

2026 Public Safety 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 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* considers the wider operational contexts impacting Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. 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.

The Report analyses themes consistent across all three Public Safety industry-sectors before examining each Public Safety industry-sector individually. The report provides data analysis, identifying workforce insights and detailing strategies aimed at addressing workforce challenges.

The report identifies seven industry insights across all the Public Safety industry-sectors relating to the following themes:

Theme	Industry Insights
Defence	> Emerging technology > Transitioning Veterans
Fire and Emergency Services	> Disaster recovery > Surf Life Saving first aid > Hazardous materials
Police	> Digital forensics > Regional and remote police leadership

The following strategies have been developed to support and address challenges identified through the above industry insights:

Industry-Sector	Strategy
Defence	Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones: Map current Defence micro-credentials on drones and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to existing units of competency from current VET qualifications.
	Support transition of Defence Veterans to civilian workforce: Support <i>Recommendation 83(c) of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide</i> by supporting up-to-date information facilitated by state and territory initiatives that assist transitioning veterans.
Fire and Emergency Services	Support uptake of disaster recovery training products: Strengthen capabilities of disaster recovery for Fire and Emergency Services and Government personnel by promoting the uptake of disaster recovery training products.
	Review first aid units of competency for Surf Life Saving in the <i>Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)</i>: Ensure the <i>Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)</i> reflects the first aid requirements of Surf Life Saving.
	Review prerequisite requirements for <i>PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident</i>: Support increased access to hazardous materials training by reviewing a key unit of competency for the Fire and Emergency Services industry.
Police	Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics: Develop a digital forensics qualification to be included in the POL Training Package.

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.

Introduction

The *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* (the Report) is the fourth report generated by Public Skills Australia for the Public Safety industry-sectors since 2023.² It builds on the previous iterations to identify workforce challenges and strategic initiatives to mitigate them. This Report represents the insights, commitment and efforts of the Public Safety industry-sectors (including Defence, Police and Fire and Emergency Services), 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
Cross-Industry-Sector Analysis	› Analyses themes consistent across all three Public Safety industry-sectors
Industry-Sector Analysis	› Examines each Public Safety industry-sector individually, providing data analysis, identifying workforce insights and detailing strategies aimed at addressing workforce challenges. This section differentiates between Defence, Fire and Emergency Services and Police
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 informs the planning and delivery of Public Skills Australia's projects
Looking Forward to 2027	› Concludes the report by outlining future lines of inquiry that will support the shaping of the <i>2027 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report</i> or other projects

² Public Safety Industry-Sectors refer to Defence, Fire and Emergency Services and Police.

Methodology

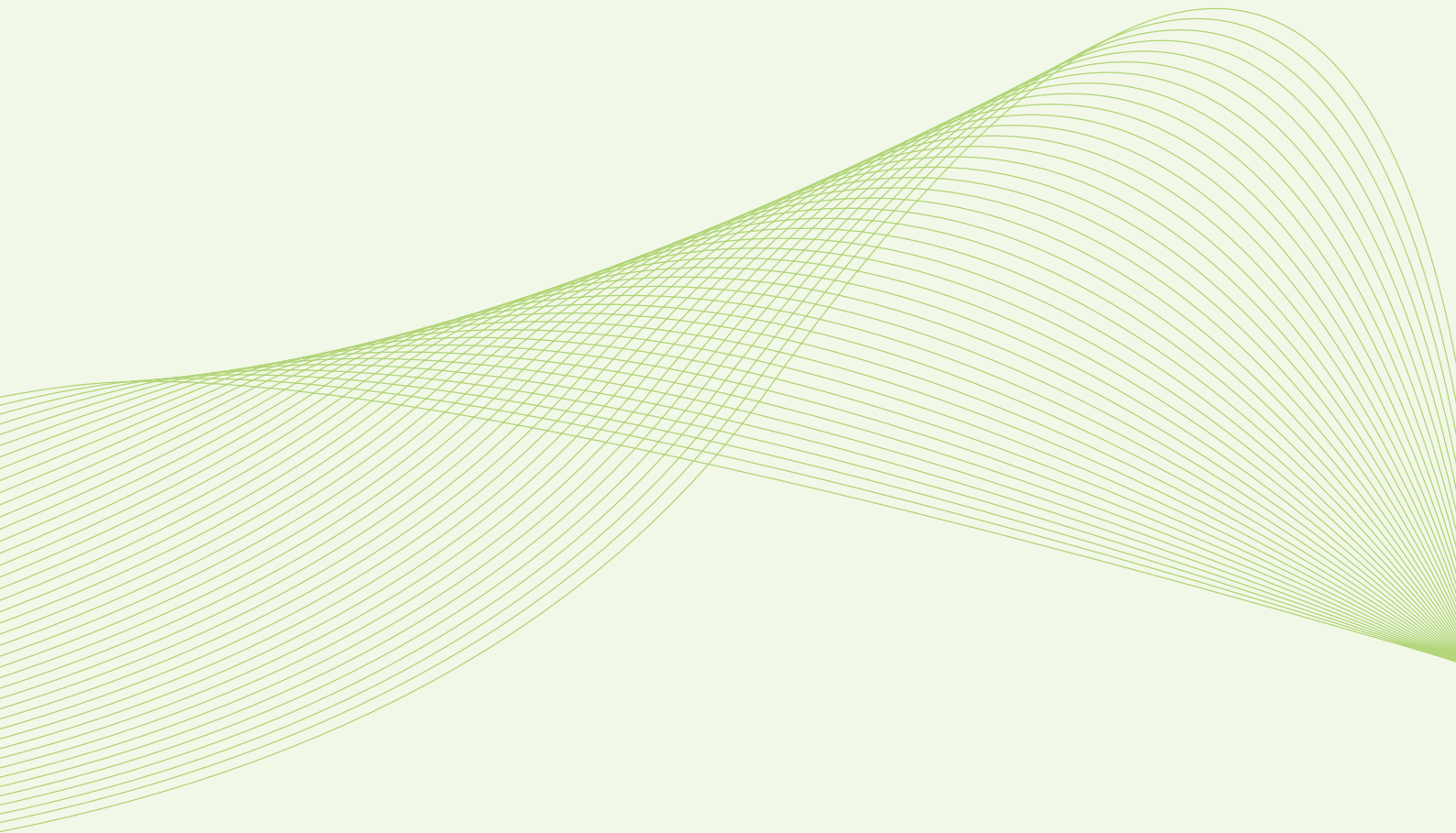
Public Skills Australia’s *Workforce Insights Reports* are developed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources. This *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* is supported by data obtained through stakeholder consultations and engagements.

These consultations were used to gain insight into challenges each industry-sector is facing with the development and maintenance of a skilled workforce. The challenges identified through consultations were thematically analysed to identify trends and priority areas to address for each industry-sector. 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. Specific to the Public Safety industry-sectors, and in alignment with the tripartite approach for Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), consultations were held with employers, employee bodies and Government organisations, both in-person and through online meetings, workshops and presentations. Drafts were subsequently progressed through Public Skills Australia’s governance process that includes:

Public Safety 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 the 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 Public Safety Subcommittee’s recommendation for endorsement. The IAG further provides its strategic guidance and endorsement if comfortable that the strategic priorities of Public Safety and Government 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 report prioritises the data source, or combination of data sources, that provide the most accurate representation of the workforce possible. 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.

Public Skills Australia thanks the contributors, including industry representatives, its Board and governance group representatives, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (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-sectors. 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**



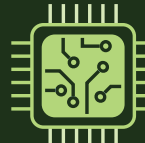
**Expansion of
core duties**



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

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

Public Safety Cross-Sector Analysis

Public Safety industry-sectors are responsible for safeguarding Australia's people, property and environment through the combined efforts of the Defence, Fire and Emergency Services and Police industry-sectors. These industry-sectors prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters, emergency incidents, law and order, sovereign capabilities and geopolitical uncertainty.

The *2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* identified four themes that consistently impact workforce planning across these industry-sectors, they include:

Public Safety's regulatory environment

Public Safety industry-sectors are institutions accountable to governments. As such, they are subject to regulatory oversight bodies, government fiscal positions (including budget constraints and financial accountability) and are impacted by election cycles and political commitments.

Public Safety taskings

The Public Safety workforce is required to remain agile and responsive to urgent taskings. This requires that Public Safety organisations ensure they are prepared to 'scale up' workforce resources in response to natural disasters, emergency incidents, geopolitical events etc, through leveraging available surge capacity.

Public Safety's resourcing

The Public Safety workforce uses a mix of career uniform personnel, reservists, volunteers and public sector personnel, to be fit for purpose across various contexts.

Public Safety's risk environment

The Public Safety workforce is exposed to demanding and, at times, hazardous work conditions. These workforces are trained to operate within high-stress and challenging environments but are not immune to resultant injury. This is a significant factor affecting workforce sustainability.

In addition to the themes above, Public Safety industry-sectors are increasingly required to improve cross-sector interoperability allowing organisations to interact, balance different legal arrangements and provide surge capacity. This requires a level of cross-industry skills recognition.

Greater cross-industry skills recognition of transferable competencies is essential for sustainable interoperability. When personnel from Defence, Fire and Emergency Services and Police share a common understanding of incident-management language, technical skills (communications, logistics, command and control) and recognised qualifications, multi-organisation teams can integrate faster, reduce safety risks and maintain surge capability during prolonged or simultaneous operations.

Core Skill Alignment

The Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) recently released by the ABS, collectively categorises the following four Public Safety occupations in the *Protective Service Workers* Minor Group (group):⁸



Tasks in this group, whether undertaken by volunteers or career employees, are characterised by the use of specialist equipment, intense physical effort and operating in high-stress emergency environments.⁹ Common skills identified across these tasks include:

Operating and maintaining equipment	Communication	Community engagement
Collecting and analysing information	Responding to emergencies	Guarding or patrolling

The Public Safety industry-sectors occupations further share core skills as illustrated below:¹⁰



These four occupations encompass a range of core skills that may likely enable industry-sector cross-skilling, greater interoperability and would enhance national capability to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters, emergency incidents and geopolitical uncertainty.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *OSCA – Occupation Standard Classification of Australia*, ABS website, December 2024, accessed 19 January 2026.
⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *OSCA – Occupation Standard Classification of Australia*, ABS website, December 2024, accessed 19 January 2026.
¹⁰ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), 'Australian Skills Classification', JSA, Australian Government, 2023.

Specialist Skill Alignment

Alongside core skill alignment, some roles in the Public Safety industry-sectors share similar specialist skills alignment. While each industry-sector holds distinct operational and legislative contexts, there are specialist roles and skills alignment between, for example:



Example: All three industry-sectors hold search and rescue related training products. The comparison illustrated below demonstrates from a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Training Package perspective, that units of competency are similar across the search and rescue skills landscape. The following units are used for this demonstration:

Defence Training Package	Public Safety Training Package	Police Training Package
DEFMIL024 <i>Conduct military searches</i>	PUAAMS007 <i>Coordinate search and rescue operations</i>	POLSAR012 <i>Coordinate police search and rescue operations</i>

These three units of competency contain shared skills relating to:

Planning and preparation – relating to planning for searches, selecting/deploying search equipment and preparing for deployment.	Search techniques and procedures – relating to the application of search techniques and/or procedures relevant to the types of searches.
Information management and recording – requiring a level of record keeping and information handling.	Communication and Coordination – emphasising inter-organisation coordination and team communication.

Where these units of competency differ is in the **application in operational contexts** and the **complexity of learning**, with DEFMIL024 focused more on tactical tasks associated with conducting searches, whereas the PUAAMS007 and POLSAR012 units of competency are broader in their application of planning and coordinating search and rescue operations.

Comparison Table

Relevant Performance Criteria	DEFMIL024 <i>Conduct military searches</i>
Planning and preparation	› Identify purpose, timing, environment and type of search from supervisor › Select and use appropriate personal protective equipment › Identify, obtain, inspect and test tools and search equipment appropriate to the type of search and report any faults › Deploy to an incident site or search area.
Communication and coordination	› Coordinate the preparation of the search site and the conduct of searches with other organisations.
Information management and recording	› Record information and complete report.
Search techniques and procedures	› Carry out search drills/procedures applicable to the type of search › Protect potential evidence and/or other items or material of interest from contamination, improper handling or removal.

PUAAMS007***Coordinate search and rescue operations***

- › Search and rescue assets and potential assets are identified and recorded in databases
- › Strategic and tactical objectives are identified, in accordance with search and rescue unit plans
- › Hazards are identified, risks assessed and control measures implemented.

- › Search and rescue procedures and policies are communicated to personnel, groups and other organisations, in accordance with the needs of those people.

- › Information management strategies are identified and applied.

- › Search and rescue procedures and policies are communicated to personnel, groups and other organisations, in accordance with the needs of those people
- › Initial search procedures are implemented, in accordance with search and rescue organisational policies.

POLSAR012***Coordinate police search and rescue (SAR) operations***

- › Assess environmental factors to determine impact on SAR operation
- › Assess resources required to undertake SAR operations based on information about environmental factors
- › Develop rescue plan to assist in managing SAR operation.

- › Liaise with stakeholders to ensure effective coordination of resources
- › Coordinate assets through delegation of roles and responsibilities.

- › Maintain critical decision records for accountability purposes.

- › Determine search patterns in accordance with environmental conditions/factors
- › Apply search techniques to support SAR operation.

Skills Recognition

VET training products can be leveraged to potentially reduce duplication of training package development, training material development and support skill recognition in and between the Public Safety industry-sectors (impacting workforce mobility, interoperability, career transition and enhancing productivity).

When shared skills, such as those identified in the comparison table above, are recognised and aligned, it may enable smoother integration of personnel in joint operations environments.

Some areas in Public Safety industry-sectors further seek to use recognition of prior learning (RPL) to reduce lead in times for personnel transitioning. Noting the similarity of operational context and skills, this may be further leveraged and give effect to important recommendations such as the Recommendation 83 of the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide*.

The Productivity Commission identified the following challenges in the delivery of RPL services.¹¹ This includes:

- Challenges with RPL fraud:** The prevalence of RPL fraud makes acceptance of RPL in the VET sector complicated, resulting in a loss of trust in the RPL process. In turn, this means that personnel often are required to complete training for a unit of competency that they already hold, resulting in productivity losses and more impost on already strained training services in the Public Safety industry-sectors. The Productivity Commission indicated that fewer than 5 per cent of successful completions/results are granted through RPL. Further, as the VET sector is highly regulated by quality assurance organisations such as the Training Accreditation Council (TAC – Western Australia), Victoria Registration Qualifications Authority (VRQA – Victoria) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA – for the remainder of the states and territories), Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), TAFEs and employers are reluctant to accept RPL outcomes due to the evidence required of competency by documents such as the ASQA 2025 *Standards for RTOs*. This is loosely referred to as 'audit fear', dissuading genuine training providers from using RPL and/or underreporting its use.
- RPL processes are costly and complex:** RPL applications require the same rigour of assessment as when assessing a student's competency for the first time. Extensive portfolios of evidence are required, often resulting in students requested to either repeat training or undertaking vigorous assessments to 'prove' competence. Further, RPL requires assessors familiar and experience in RPL, which make RPL assessments costly (both timing and financial costs).

Challenges with RPL are not exclusive to the Public Safety industry-sectors and are shared with other industries. Other factors that affect the limited use of RPL in the Public Safety industry-sector include:

Differences					
Policies and procedures	Legislation and regulatory requirements	Roles and remits of Public Safety organisations	Operating contexts	Equipment, appliances etc and other technology used	Ranks and structures
An interesting complexity of the VET sector is the drive to integrate the areas above into training delivery to ensure students are job ready. In Public Safety industry-sectors, such contextualisation is crucial, noting the operating environment. However, it is exactly this contextualisation of training that limits RPL when employees want to work in other industries.					

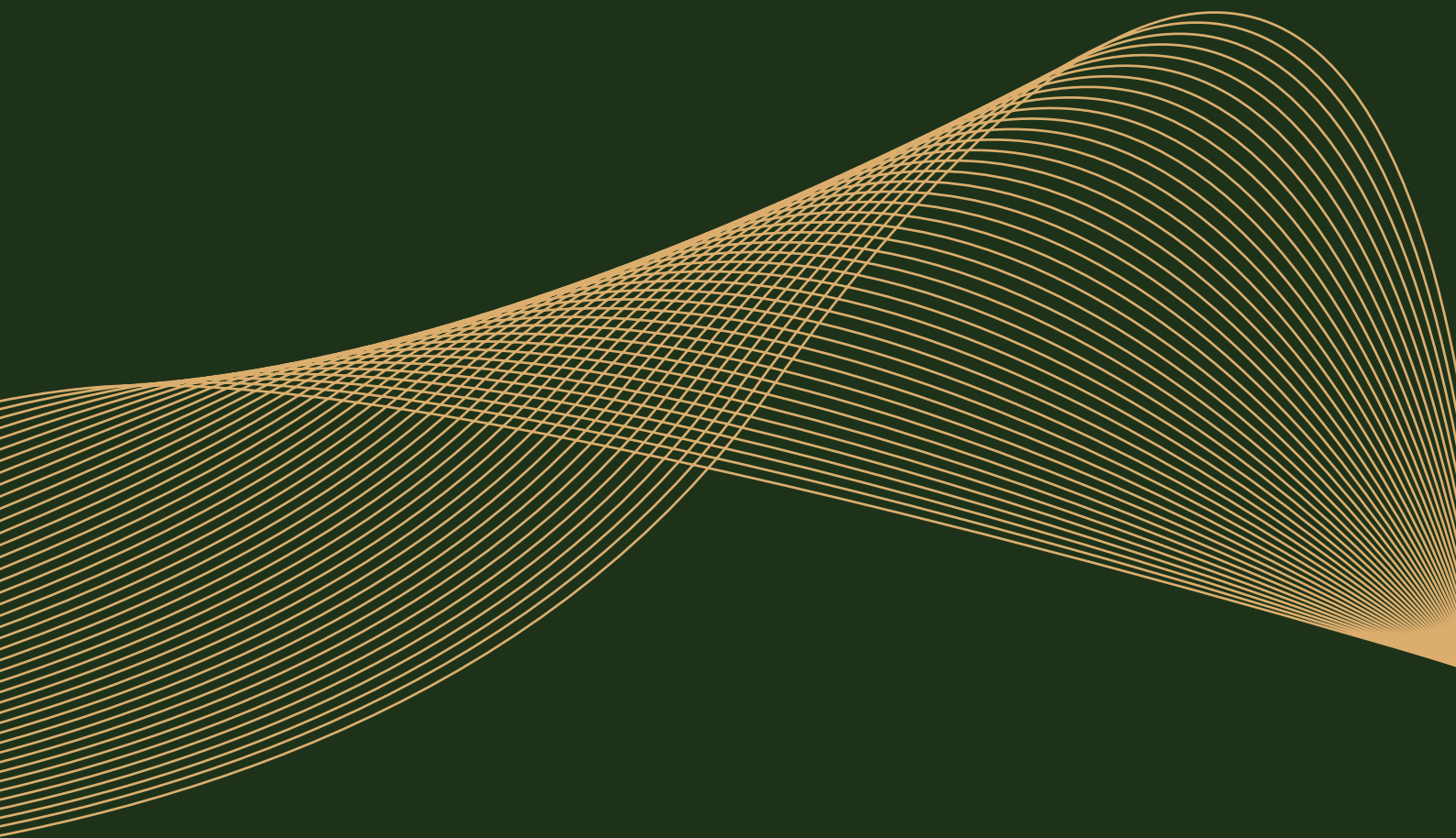
¹¹ Productivity Commission, [Building a skilled and adaptable workforce](#), Productivity Commission, Australian Government, 2025.

Industry-Sector Analysis

The industry-sector analysis section of this report covers the following structure for each of the Public Safety industry-sectors:

Industry-Sector Overview	Statistics and data of the industry-sectors' workforce.
Workforce Insights	Analysis and insights on current and emerging challenges.
2026 Proposed Strategies	Strategies being proposed to mitigate identified challenges.
2025 Strategy Update	Updates on earlier strategies proposed in previous reports as to their progress.
Existing Industry-Sector Strategies	Outline existing strategies now used by Government and industry-sectors that impact workforces, their operating and policy contexts and challenges that they may be facing.

Defence



Industry-Sector Overview

The Defence workforce is multidisciplinary, with highly skilled personnel in a breadth of roles. The workforce comprises permanent and reserve force members across the Australian Defence Force (ADF) including Navy, Army and Air Force, supported by civilian Australian Public Service (APS) employees who work across the Department of Defence.

The Defence workforce operates in a secure, structured and regulated environment and undertakes its own long-term workforce planning, including growth and future workforce requirements as outlined in the *Defence Workforce Plan 2024*. The Defence industry-sector has identified workforce growth targets for ADF permanent workforce of 69,000 by the early 2030s, with an overall permanent ADF and APS workforce of around 100,000 by 2040.¹²

The following datapoints were identified through this industry-sector overview for the Defence workforce:

- › **Current workforce:** The 2024-25 financial year saw a significant increase in ADF recruitment alongside a decrease in separations, increasing the total ADF permanent workforce headcount by 1,664.¹³ The Federal Government has further budgeted for increases in the ADF permanent workforce to 61,049 for 2026-27 and 63,272 for 2027-28.¹⁴
- › **Future workforce:** To meet targets set in the *Defence Workforce Plan 2024*, the ADF will be required to recruit on average between 6,885 and 7,139 personnel each year, while maintaining an average separation rate of 7.9 per cent (between 4,654-6,217 ADF personnel separating per year). This will aggregate to an average headcount increase of 1,419 per year (between 2026-2040). Should the ADF maintain its current recruitment rate and meet its budgeted workforce requirements over the next two years, it will be well positioned to meet these targets.
- › **Veterans:** The ADF has issued more than 4,000 qualifications and micro-credentials, ranging from Certificate III to Advanced Diploma, to both personnel considering their transition to civilian life, and recently separated Veterans in the 2024-25 financial year. This has been supported through ADF use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with 1,057 RPL assessments conducted in the 2024-25 financial year.¹⁵

¹² Department of Defence, *Defence Workforce Plan 2024*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 15 December 2025.

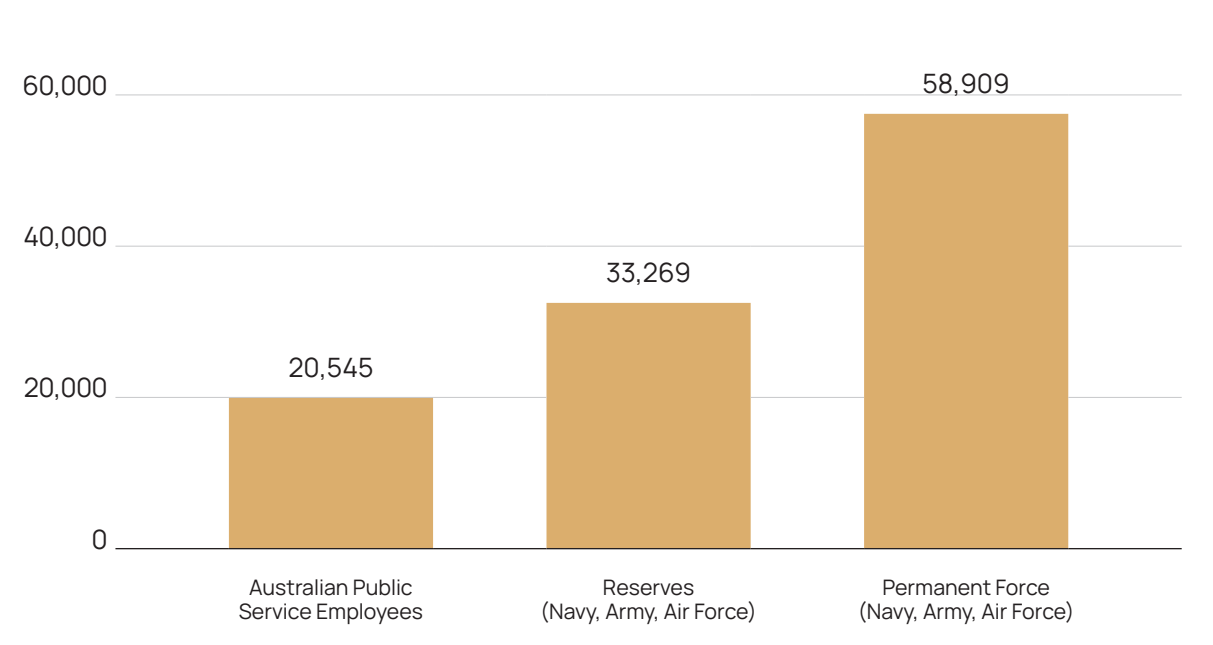
¹³ Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report 2024-25*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 15 December 2025.

¹⁴ Department of Defence, *Defence Workforce Plan 2024*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 15 December 2025.

¹⁵ Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report 2024-25*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 15 December 2025.

Current Workforce

Defence Workforce Headcount, 30 June 2025



Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), 2025

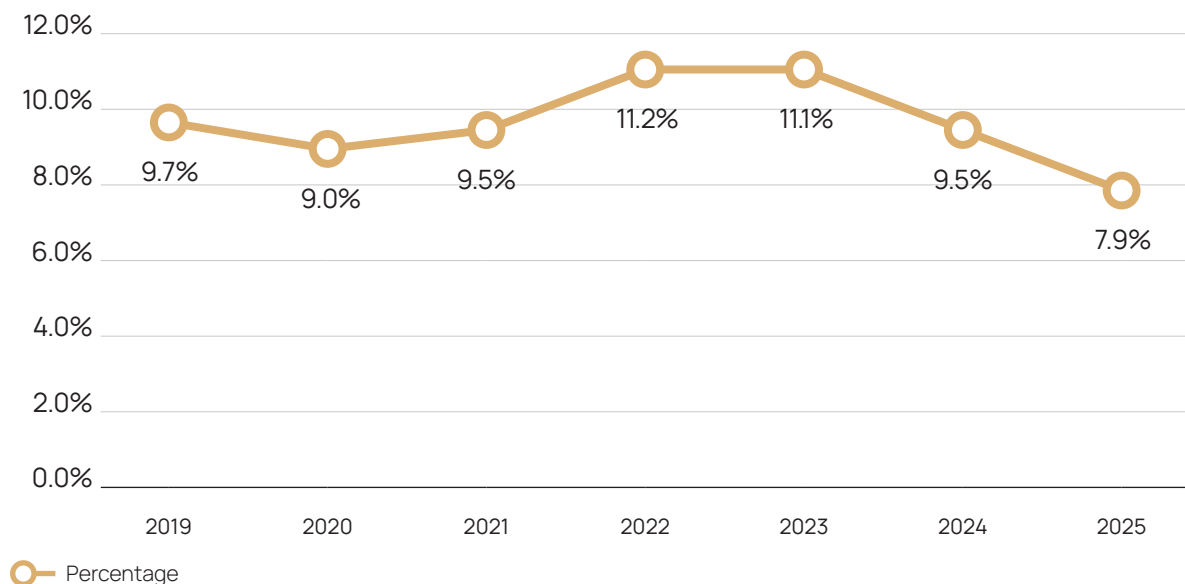
Australian Defence Force Key Enlistment Demographics 2024-25



Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), 2025

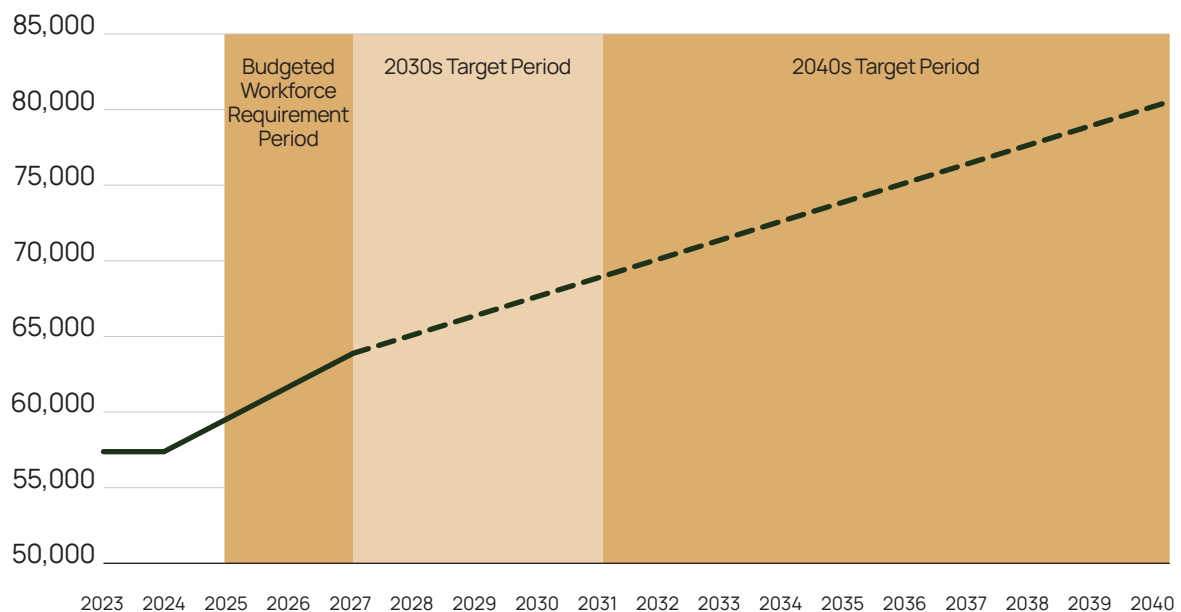
Future Workforce

Australian Defence Force Separation Rate, June 2019 – June 2025



Source: [Defence Annual Reports 2019-20](#) – [2024-25](#)

Australian Defence Force Permanent Workforce – Forecast to 2040



Sources: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), 2025 & [Defence Workforce Plan 2024](#), 2024

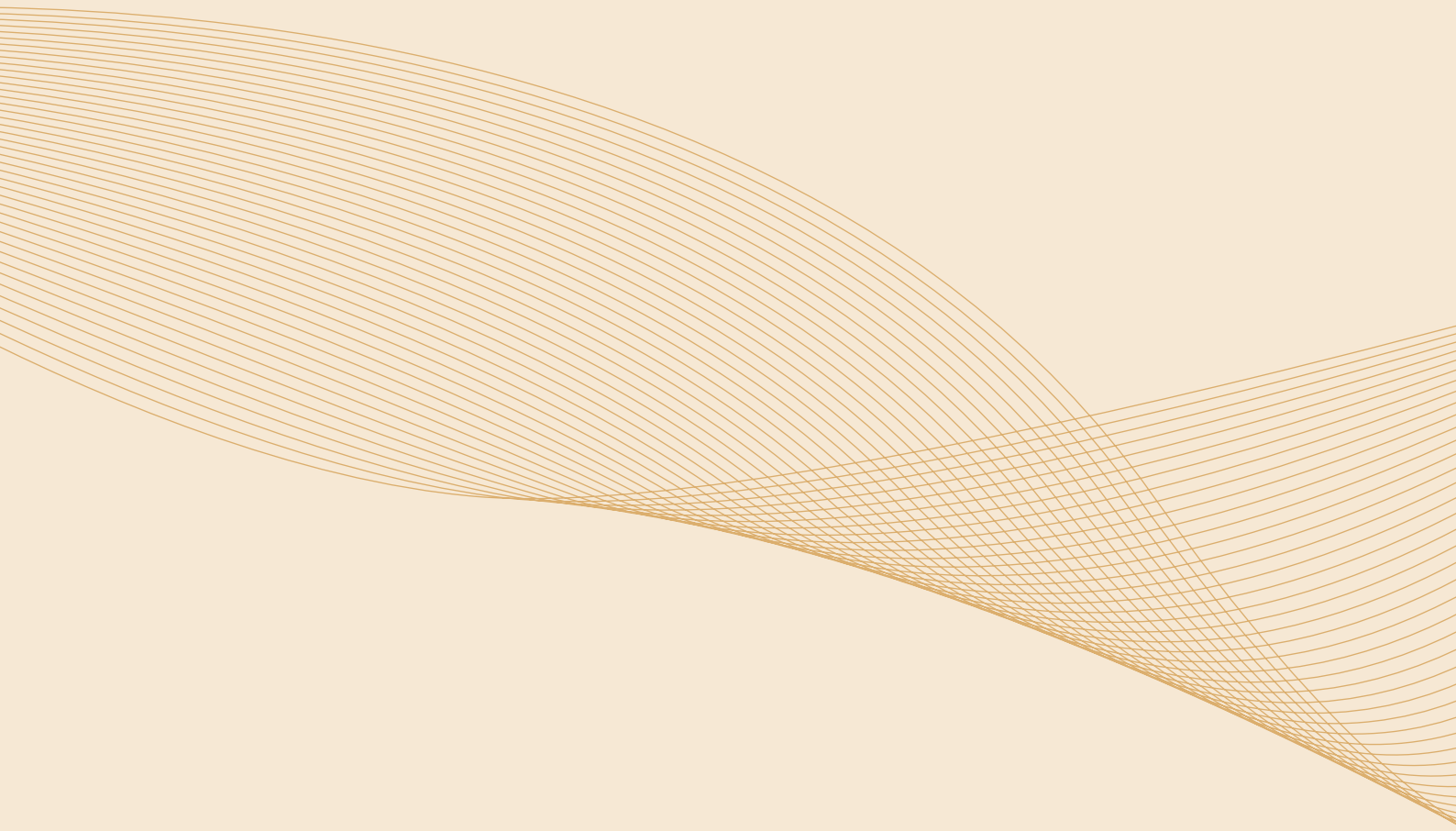
Veterans

Veterans Transition Training Support 2024-25

To support serving members and transitioned veterans the ADF Transition and Civil Recognition Cell completed the following in 2024-25:

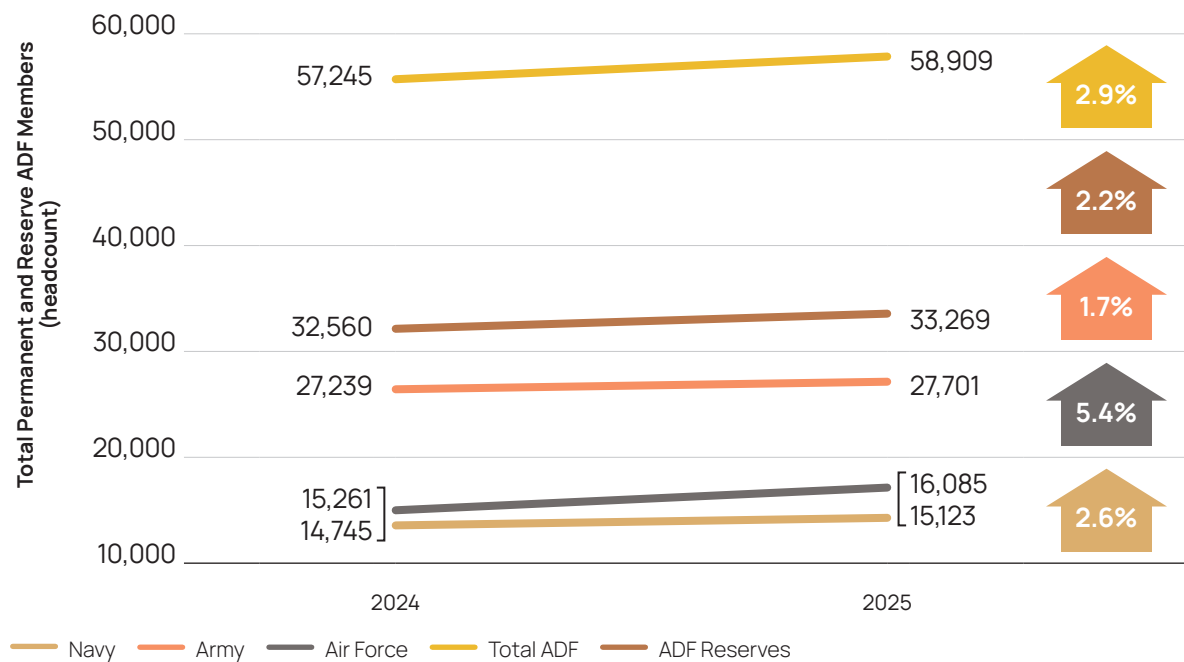


Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), 2025



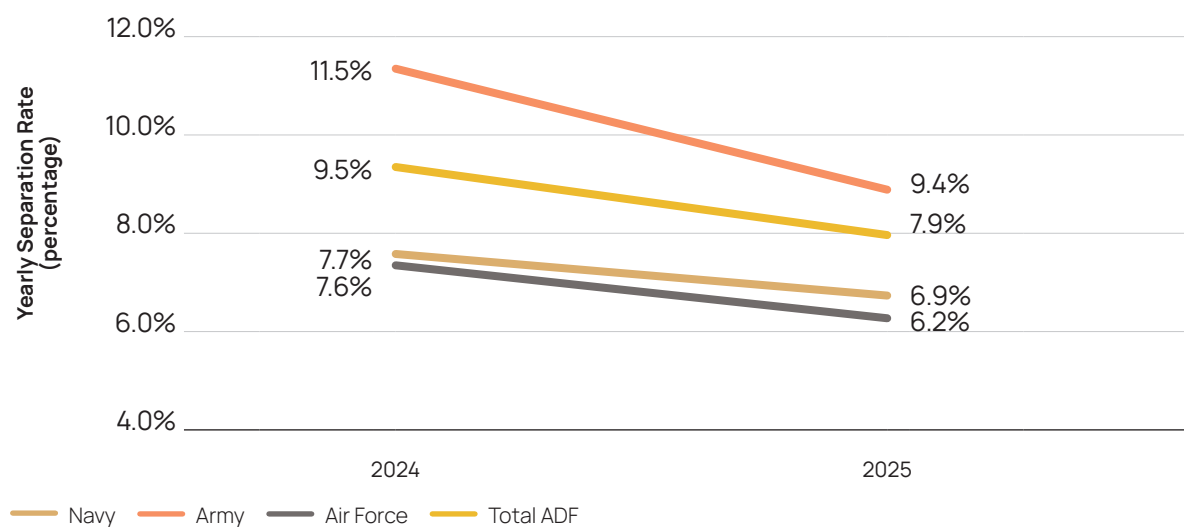
Industry Profile

Total Yearly Headcount and Percent Change (coloured arrows) for each Military Service Branch, Combined for Whole of Australian Defence Force (ADF)



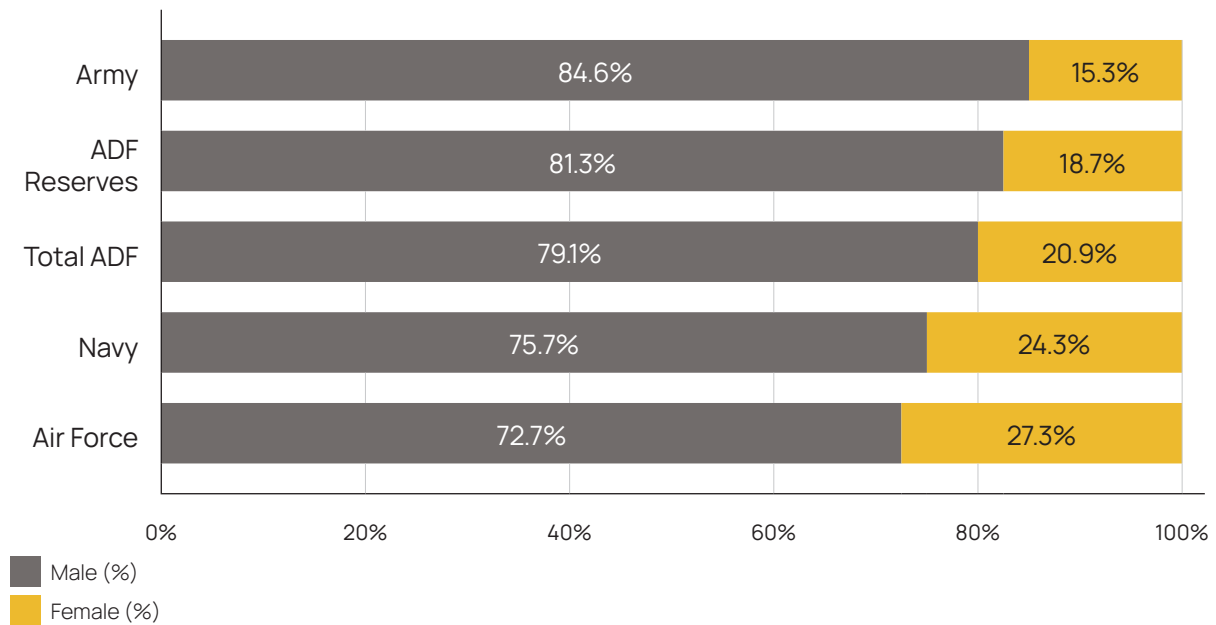
Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25, 2025](#) & [Defence Annual Report 2023-24, 2024](#)

Yearly Separation Rate for ADF Service Branches and ADF Combined



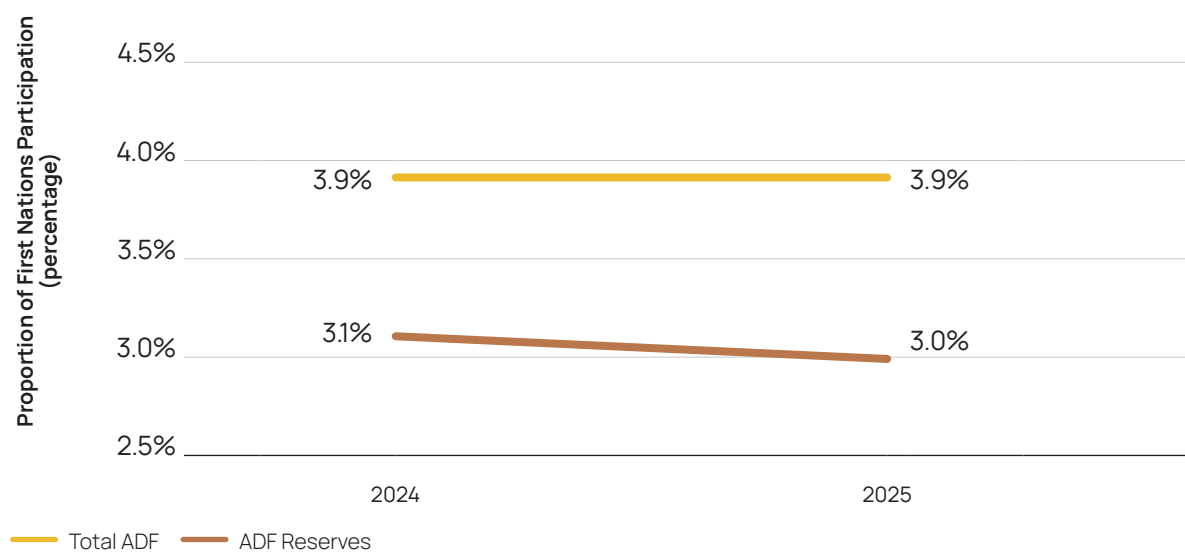
Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25, 2025](#)

Proportion of Male and Female ADF and ADF Reserve Members in 2025



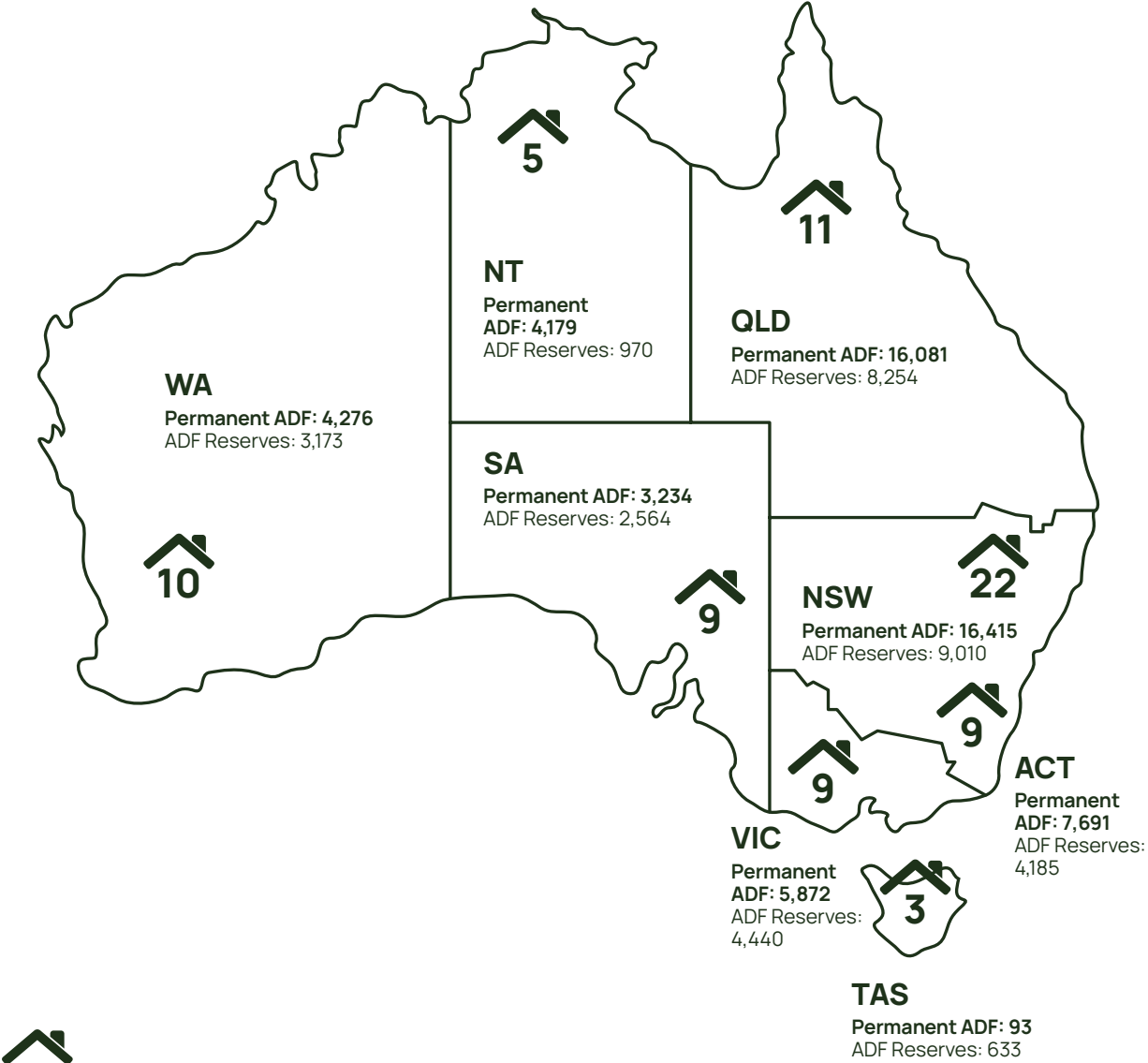
Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25, 2025](#)

Proportion of First Nations Participation in the ADF and ADF Reserves Across 2024 and 2025



Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25, 2025](#)

ADF Employees and Major Facilities by Location



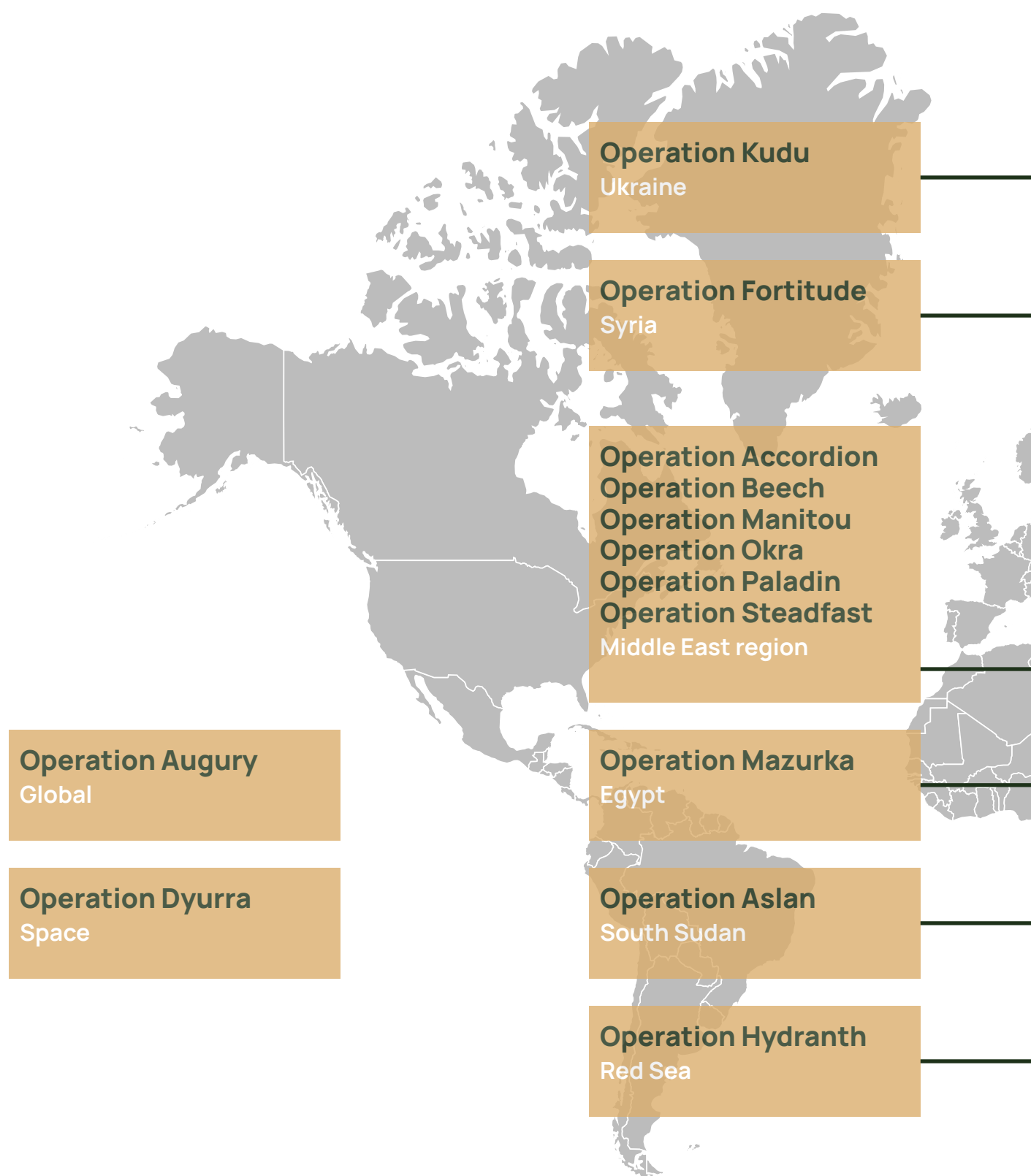
Major Defence bases

Please note total number of bases may change in the next 12 months inline with recommendations from the Defence Estate Audit

Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), 2025

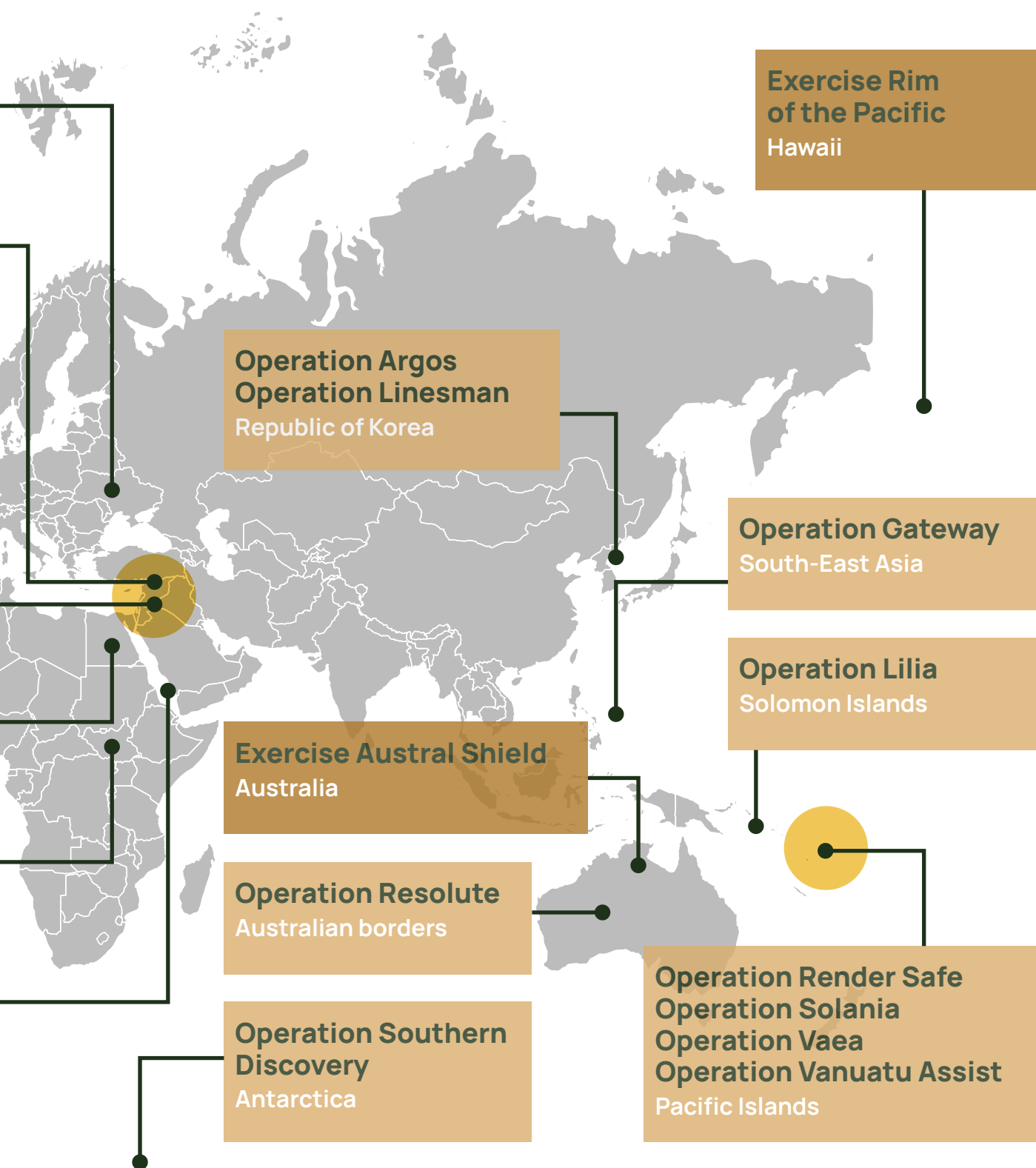


**List of Operations and Activities Undertaken by the Australian Defence Force
Throughout 2024 and 2025**



NOTE: Does not include ADF assistance to domestic emergency response.

Source: [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), 2025



Workforce Insights

This Report identifies the following themes and industry insights relating to the ADF:

Theme	Industry Insights
1. Emerging Technology	› Challenges in rapid adoption of emerging technology remains, due to significant security screening requirements for any new technology adoption. Limitations exist for the speed of being able to upskill employees in the use of any new technology. › Provisioning targeted training faster through short courses (often referred to as micro-credentials). Leveraging Vocational Education and Training Units of Competency could be effective in responding to emerging technologies.
2. Transitioning Veterans	› The Vocational Education and Training (VET) system remains important for the ADF as it provides a national standard, with meaningful qualifications written by industry, for industry. › Greater focus is required to support those transitioning (including veterans) to articulate the transferability of their VET qualifications and the relevance of their ADF experience to the civilian workforce. Where support is available, the information provided could be bolstered.

1. Emerging Technology

Across the broader labour market in Australia, emerging technologies are considered to be drivers of long-term productivity growth. Adopting these emerging technologies requires supporting workforces to rapidly train and upskill, changing traditional approaches to training.¹⁶ It is anticipated that across the labour market, Australia will require 1.3 million technology professionals by 2030, equating to 52,000 employees.¹⁷ Recent data indicates that between 2016 and 2021, 75,000 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) students entered the broader technology sector following completion of a university or VET qualification, which equates to only 15,000 ICT professionals annually.¹⁸

While not Defence-specific, this shortage indicates the need to ensure the ADF workforce is not only appropriately skilled to deploy emerging technologies, but that individuals are attracted and retained, noting the competing need for such professionals across the wider labour market.

¹⁶ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), [Connecting for Impact – The Jobs and Skills Report 2025](#), JSA, 2025, page 81, accessed 19 November 2025.

¹⁷ Australian Computer Society (ACS), [Digital Tasmania Strategy 2026-2031](#), ACS, 2024, page 7, accessed 6 January 2026.

¹⁸ Australian Computer Society (ACS), [Digital Tasmania Strategy 2026-2031](#), ACS, 2024, page 12, accessed 6 January 2026.

The adoption of the *2024 National Defence Strategy* has resulted in a change in capability priorities for the ADF, which has now moved “to an integrated, focused force designed to address Australia’s most significant strategic risks”. This is markedly different from the previous balanced force approach, which was structured to respond to a range of possibilities.¹⁹ Noting this change, ADF stakeholders who were consulted, emphasised the importance of training for capability that is agile and resilient to strategic shocks, and adaptable to government priorities.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Challenges in rapid adoption of emerging technology remain, due to significant security screening requirements for any new technology adoption. Limitations on how rapidly upskilling in the use of any new technology also remains.

Recruitment, training and retention of a highly specialised and skilled workforce is necessary to meet emerging technology challenges and future capability needs.²⁰ As detailed in the Industry Overview section, the ADF workforce has been expanding in recent years due to an increase in enlistments alongside a decline in separations. Defence stakeholders noted that the ADF workforce will need to enhance their ability to upskill this workforce to be technically proficient in new and emerging technologies.²¹

The *2024 Integrated Investment Program* outlines \$330 billion through to 2033-34 on capability investment priorities that include the following areas (relating to new and emerging technologies):²²

Autonomous maritime systems and uncrewed/optionally crewed vehicles	Decision advantage and intelligence systems	Warfighting networks and strategic communication
Uncrewed air systems	Enhanced cyber capabilities	Space sensors

As a result of the need to acquire emerging technologies to be able to respond to future threats, the ADF faces the challenge of ensuring that their personnel can rapidly acquire and refresh highly technical skills (at pace with operational needs), while continuing to meet current job role requirements in increasingly complex and dangerous environments.

¹⁹ Department of Defence, *2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024, page 7, accessed 19 November 2025.

²⁰ Department of Defence, *2024 National Defence Strategy*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024, accessed 19 November 2025.

²¹ Department of Defence, *2024 National Defence Strategy*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024, accessed 19 November 2025.

²² Department of Defence, *2024 Integrated Investment Program*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024, accessed 19 November 2025.

Defence stakeholders and public announcements by the Federal Government have consistently identified uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS-drone) as a critical technology where more training will support operational needs.²³ At an international level, it is acknowledged that UAS technology and counter-drone systems are evolving at a much faster rate than traditional acquisition and training cycles (in large part due to their evolving use in the war in Ukraine). Ukraine has developed and invested in counter-drone systems that are built to efficiently respond to threats that never previously existed.²⁴ The fast innovation of the Ukraine in response to these threats has been used in NATO training exercises, and provides an example of the way that the ADF could adapt to future threats, with drone technology evolving “every two to three weeks [with a] fundamentally different [model].”²⁵ The Australian Government has made a \$10 billion commitment to UAS over the next 10 years from 2025 that includes:

Acquisition of 300 Australian-made drones	Development of advanced counter-drone technology	Adoption of more than 20 different drone systems ²⁶
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In Australia, initiatives such as the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Training School (RPATS) have been established, with Australian Air Force Cadets now eligible for Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) training to qualify as fully certified drone pilots.²⁷ Additional training for drone capability and other emerging technologies is currently available through programs such as the National Security TAFE Centre of Excellence.²⁸ However, through consultations, Defence stakeholders advised that the current available training in the *AVI Aviation Training Package* is generic, and that Defence-specific training will likely be required to align to varying job roles in the ADF.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Provisioning targeted training faster through short courses (often referred to as micro-credentials) leveraging Vocational Education and Training Units of Competency could be effective in responding to emerging technologies.

²³ Department of Defence, Albanese Government to invest up to \$7 billion in counter drone defence [media release], Department of Defence, Australian Government, 21 April 2026, accessed 28 April 2026.

²⁴ S Baker, 'The drone war is moving too fast for old-school defense tech development, CEO warns', Business Insider, 18 November 2025, accessed 5 January 2026; O Molloy, Drones in Modern Warfare: Lessons Learnt from the War in Ukraine, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 29, 2024, accessed 6 January 2026.

²⁵ S Baker, 'The drone war is moving too fast for old-school defense tech development, CEO warns', Business Insider, 18 November 2025, accessed 5 January 2026.

²⁶ Department of Defence, Growing sovereign industrial base with 300 drones delivered to Defence [media release], Department of Defence, Australian Government, 19 August 2025; Department of Defence, 2024 National Defence Strategy and 2024 Integrated Investment Program, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024; Department of Defence, Counter-drone investment and drone championships [media release], Department of Defence, Australian Government, 24 July 2025; Department of Defence, Albanese Government invests over \$100 million to deliver next generation drones [media release], Department of Defence, Australian Government, 15 July 2024.

²⁷ Department of Defence, Drone Training Takes Off [media release], Australian Government, 14 April 2025, accessed 19 December 2025.

²⁸ Ministers' Media Centre, \$28 million TAFE Centre of Excellence to boost national security and upskill workers for AUKUS [media release], Ministers of the Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio, 26 September 2025, accessed 9 January 2026.

2. Transitioning Veterans

Defence veterans are defined as:

“all ex-serving personnel who have ever served at least one day in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), including reservists, personnel who experienced operational deployments and personnel who served in peacekeeping and peace-making operations, including humanitarian and domestic support operations.”²⁹

The Final Report for the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide* details the transition from military to civilian life and examines the challenges that veterans may face when seeking employment post-service.³⁰

Of the 122 recommendations, Recommendation 83: *“Increase opportunities for personnel to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education, Focus Area C ‘fill the gap’ between Defence and civilian training (where an equivalent civilian qualification exists), either by expanding the content of the Defence training course or by funding bridging training for personnel prior to separation”* was highlighted in the *2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* as a focus area for Public Skills Australia to support the Defence industry-sector.³¹

The skills and experience that ADF personnel obtain throughout their service can be considered towards any additional study post-service, or towards future job roles in the civilian workforce through RPL provided by ADF Transition and Civil Recognition.³² Once assessed, a veteran’s existing skills, work level standards and experience can result in being awarded qualifications and/or micro-credentials which have transferability to industries external to Defence.³³

Defence stakeholders emphasised the importance of the VET system for this purpose as associated education and training products represents particular skills (through the units of competency) as a national standard for relevant occupations.³⁴ Awarding VET qualifications allows Defence veterans to demonstrate that they have met a national standard that can be recognised across the country by RTOs, industries and employers.³⁵

²⁹ NSW Veterans Affairs, *NSW Veterans Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030*, New South Wales Government, 2025, page 10, accessed 10 December 2025.

³⁰ Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, *Final Report – Volume 5: Transition, DVA and Support for Ex-Serving Members*, Attorney-General’s Department, Australian Government, 2024, accessed 14 November 2025.

³¹ Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, *Final Report – Volume 5: Transition, DVA and Support for Ex-Serving Members*, Attorney-General’s Department, Australian Government, 2024, accessed 14 November 2025.

³² Department of Defence, *Military Skill Recognition* [website], Department of Defence, Australian Government, n.d., accessed 17 November 2025.

³³ Department of Defence, *Military Skill Recognition* [website], Department of Defence, Australian Government, n.d., accessed 17 November 2025.

³⁴ Australian Defence Force, *How to Use a Qualification*, Australian Defence Force, n.d., accessed 17 November 2025.

³⁵ Australian Defence Force, *How to Use a Qualification*, Australian Defence Force, n.d., accessed 17 November 2025.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) system remains important for the ADF as it provides a national standard, with meaningful qualifications written by industry, for industry.

While much of the focus for transitioning veterans was based on issuing VET qualifications post-service, a challenge raised by Defence stakeholders related to enabling veterans to articulate their skills through their VET qualifications to prospective employers. Current support for veterans to articulate their skills is available, however the programs and information differ based on states and territories.

Defence stakeholders advised that the current support should be bolstered – *Appendix A – Defence Veterans' Programs and Initiatives* – highlights some of the programs in each state and territory, and the information available to support veteran transition out of the ADF and into the civilian workforce.

Some programs, such as *TAFE NSW Ranks to Recognition Program*, mirror the ADF programs offered to transitioning and transitioned veterans. Additionally, some states and territories (such as the Northern Territory) have adopted initiatives like the *Rank to Grade Guide* to better support veterans.³⁶ In the ACT, the *ACTPS Veterans' Employment Strategy* has not been updated since 2020 but rather aligned to the broader programs at the federal level.

Defence stakeholders emphasised that transitioning veterans should be provided with clear information to understand how the qualifications they obtained during service is relevant in the civilian workforce. This may be further supported through guidance on the programs on offer, options available and understanding how the varying roles and ranks across the ADF could translate to a civilian context. An additional benefit could be the identification of where such services could be streamlined.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Greater focus is required to support transitioning veterans to articulate the transferability of their VET qualifications and the relevance of their ADF experience to the civilian workforce. Where support is available, the information provided at times is out of date and inconsistent.

³⁶ Northern Territory Government, [Northern Territory Defence Veterans Strategy](#), n.d., Northern Territory Government, accessed 16 December 2025.

Defence Workforce Strategies

Proposed Strategies 2026

Public Skills Australia proposes the following strategies aligned to the workforce insights identified to support Defence:

1

Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones

Workforce Insight: Emerging technologies

JSC Function: Training Product Development

Objective: Map current Defence micro-credentials on drones and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to existing units of competency from current VET qualifications.

Approach: Identify whether current units of competency relating to UAS and drones meet the skills requirements of Defence. Should gaps be found, review/develop new units of competency to address these gaps.

Key Stakeholders

- > Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)
- > Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA)
- > Industry Skills Australia

Deliverable: Mapping Report

Impact: Support the Defence workforce by enabling rapid, targeted upskilling in UAS and drone related technologies.

Anticipated timing: 12-month project

2

Support transition of Defence Veterans to civilian workforce

Workforce Insight: Transitioning Veterans

JSC Function: Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring

Objective: Support Recommendation 83(c) of the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide* by supporting up-to-date information facilitated by state and territory initiatives that assist transitioning veterans.

Approach: Collaborate with Defence to map ADF job roles and training to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels and approximate equivalent civilian qualifications.

Develop material that translates military terminology into civilian contexts, to build collective understanding for both transitioning veterans and prospective civilian employers.

Collaborate with Defence to share this information back through state and territories to be included on their websites for veterans.

Key Stakeholders

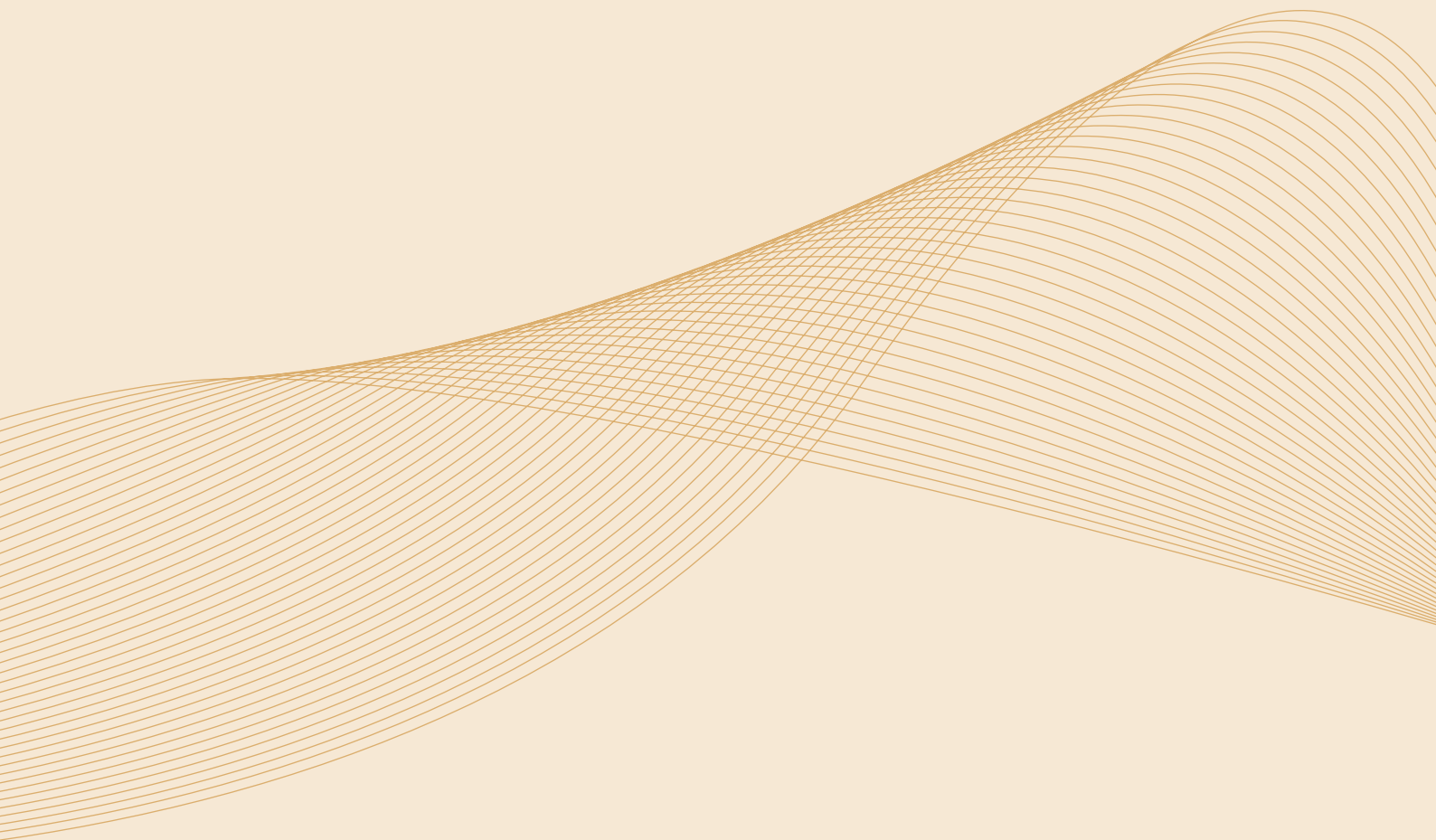
- > Australian Public Service Academy
- > Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA)
- > Department of Veterans Affairs
- > State Training Authorities/ Senior Responsible Officers

Deliverable:

- > Mapping Report
- > Military Terminology Guide

Impact: Support Recommendation 83(c) by providing information through Defence, states and territories that support veterans to translate their Defence skills and experience into civilian-recognised language.

Anticipated timing: 12-month project



2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report – Defence Strategies Updates

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Defence Youth Development Project ³⁷	June 2026	Redevelop the <i>DEF21115 Certificate II in Military Skills</i> to formally recognise skills acquired through Australian Defence Force Cadet participation. Update <i>DEF10117 Certificate I in Defence Skills</i>. When completed, this project will support Defence's workforce targets as outlined in the <i>Defence Workforce Plan 2024</i>. This project counterbalances the <i>Defence Veterans – Supporting Transition</i> strategy as it builds foundational skills for young people seeking to enter the Defence Workforce.	In collaboration with Defence, Public Skills Australia has reviewed the following qualifications: > <i>DEF21115 Certificate II in Military Skills</i> > <i>DEF10117 Certificate I in Defence Skills</i> These will be consulted with Defence stakeholders, before finalisation and submission in 2026.
Defence Cyber Skill Set Project ³⁸	June 2026	Develop a new Defence cyber skill set in the DEF (Defence) Training Package. When completed, this project will be complementary to the <i>Defence micro-credentials for emerging technologies</i> strategy and will support defence in developing the skills needed to respond to threats associated with wider digital transformation. This project supports the Defence workforce to rapidly respond to broader digital transformation and emerging technology adoption.	In collaboration with Defence, Public Skills Australia will develop a new Defence cyber skill set in the DEF (Defence) Training Package. This may include using existing units of competency from in the <i>DEF Defence Training Package</i>. This skill set will be consulted with Defence stakeholders, before finalisation and submission.

³⁷ Previously referred to as Contemporary Cadet Training

³⁸ Previously referred to as Development of Training Products for Emerging Skills in the Cyber Domain

Public Skills Australia identified workforce strategies for the Defence industry-sector as part of the *2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. Updates on the progress of these strategies and activity projects are provided below.

Key Stakeholders	Connection to 2026 Strategies
> Australian Air Force Cadets > Australian Army Cadets > Australian Navy Cadets > Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA), Australian Defence College > Department of Defence > Department of Education, Training and Young People > State Training Authorities/Senior Responsible Officer > State and Territory Departments of Education > Training Package Assurance Body	Ministerial Priority 2026 This project will contribute to building a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Support industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready. Support industry-sectors through high quality training products. Drivers of Change connections > Workforce inclusivity > Challenges to workforce productivity
> Australian Forensic Services > Australian Information Security Association > Australian Signals Directorate > Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA), Australian Defence College > Defence Joint Capability Group > Department of Defence > Future Skills Organisation > State Training Authorities/Senior Responsible Officer > Training Package Assurance Body	Ministerial Priority 2026 This project will contribute to the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and broader digital transformation in the design and review of qualifications and training products. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Support industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready. Support industry-sectors through high quality training products. Drivers of Change Connections Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), greater automation and broader digital transformation. Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks. 2026 Defence Strategies Connection Defence micro-credentials for emerging technologies.

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Defence Space Skill Set Project ³⁹	June 2026	Develop training products in the DEF (Defence) Training Package that meet the emerging skills needs of Defence in the space domain aligned to priority skilling needs that which may include but are not limited to skills related to satellite imagery, intelligence, reconnaissance and communications. When completed, this project will be complementary to the <i>Defence micro-credentials for emerging technologies</i> as it will provide a foundational skill set for Space Domain operations to respond to the application of emerging technologies for this domain. This project supports the Defence workforce to rapidly respond to broader digital transformation and emerging technology adoption.	In collaboration with the ADF, Public Skills Australia will develop new Defence cyber skill training products in the DEF (Defence) Training Package. Up to six new Space Skills Sets have been proposed to address the emerging space skills required. Defence stakeholders will be consulted on these skillsets before finalisation and submission.
Defence Capability – VET System Pathways Framework Project ⁴⁰	December 2026	Develop a framework that outlines how the VET system could be effectively leveraged to support Defence in the delivery of nationally accredited training, and to meet new and evolving skills requirements. When completed this project will be complementary to the <i>Defence micro-credentials for emerging technologies</i> and <i>Defence Veterans – Supporting transition strategies</i>. This project supports Defence to identify when and how units of competency, skill sets and qualifications can be used to address the skills required in Defence.	In collaboration with the ADF, Public Skills Australia is developing a framework that identifies skills, training, related VET qualifications, units of competency and skill sets to collectively deliver the skills needs for Defence. It is anticipated that the development of this framework will also assist the Defence industry-sector in delivering recommendations from the <i>Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans' Suicide</i>. Defence stakeholders will be consulted on this framework before finalisation and submission.

³⁹ Previously referred to as Development of Training Products for Emerging Skills in the Space Domain.

⁴⁰ Previously referred to as Defence Evolving Skills Requirements – VET System Pathways Framework.

Key Stakeholders

- › Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA), Australian Defence College
- › Defence Joint Capability Group
- › Department of Defence
- › State Training Authorities/Senior Responsible Officer
- › Training Package Assurance Body

Connection to 2026 Strategies

Ministerial Priority 2026

This project will contribute to the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and broader digital transformation in the design and review of qualifications and training products.

Strategic Plan Priorities 2026

Support industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.

Support industry-sectors through high quality training products.

Drivers of Change connection

Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), greater automation and broader digital transformation.

2026 Defence Strategies Connection

Defence micro-credentials for emerging technologies.

- › AUKUS Taskforce
- › Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA), Australian Defence College
- › Defence Joint Capability Group
- › Department of Defence
- › Defence Industry
- › DEWR Defence Skills Taskforce
- › Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance (MISA)
- › Military Workforce Design
- › Relevant Government Departments
- › State/Territory Skills Commissions/Councils
- › State Training Authorities/Senior Responsible Officer

Ministerial Priority 2026

This project will support the embedding of Qualification Reform principles to deliver streamlined, relevant and future-ready qualifications.

Strategic Plan Priorities 2026

Support industry-sectors through high quality training products.

Drivers of Change connections

- › Workforce inclusivity
- › Challenges to workforce productivity

2026 Defence Strategies Connection

- › Defence micro-credentials for emerging technologies
- › Defence Veterans – Supporting transition

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Proposal to Investigate the Development of Pathways for Transitioning Veterans Project	Scoping complete	Undertake scoping on options to support Defence to address Recommendation 83(c) of the <i>Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide</i> . This strategy has been completed and transitioned into the <i>Defence Veterans – Supporting transition strategy</i> .	In collaboration with the ADF, Public Skills Australia undertook initial scoping through desktop research and targeted consultations. Through this scoping it was recommended by Public Skills Australia's Industry Advisory Group that this topic be explored further as part of this workforce insights report. A further workshop with defence stakeholders (including ADF and DoD stakeholders) provided further insight that has been included in this report (refer Workforce Insights theme and Strategy 2).

Key Stakeholders

- › Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA), Australian Defence College
- › Defence Education, Learning and Training Authority (DELTA), Australian Defence College
- › Defence Joint Capability Group
- › Department of Defence
- › Future Skills Organisation
- › State Training Authorities/ Senior Responsible Officer
- › Training Package Assurance Body
- › DEWR Defence Skills Taskforce
- › Military Workforce Design
- › Relevant Government Departments
- › State/Territory Skills Commissions/ Councils

Connection to 2026 Strategies

Ministerial Priority 2026

This project explores opportunities for the national VET system to better support the skills and training needs of Australian Defence Force veterans transitioning into civilian employment, with consideration to the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide* recommendation to increase opportunities for personnel to gain.

Strategic Plan Priorities 2026

Support industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.

Drivers of Change connections

- › Workforce inclusivity
- › Challenges to workforce productivity

2026 Defence Strategies connection

- › Defence Veterans – Supporting transition

Existing Industry-Sector Strategies

Australian Government National Defence: Defence Strategic Review

Department of Defence

2023 – ongoing

The *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review 2023* outlined recommended reforms to Defence's posture and structure. The review provides 62 recommendations across a range of strategic focus areas, including but not limited to workforce, capability, technology, resourcing and logistics. This strategic review preceded the development of the *2024 National Defence Strategy* and update of the *Integrated Investment Program 2024*. It recommended a biennial strategic update through a *National Defence Strategy*, with the *2024 National Defence Strategy* the first iteration of the strategic update. The *Defence Strategic Review* notes that it should be considered in conjunction with the *2024 National Defence Strategy* and the *Integrated Investment Program 2024*.

Initial progress on a range of other recommendation focus areas is described at the Australian Government Transparency Portal.⁴¹ Continued progress against the recommendations is also documented in the *Defence Annual Report 2024-25*.⁴²

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Considered in conjunction with the *National Defence Strategy 2024* and the *Integrated Investment Plan 2024*, which provided detail and context for engagements and consultations.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of Workforce Strategies identified in the *National Defence Strategy 2024* and the *Integrated Investment Program 2024*. Together they provide the framework for Public Skills Australia's Defence projects.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Will provide context and data for the development of initial research for the *Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones* project.

⁴¹ Australian Government, 'Progress since the Defence Strategic Review', Transparency Portal, Australian Government website, 2024, accessed 2 February 2026.

⁴² Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report 2024-25*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2025, pp 166-215.

Australian Government National Defence Strategy 2024

Department of Defence

2024 – ongoing

The *National Defence Strategy* outlines the Government's approach to Australia's National Defence risks. Six priorities are highlighted in the strategy including:

- › Acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines through AUKUS
- › Developing long-range capabilities
- › Improvements to bases
- › Improving the growth and retention of the workforce
- › Lifting Australia's capacity to rapidly translate disruptive new technologies into ADF capability
- › Prioritising international partnerships

An update to the *National Defence Strategy* is due to be delivered by the Department of Defence in 2026.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on Defence's forward strategy, specifically the strategy of deterrence and denial, that informs force design and acquisition priorities that informed consultations with Defence stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › VET System Pathways Framework
- › Defence Space Skills
- › Defence Cyber Skills

Specifically, the *National Defence Strategy 2024* identified both space and cyber skills as key components of Defence's Capability Investment Priorities. Additionally, *Training and skilling reform* was identified as part of the wider Defence reform agenda, which directly informed the design and agenda for the *VET System Pathways Framework*.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones and its focus on UAS and drones will be informed by the *Capability Investment Priorities: Priorities for the integrated, focused force* section of the strategy.

Support transition of Defence Veterans to civilian workforce will be informed by the insights of the *People: Culture* section of this strategy.

Australian Government 2024 Defence Workforce Plan

Department of Defence

2024 – 2034

The *2024 Defence Workforce Plan* outlines Australia's strategy to expand and enhance the ADF and APS workforce, aiming to grow the permanent ADF workforce to 69,000 by the early 2030s and the combined ADF and APS workforce to around 100,000 by 2040. Key initiatives include extending the Continuation Bonus, increasing Operational Reserves, improving mental health support and aligning workforce growth with capability needs across various domains. The plan also emphasises cultural improvements and significant financial investments, with \$5.7 billion allocated over the next four years and \$50.3 billion over the next decade.

Since its release Defence has recorded the largest recruitment surge for the ADF in August 2025. Additionally in February 2026 new roles in the Space domain were announced for direct entry into the ADF.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on workforce priorities in consultations with Defence stakeholders and set clear workforce planning expectations.

2025 Workforce Strategies

The *VET System Pathways Framework* was informed by *Strategic Task 5 – Development and Transformation of the Defence Workforce*, which identified Defence education and training as core components of workforce attraction and enhancement.

Both space and cyber capabilities are identified in Chapter 2: Delivering an Integrated, Focused Force (point 2.17) as critical skillsets pivotal to Defence's situational awareness and warfighting capabilities.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Support transition of Defence Veterans to civilian workforce will be informed by *Strategic Task 8: Support to Defence Personnel, ADF Families and Transitioning Personnel*.

Australian Government Defence Industry Development Strategy

Department of Defence

2024 – ongoing

The *Defence Industry Development Strategy* outlines Australia's plan to build a sovereign Defence industrial base to enhance national security and military preparedness. It emphasises the need for a robust industrial structure, identifies seven Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities (SDIPs) and details initiatives for industry growth, workforce development, innovation and exports. The strategy also highlights the importance of security measures to protect sensitive technologies and information.

Since its release there have been several announcements for initiatives that support the SDIPs including:

- › A total \$30 billion investment in the Osborne Shipyard in South Australia to support construction of the AUKUS submarines
- › \$17 million has been allocated to 44 Australian businesses in the latest rounds of the Defence Industry Development Grants (DIDG) program in January 2026
- › \$1.4 billion to advance collaborative air capabilities through the MQ-28A Ghost Bat
- › Beginning of production for Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) missiles in December 2025 at a new factory in Port Wakefield, South Australia.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on sovereign capability priorities in consultations with Defence stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Chapter 8 – Workforce of the strategy described building a skilled and capable workforce as being at the core of Defence's efforts to modernise its capabilities and informed the development of the *VET System Pathways Framework*.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones will be informed by *Sovereign Defence Industrial Priority 5: Development and integration of autonomous systems*.

Australian Government Integrated Investment Program

Department of Defence

2024 – ongoing

The *Integrated Investment Program* outlines the Defence capability investment priorities, including, but not limited to: Undersea Warfare, Maritime capabilities, Space and Cyber, Targeting and Long-Range Strike and Missile Defence. The *Integrated Investment Program* includes developing a skilled workforce in identified investment areas.

Since the release of this Strategy, the Minister of Defence announced in December 2025 the establishment of the Defence Delivery Agency. This new agency will integrate three existing capability delivery groups:

- › Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group
- › Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group
- › Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group

The aim of this agency is aimed at enabling coordinated and holistic delivery of defence capability and growing sovereign defence industrial base.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on capability acquisition priorities and the skills requirements to deploy them in consultations with Defence stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › VET System Pathways Framework
- › Defence Space Skills
- › Defence Cyber Skills

Chapter 1: Investing in the National Defence Strategy outlined that investing in a highly skilled workforce is critical to successfully achieving its workforce strategy. This includes "skilling initiatives" related to growing and attracting the required workforce which informed all three strategies.

Additionally, *Chapter 6: Space and Cyber* is dedicated to describing Defence's investment commitment to enhancing its capabilities in both areas and provided foundational work for Public Skills Australia's strategies in this area.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones and its focus on UAS and drones will be informed by the *Chapter 8: Expeditionary Air Operations: Uncrewed air systems* investment area.

Australian Government Response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Australian Government

2024 – ongoing

The Australian Government Response to the Final Report of the *Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide* commits to addressing systemic challenges and risk factors related to suicide among current and former ADF personnel, agreeing to most of the Royal Commission's 122 recommendations.

Specific to Public Skills Australia, Recommendation 83 describes the requirement for Defence “to increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education.”

The Reform Management Plan was approved by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Implementation Program Board on 12 December 2025.

In December 2025 it was announced that 32 recommendations will be implemented by the end of 2025, with work underway on the remainder of the recommendation. For initiatives across Defence and State/Territory governments in support of Veterans transitioning out of defence careers refer Appendix A.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

This document outlines critical priorities for Defence and provided substantial material and recommendations to consult on through Defence engagements.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the:

- › development of VET System Pathways Framework
- › completion of Scoping Proposal to Investigate the Development of Pathways for Transitioning Veterans

Specifically, both the VET System Pathways Framework and Scoping Proposal were guided by Recommendation 83(c) that describes the need for expansion of Defence's education and training programs.

2026 Workforce Strategies

This report will inform Public Skills Australia's research into *Support transition of Defence Veterans to civilian workforce*, which proposes to increase opportunities for ADF members to gain civilian qualifications by expanding existing Defence training courses.

2024 Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan

Department of Defence

2024 – ongoing

This plan sets out the activities required to uplift the ADF's maritime capability. This includes enabling:

- › conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines
- › enhanced lethality surface combatants
- › minor war vessels and Army landing craft

Importantly, this plan describes Australia's commitment to continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment.

In February 2027 the Prime Minister announced a total \$30 billion investment in the Osborne Shipyard in South Australia to support construction of the AUKUS submarines.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided guidance on priorities for enabling the AUKUS work program in consultations with Jobs and Skills Australia, the Australian Submarine Organisation and Defence stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of the *Defence Capability – VET System Pathways Framework Project*. Specifically, *Chapter 3: Workforce* identifies the need for the Vocational Education and Training system to support the upskilling of Defence's shipbuilding and submarine workforce.

Defence Digital Strategy and Roadmap 2025

Department of Defence

2025 – 2028

The *Defence Digital Strategy and Roadmap* document provides comprehensive guidance on Defence's plan to stay well positioned in the digital age. This strategy sets out the following three priorities:

- › Best-in-class APS/ADF workforce
- › Best-in-class global platforms
- › Best-in-class sovereign capabilities

Collectively, this strategy ensures Defence enhances its ICT capabilities to deliver critical digital functions.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

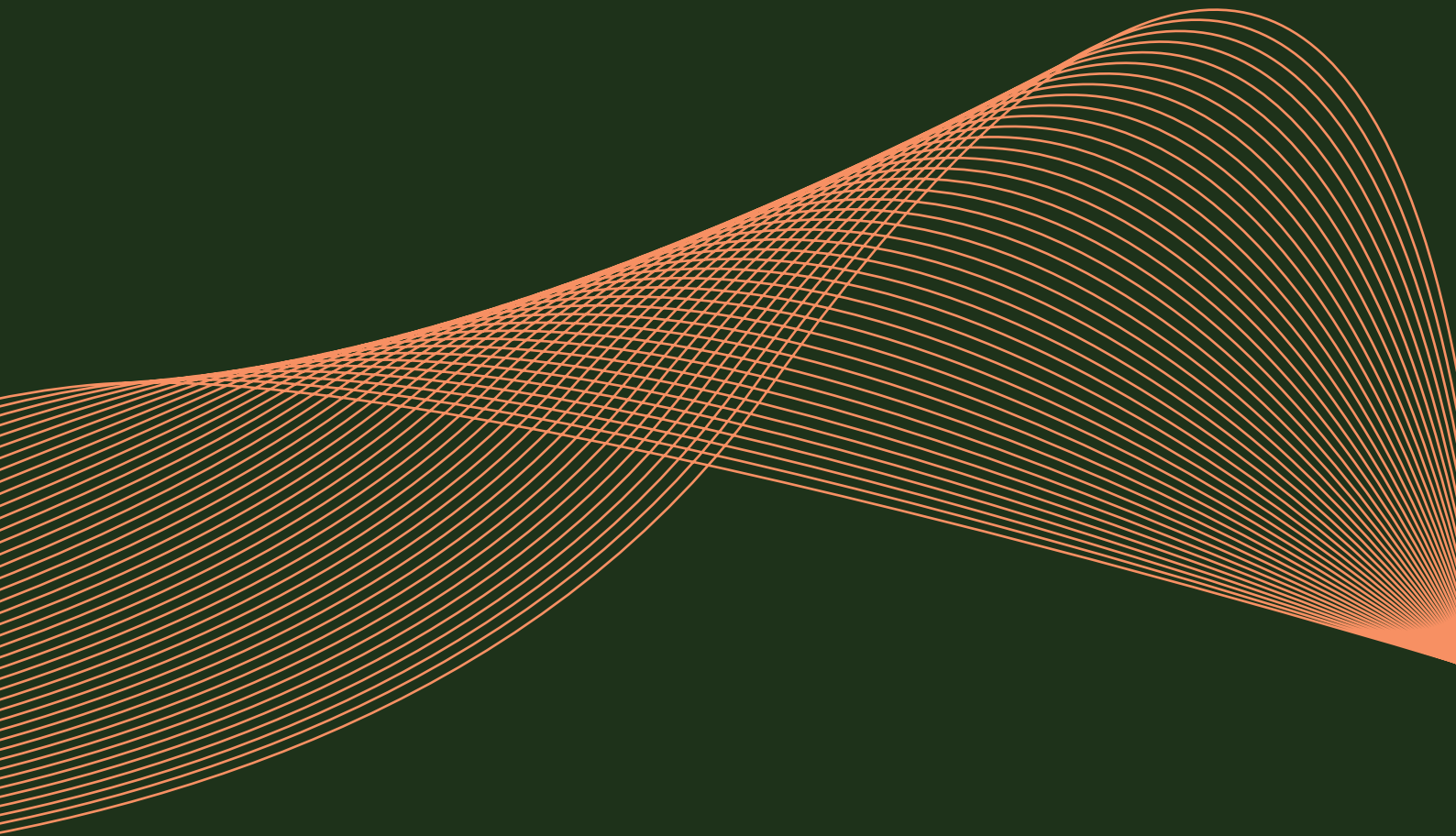
Consultation and engagement

This will inform continued consultations with Defence stakeholders as the Defence Cyber Skills strategy progresses.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed development and progression of *Defence Cyber Skill Set Project*. Specifically, the strategy describes ICT capabilities as being at the core of its commitment to becoming a "best-in-class workforce", maintaining "best-in-class global platforms" and possessing "best-in-class sovereign capabilities".

Fire and Emergency Services



Industry-Sector Overview

Australia's Fire and Emergency Services are critical to ensure protection of life and property and public safety. Working across inland waterways and coastline, to national parks and alpine regions, and throughout regional, rural and remote centres as well as metropolitan cities, these services protect Australian lives, property and the environment.

Depending on the state or territory, a range of Fire and Emergency Services organisations, government departments, public entities and private companies collaborate to deliver a range of emergency management services. The Fire and Emergency Services workforce is made up of both career personnel and volunteers. Fire and Emergency Services workforces comprise three primary services, including:



The following datapoints were identified through this Industry Overview for the Fire and Emergency Services workforces:

- **Demand for services:** Demand for both firefighter and state and territory emergency services (SES) increased by 7.6 per cent from 488,242 (total combined emergency response activities) in 2019-20 to 525,317 in 2023-24,⁴³ while 40 major emergency incidents were documented from July 2024 to June 2025 (an increase from 30 the previous year).⁴⁴
- **Career firefighters and emergency services employees:** In the 20 years from August 2005 to August 2025, the career Fire and Emergency Services occupation (ANZSCO 4412) experienced a 65.9 per cent growth, outpacing the wider job market at 48.4 per cent.⁴⁵ This is supported by growth in student enrolments from 2019 to 2024 in the two core qualifications required for firefighters. Similarly, the total career operational and support emergency services personnel have experienced year-on-year increases since 2019-20.⁴⁶

⁴³ Productivity Commission, [Emergency services for fire and other events](#) – Table 9A.6 and 9A.7, [data set], Productivity Commission, 2025, accessed 7 January 2026.

⁴⁴ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), [Major Incidents Report 2024-25](#), Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2025.

⁴⁵ ABS, [November 2025, Detailed Labour Force Survey \(Table EQ08\)](#), ABS, Data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia.

⁴⁶ Productivity Commission, [Emergency services for fire and other events](#) – Table 9A.5, [data set], Productivity Commission, 2026, accessed 24 February 2026.

While data indicates the growth, the following occupations were assessed as being *'in shortage'* since 2025:

Firefighter occupation (OSCA 451232)
in New South Wales

Emergency Services Officer occupation (OSCA 451231)
in New South Wales and South Australia⁴⁷

Volunteer services: Compared to career firefighting, total volunteer firefighter numbers (including support staff) decreased by nearly 12,000 volunteers from 2019-20 to 2024-25.⁴⁸ Similarly, SES has largely experienced year-on-year declines in total volunteers since 2019-20, in line with wider decline in volunteerism trends.⁴⁹

Surf Life Saving: Across 2024-2025, Surf Life Saving provided a combined total of 1.95 million hours of lifesaving patrol activity, with New South Wales and Queensland accounting for more than 70 per cent of total hours served.⁵⁰ This enabled a combined total of 2.19 million preventative actions, along with 65,942 administrations of first aid and 8,207 rescues across both volunteer and career surf lifesavers.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), 2025 Occupation Shortage List, JSA, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 23 February 2026.

⁴⁸ Productivity Commission, Emergency services for fire and other events – Table 9A.4, [data set], Productivity Commission, 2026, accessed 24 February 2026.

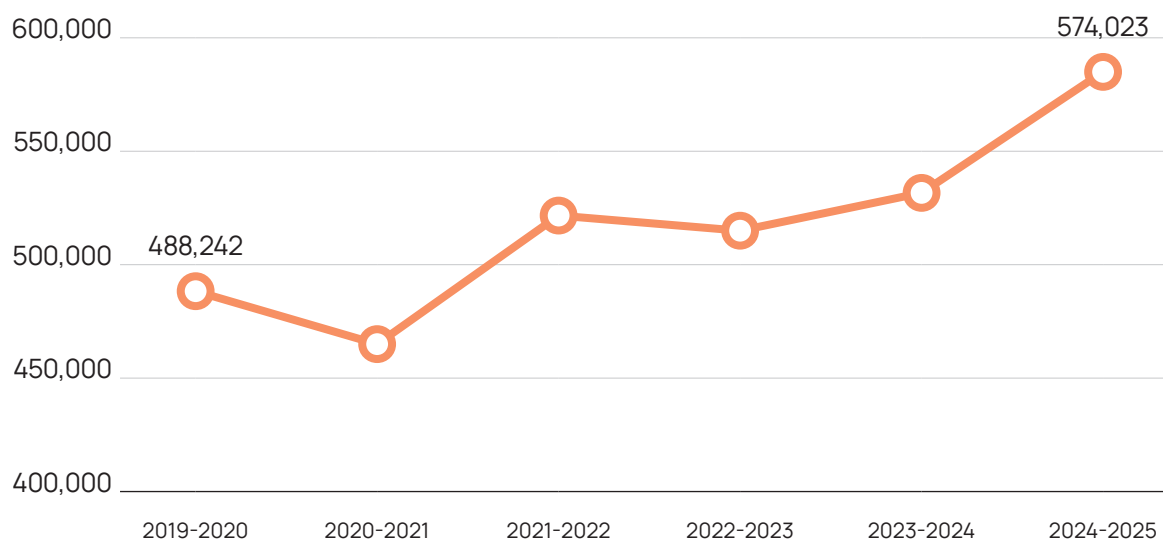
⁴⁹ Volunteering Australia, Key volunteering statistics in Australia, Volunteering Australia, 2025.

⁵⁰ Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), 2024/25 Annual Report, SLSA, 2025, p 118.

⁵¹ Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), 2024/25 Annual Report, SLSA, 2025, p 118.

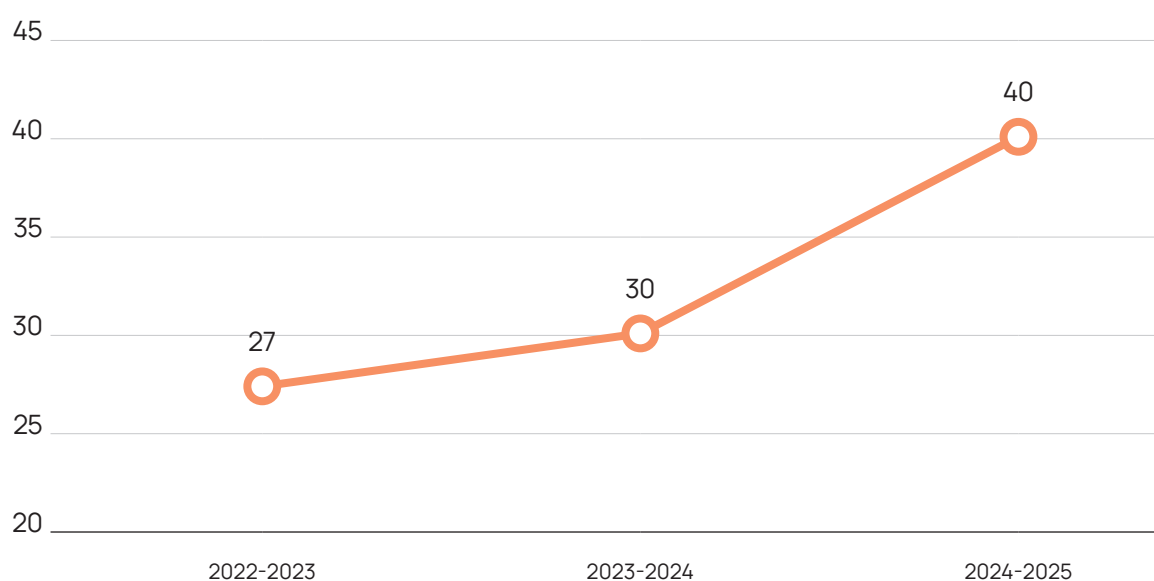
Increasing Demand

Combined Total Yearly Fire and Other Emergency Incidents Responded to by Fire and Emergency Services Organisations Across Australia



Source: Productivity Commission, [Emergency services for fire and other events](#) – Table 9A.6 and Table 9A.7, 2026

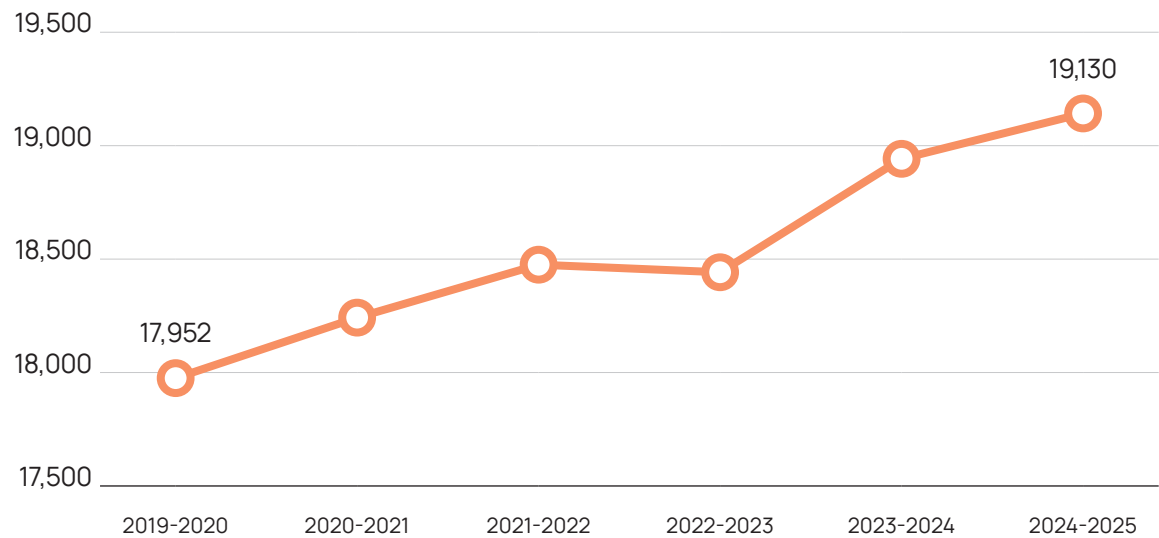
Documented Major Emergency Incidents Australia



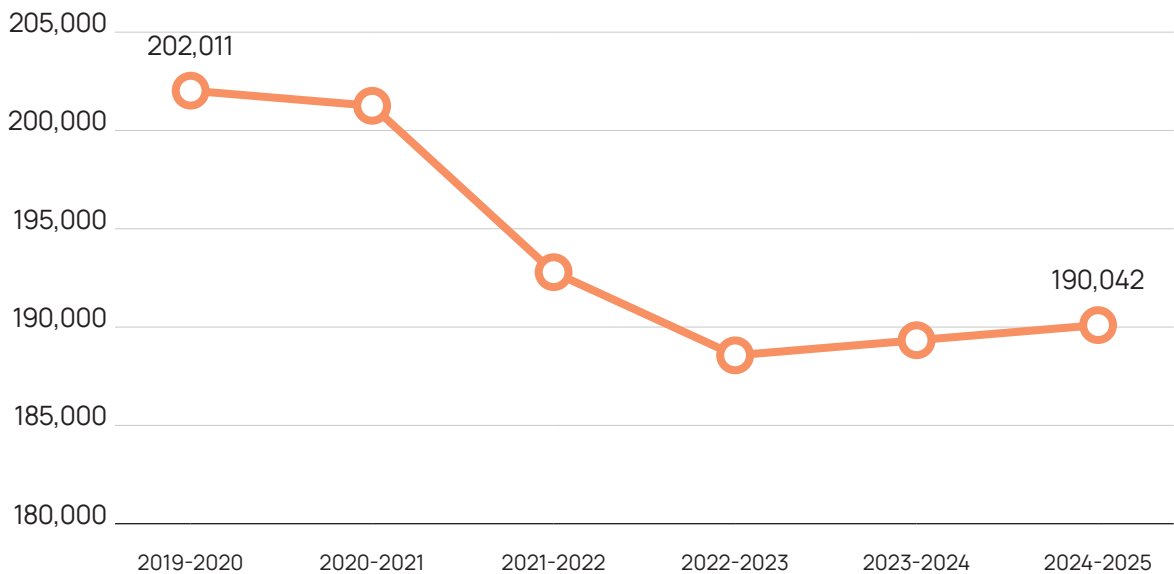
Source: Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), [Major Incidents Report 2024-25](#), 2025

Career and Volunteer Workforces

Career Firefighters (headcount)

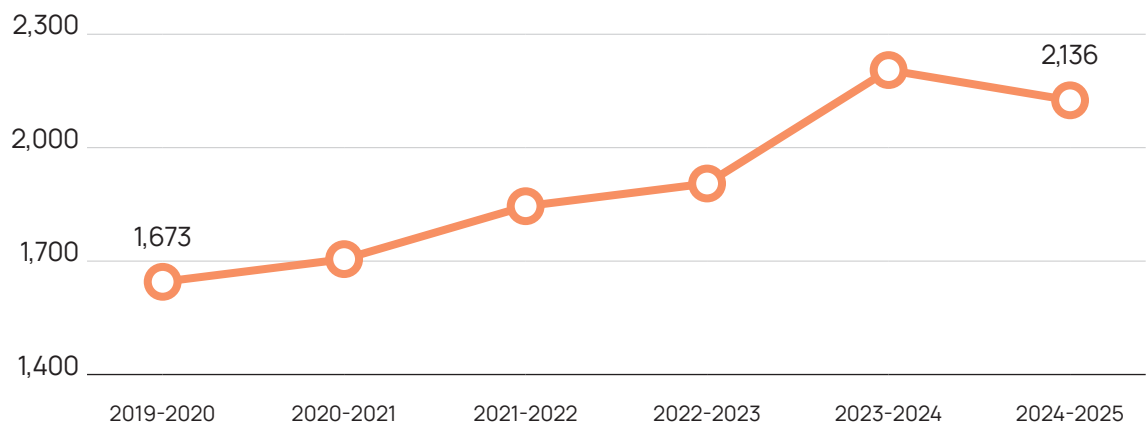


Total Fire Volunteers (headcount)

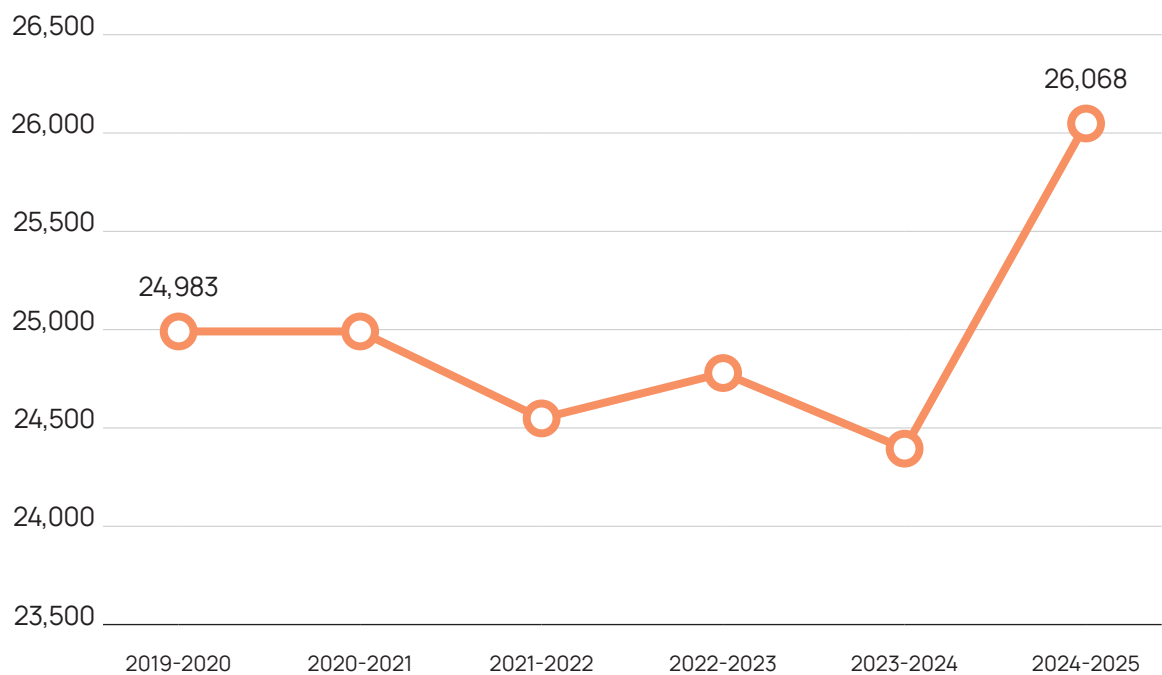


Despite relative increases in career Firefighter and operational SES members from 2019-20 to 2024-25, in absolute terms, the increases in career employees are heavily negated by the decreases experienced in volunteer cohorts. Collectively, in the five years from 2019-2020, a total of 1,130 career Firefighters and SES members were added to Australia’s emergency response capability, while a total of 10,336 volunteers were lost.

Career Operational SES Employees (FTE)



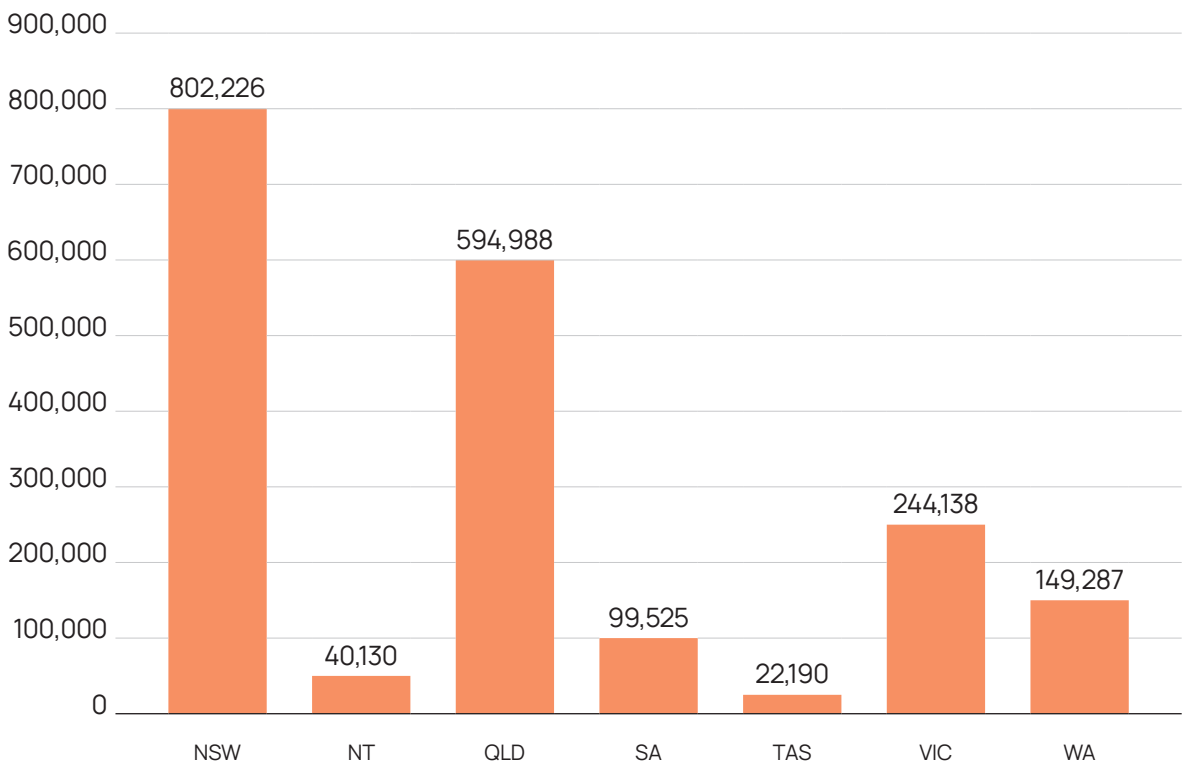
Total SES Volunteers (FTE)



Career and Volunteer Workforces Data Source: Productivity Commission, Emergency services for fire and other events – Table 9A.4 and 9A.5, 2026

Surf Life Saving

Total Patrolling Hours of Surf Lifesavers in 2024/25 by State/Territory



Source: Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), [2024/25 Annual Report](#), 2025

Total Patrolling Hours of Career and Volunteer Surf Lifesavers in 2024-25



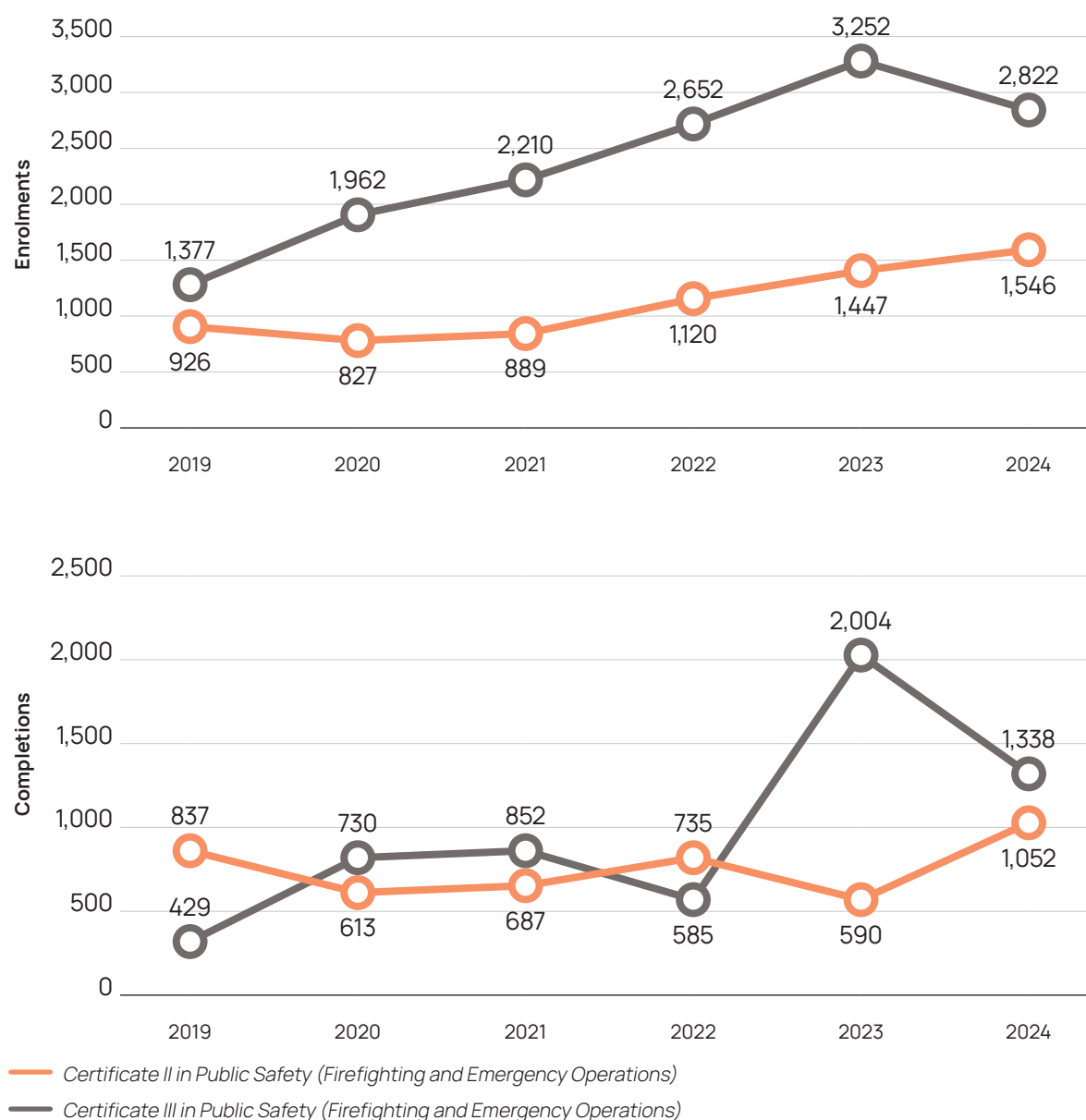
Source: Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), [2024/25 Annual Report](#), 2025



**30,000 km
of coastline**
11,000 individual beaches
(316 patrolled beaches)

Industry Profile

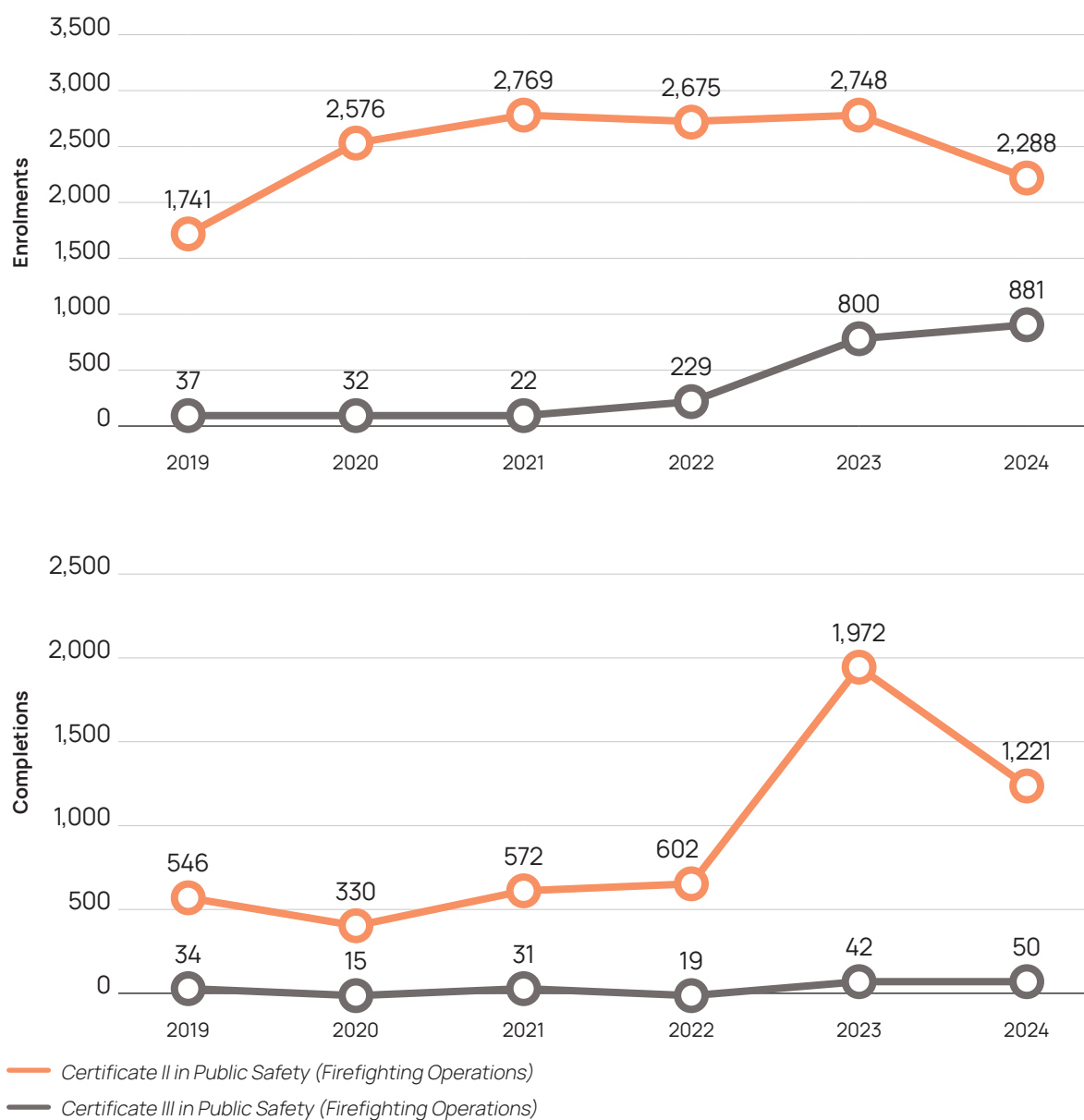
Yearly Student Enrolments and Completions for Primary Firefighter Recruit Qualifications (Career and Volunteer)⁵²



Source: NCVET, [Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS](#), 2026

⁵² It should be noted that for several Fire and Emergency Services organisations recruit training focuses on completions of Units of Competency rather than full qualifications.

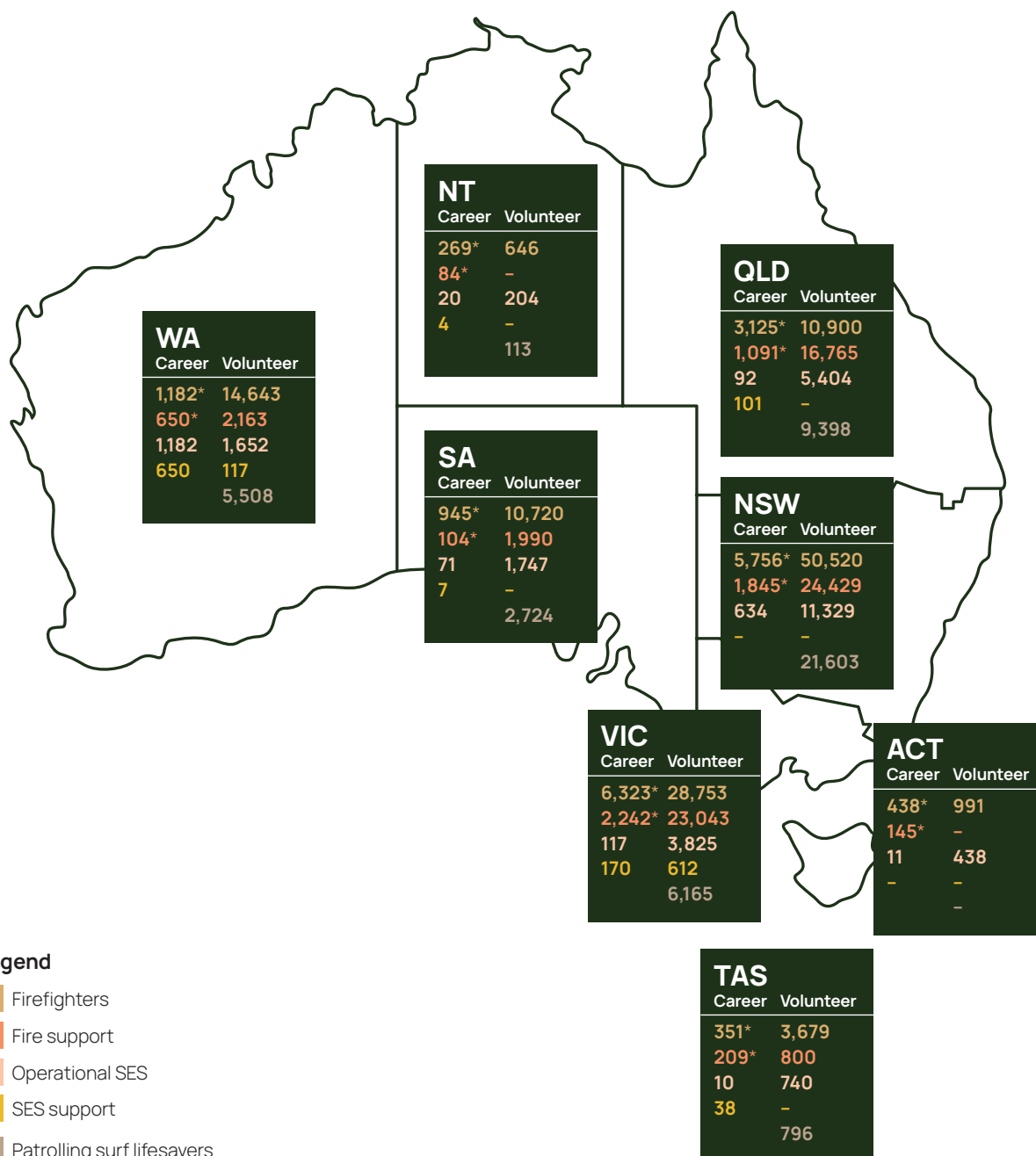
Yearly Student Enrolments and Completions for Primary Firefighter Recruit Qualifications (Career and Volunteer)⁵²



Source: NCVET, [Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS](#), 2026

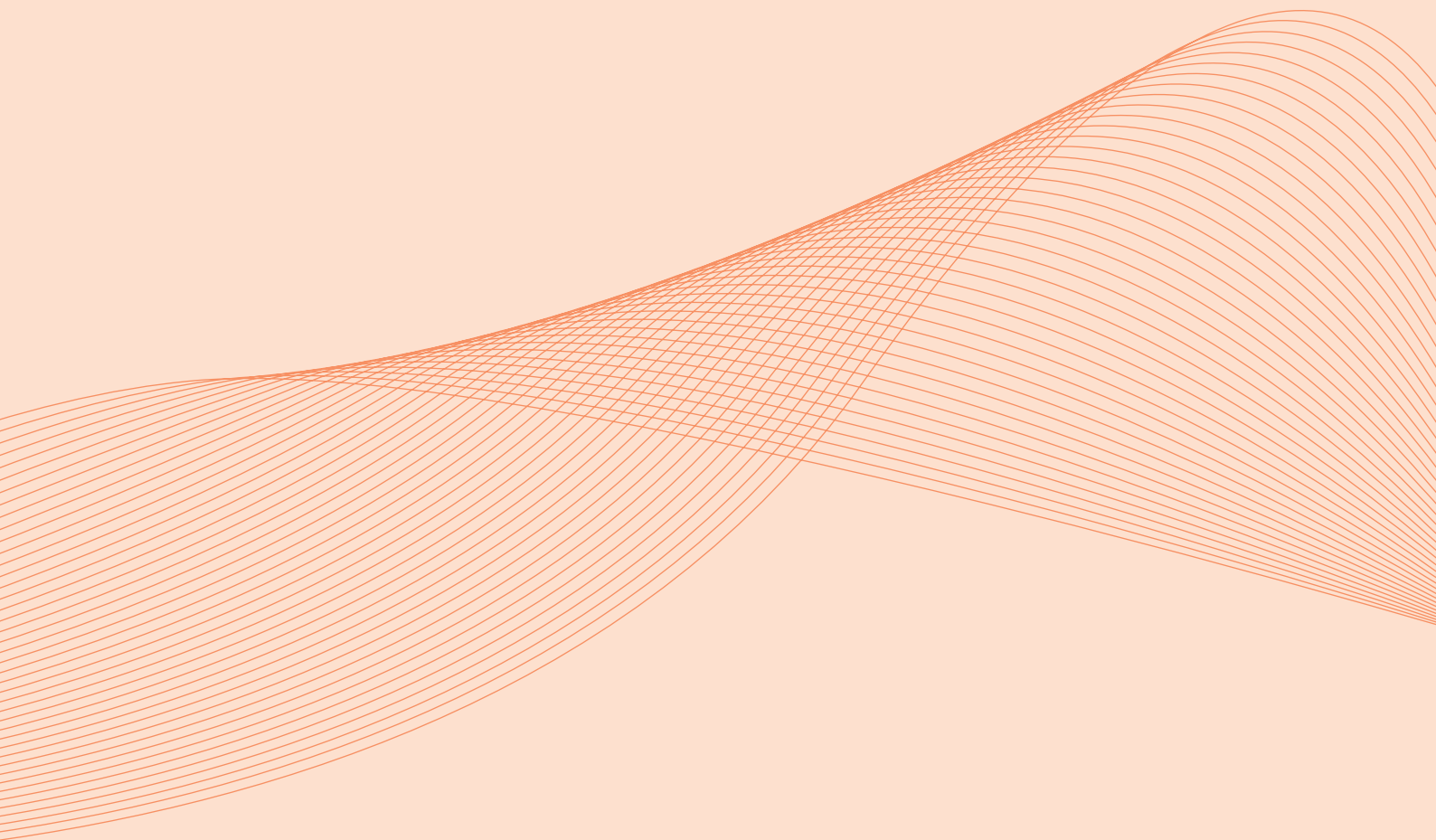
Fire and Emergency Services

Workforce by Jurisdiction

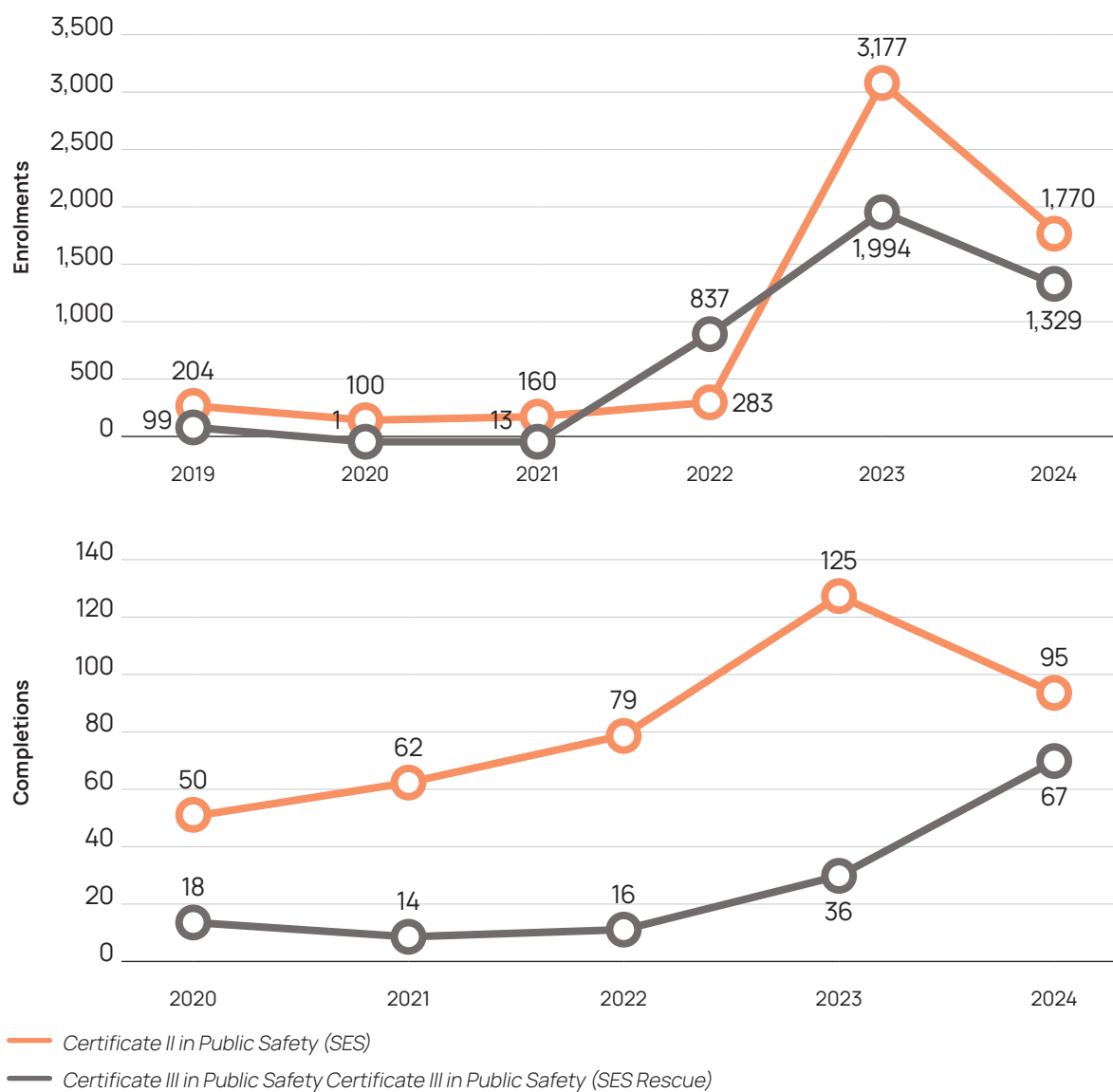


Data are headcount except where * indicates full-time equivalent

Source: Report on Government Services, Emergency Services for fire and other events, 2026; Surf Life Saving Australia, 2024/25 Annual Report, 2025

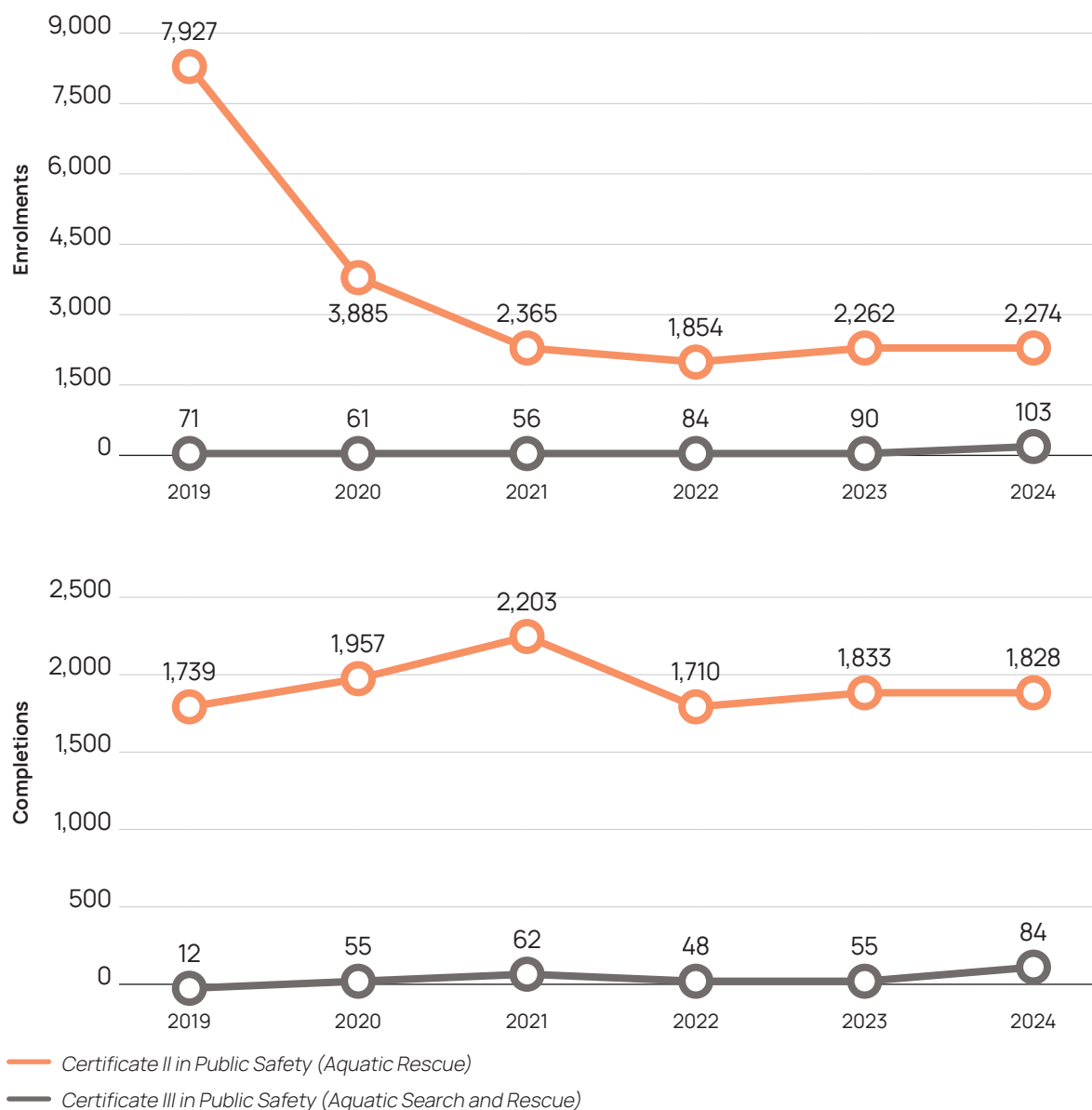


Yearly Student Enrolments and Completions for SES Qualifications



Source: NCVER, [Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS](#), 2026

Yearly Student Enrolments and Completions for Surf Life Saving Qualifications



Source: NCVET, [Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS](#), 2026

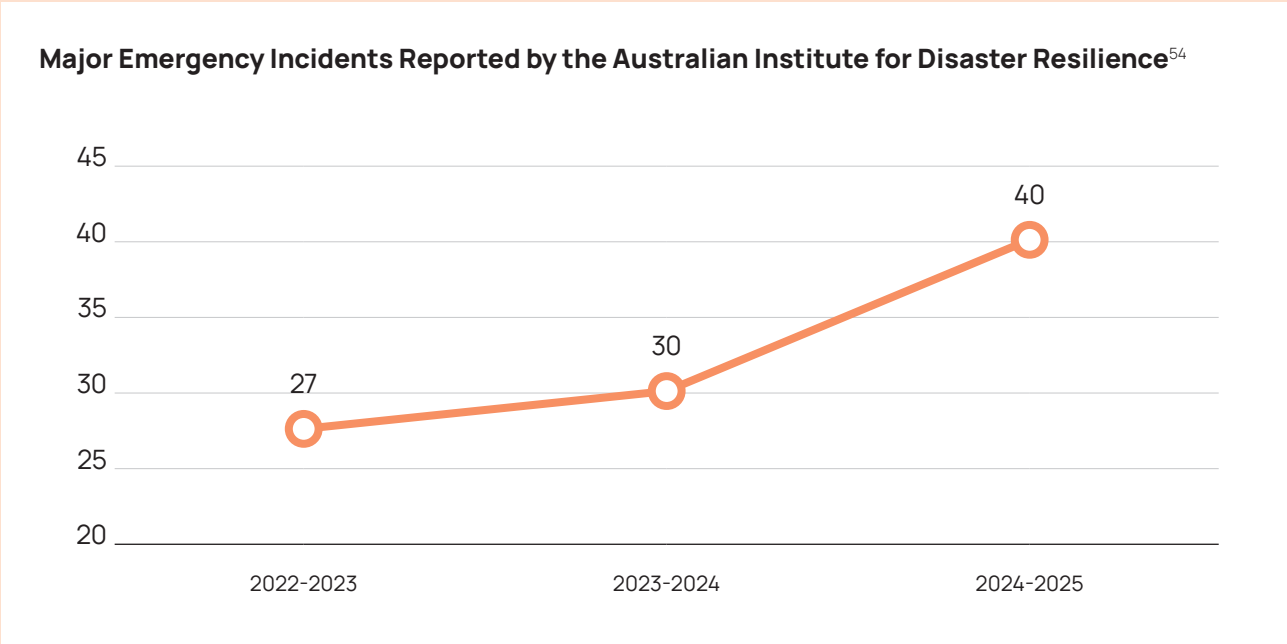
Workforce Insights

This Report has identified the following themes and industry insights relating to the Fire and Emergency Services Workforce:

Theme	Industry Insights
1. Disaster Recovery	Specialist disaster recovery functions are operationally focused, a more contemporary approach now requires capabilities related to the unique aspects of working with communities that may be grieving or socially, emotionally and financially impacted. Challenges in access to nationally accredited disaster recovery training products leads to inconsistencies in recovery outcomes, reduced community trust and limits the ability of communities to rebuild from the impacts of disasters. Australia is experiencing a critical challenge in maintaining capability to use fire effectively in the landscape, particularly for complex prescribed burning and backburning during bushfire suppression.
2. Surf Life Saving First Aid	The HLTAID010 unit of competency is an entry-level first aid training product that is no longer meeting the operational needs for volunteer surf lifesavers.
3. Hazardous Materials	Incidents involving hazardous materials are becoming increasingly important while current training may be limiting in some Fire and Emergency Services organisations ability to deliver this type of service.

1. Disaster Recovery

From July 2024 to June 2025, the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience *Major Incidents Report* documented 40 major emergency incidents, spanning fires, floods, storms, tropical cyclones, health outbreaks, technology failures and repatriations from international conflict zones.⁵³ This is an increase from both the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years as detailed below:



Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders noted that at the time of the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements in 2020* (Royal Commission in 2020), specialist disaster recovery skills and functions were identified as different to those required in emergency management. Following the Royal Commission in 2020, a suite of nationally accredited training products related to disaster recovery were developed.⁵⁵ Facilitated through the *National Recovery Training Program*,⁵⁶ newly developed disaster recovery training products included one qualification, nine skill sets and four units of competency (refer *Appendix B – Disaster recovery training products from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements*).

⁵³ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), *'Major Incidents Report 2024-25'*, Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2025.

⁵⁴ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), *'Major Incidents Report 2022-23'*, Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2023; AIDR, *'Major Incidents Report 2023-24'*, Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2024; AIDR, *'Major Incidents Report 2024-25'*, Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2025.

⁵⁵ M Biskin, *'Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements' (Report)*, Australian Government, 2020, page 453.

⁵⁶ Transparency Portal, *'National Recovery and Resilience Organisation Annual Report 2021-22'*, Australian Government, 2022, accessed 13 December 2025.

Collectively, these training products are targeted at individuals without emergency service backgrounds, including local community members, social service providers, local government personnel, spontaneous volunteers or individuals from government organisations tasked with recovery coordination.⁵⁷

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Specialist disaster recovery functions are operationally focused, a more contemporary approach now requires capabilities related to the unique aspects of working with communities that may be grieving or socially, emotionally and financially impacted.

Despite the relevance and importance of disaster recovery training, there are limited TAFEs and RTOs equipped to deliver this training. For example:

- › seven of the nine newly developed skill sets are not on scope for any RTO
- › only one RTO has the qualification and four associated units of competency on scope
- › only five RTOs have the *PUASS00098 Manage a Recovery Centre* skill set on scope.⁵⁸

Additionally, there have been no enrolment or completion data for all 14 recovery training products since their release in 2022.⁵⁹

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Challenges in access to nationally accredited disaster recovery training products leads to inconsistencies in recovery outcomes, reduced community trust and limits the ability of communities to rebuild from the impacts of disasters.

⁵⁷ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, 'Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection: Community Recovery', Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2018, page 6-7.

⁵⁸ Training.gov.au, 'Training package – PUA Public Safety', Australian Government, 2025, accessed 8 January 2026.

⁵⁹ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), 'Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS', [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 13 December 2025.

As described in the *National Principles for Disaster Recovery*, community involvement in disaster recovery activities is critical for ensuring long-term disaster recovery success and community resilience.⁶⁰ Consequently, access to relevant and contemporary disaster recovery training is required to enable community, local government, and State, Territory and federal government personnel and volunteers to adequately support communities in times of disaster.

Connected to this is the role of prescribed burning in decreasing the scale of recovery efforts required after a major fire. Prescribed burning reduces fuel hazards and can assist the success of suppression activities and reduce the intensity, extent and impacts of subsequent bushfires. At the same time, insights gained during disaster recovery, such as patterns of fire behaviour, infrastructure vulnerability and ecological impacts can directly inform the planning and prioritisation of prescribed burns.⁶¹

However, capability in the use of prescribed burning is declining. Changes in rural land use, primary industries and forest management, together with shifting policies for fire, land management, emergency services and the environment at different levels of government have contributed to the challenges of maintaining skills.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Australia is experiencing a critical challenge in maintaining capability to use fire effectively in the landscape, particularly for complex prescribed burning and backburning during bushfire suppression.

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) in conjunction with the Forest Fire Management Group developed a series of documents including principles, frameworks and guidelines as part of the National Burning Project. These documents are aimed at developing nationally consistent approaches to the use of prescribed burning by the Fire and Emergency Services industry-sector. This prescribed burning capability is supported by five units of competency in the *PUA Public Safety Training Package*.⁶²

⁶⁰ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), *National Principles for Disaster Recovery*, National Emergency Management Agency, AIDR, n.d., accessed 13 December 2025.

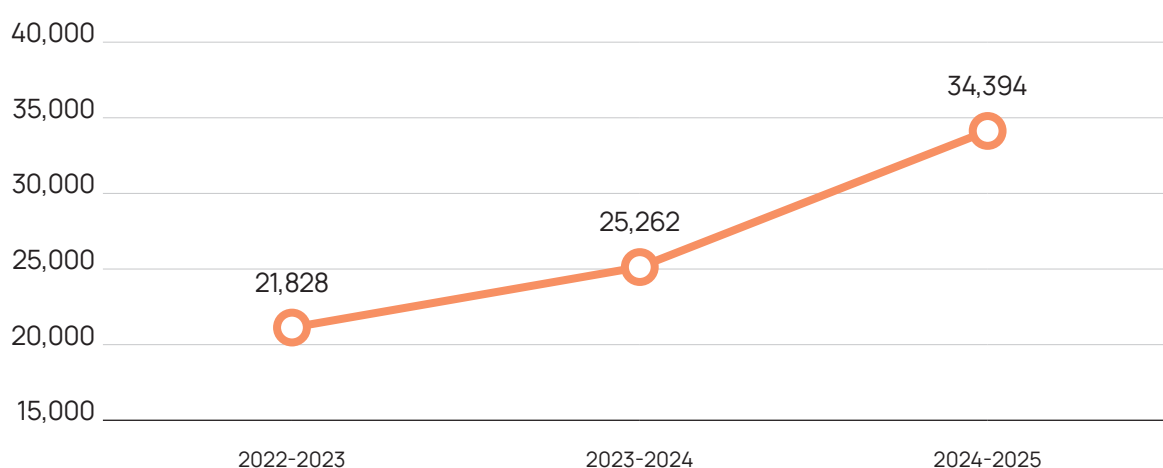
⁶¹ Prescribed Burning Centre of Excellence, National Position on Prescribed Burning, Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), 2021.

⁶² PUAFIR201 Assist with prescribed burning; PUAFIR402 Conduct simple prescribed burns; PUAFIR406 Develop simple prescribed burn plans; PUAFIR506 Conduct complex prescribed burns; PUAFIR515 Develop complex prescribed burn plans.

2. Surf Life Saving First Aid

In 2024-25, volunteer surf lifesavers administered six times more first aid treatments compared to rescue operations. The number of yearly first aid treatments administered has also been increasing year-on-year since 2022-23.⁶³ This highlights a distinct operational capability requirement for volunteers. Skilling of volunteer surf lifesavers is provided through the *PUA20119 Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)*.

First Aid Treatments Administered by Surf Lifesavers⁶⁰



The importance of this qualification is strongly supported by its high utilisation with more than 1,500 completions per year since 2020.⁶⁴ The principal first aid unit of competency in this qualification is *HLTAID010 Provide Basic Emergency Life Support*. Recent consultation with industry stakeholders identified that this unit of competency is not meeting the increasing first aid requirements of Surf Life Saving.

Stakeholders identified that the *HLTAID011 Provide First Aid* unit of competency is considered a more complete resource for providing the increasing first aid skills demands for volunteer surf lifesavers. The differences between the training products are the range of medical conditions and injuries trained to be treated.

⁶³ Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), *2022/23 Annual Report*, SLSA, 2023, p 100; SLSA, *2023/24 Annual Report*, SLSA, 2024, p 108; SLSA, *2024/25 Annual Report*, SLSA, 2025, p 115.

⁶⁴ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *Total VET students and courses 2024: DataBuilder*, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 17 December 2025.

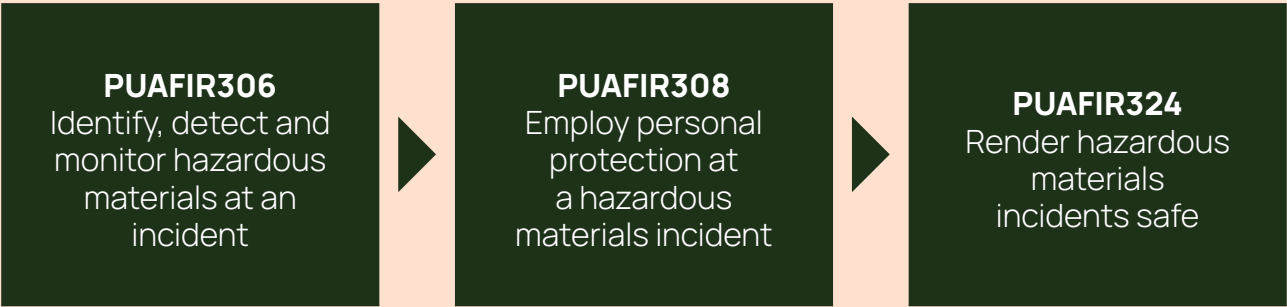
INDUSTRY INSIGHT

The HLTAID010 unit of competency is an entry-level first aid training product that is no longer meeting the operational requirements for volunteer surf lifesavers.

	HLTAID010 Provide Basic Emergency Life Support	HLTAID011 Provide First Aid
Medical conditions and injuries covered	> allergic reaction > anaphylaxis > asthma > non-life-threatening and life-threatening bleeding > cardiac conditions, including chest pain > choking > shock > stroke	All conditions in HLTAID010 plus: > drowning > envenomation – all current treatments > eye injuries and diabetes > fractures, dislocations, strains and sprains > head, neck and spinal injuries > hypothermia and hyperthermia > minor wounds and nosebleeds > poisoning and burns

3. Hazardous Materials

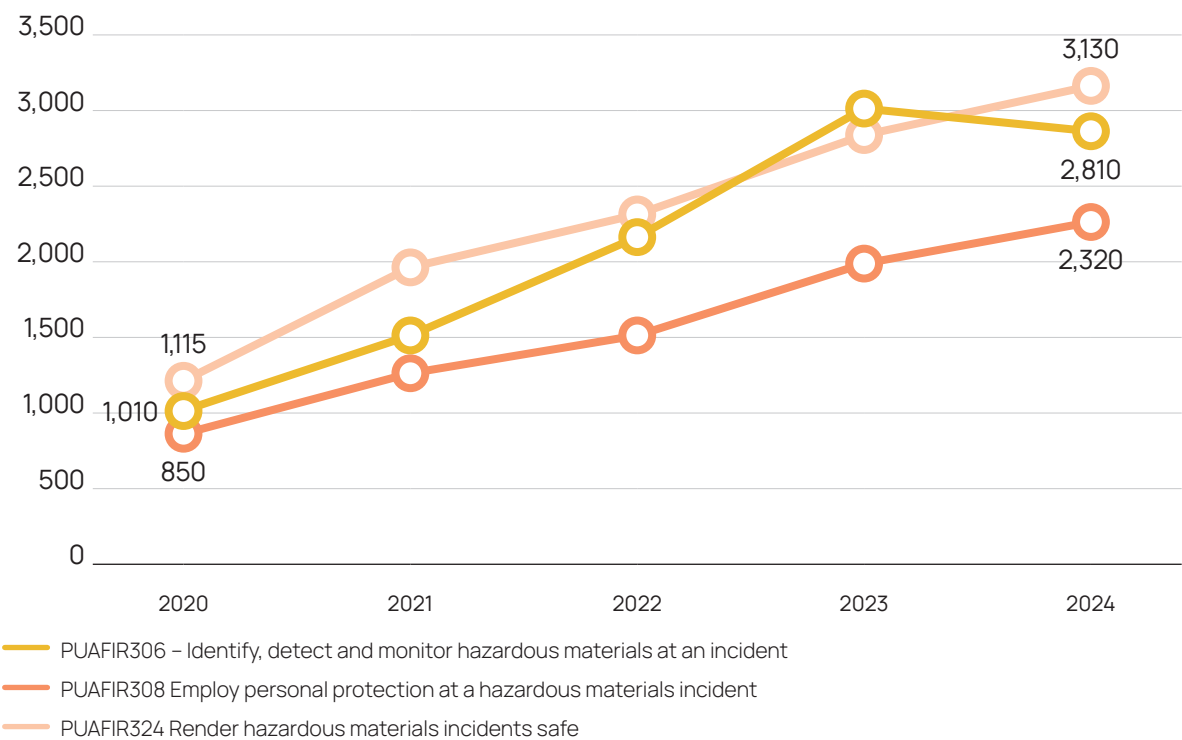
Each year, firefighting organisations around Australia respond to a range of emergency incidents. In 2024-25, this included, but was not limited to, 11,982 incidents relating to hazardous materials.⁶⁵ Specific to responding to hazardous materials incidents, training is enabled through three units of competency in the *PUA Public Safety Training Package*:



⁶⁵ Productivity Commission, [Emergency services for fire and other events](#) – Table 9A.6 [data set], Productivity Commission, 2026, accessed 17 February 2026.

The importance of these three units of competency is supported by annual enrolment data, with all three products having high use rates since 2020:

Yearly Enrolments for all Three Hazardous Materials Units of Competency since 2020



Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2024: DataBuilder, [subject enrolments, subject data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 17 December 2025.

Due to evolving technology and access to different equipment across organisations, stakeholders indicated that some aspects of *PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident* may require updating. Specifically, this unit of competency may require an update related to the use of gas detection equipment and certain personal protective equipment (PPE) and personal protective clothing (PPC), which, as a prerequisite unit, may limit access to other training units.

In its current form this unit of competency excludes some firefighting organisations that either use different equipment or do not have access to specific equipment detailed in the unit of competency.

Additionally, PUAFIR306 is a pre-requisite unit of competency in *PUASAR025 Undertake confined space rescue* – a highly utilised unit of competency across both the Mining and Public Safety industries.⁶⁶ This unit of competency is also utilised across all states and territories, with 8,871 subject enrolments in 2024 alone.

Some industry-sector representatives expressed challenges with some of the prescriptive requirements in the units of competency that may impact some agencies being able to deliver and award these qualifications. Further to this, some terminology and assessment conditions were identified as potential limiting factors in training employees in these units of competency.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

While response to incidents involving hazardous materials is becoming increasingly important, the specificity of equipment requirements in current training may be limiting access by Fire and Emergency Services organisations to other training units, impacting national response capabilities.

Recent consultation with stakeholders highlighted the importance of the link between the two units of competency and advise that any updates to this hazardous materials unit of competency must carefully consider any potential downstream impacts on other training products.

Further consensus must be built to ensure any proposed training solutions meet the needs of all industry representatives, including ensuring that employee organisations are supportive of any proposed alternatives.

⁶⁶ Training.gov.au, 'Unit of competency – PUASAR025 Undertake confined space rescue', Australian Government, 2025, accessed 13 January 2026.

Fire and Emergency Services Workforce Strategies

Proposed Strategies 2026

Public Skills Australia proposes the following strategies to aligned to the workforce insights identified to support Fire and Emergency Services:

- 1 Support uptake of disaster recovery training products
(Refer Appendix B for list of training products)

Workforce Insight: Disaster Recovery

JSC Function: Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring

Objective: Strengthen capabilities of disaster recovery for Fire and Emergency Services and Government personnel by promoting the uptake of disaster recovery training products.

Approach: Develop and implement a promotion plan for disaster recovery products among TAFEs and RTOs.

Deliverable:

- > Promotion Plan
- > Presentation of promotions to RTO, TAFE and stakeholders
- > Report on outcomes of engagement

Key Stakeholders

- > AFAC
- > Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience
- > Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
- > National Emergency Management Agency
- > TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)
- > Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association (ERTOA)

Impact: Capability uplift across Fire and Emergency Services and Government personnel through increased uptake of nationally consistent disaster recovery training.

Anticipated timing: 18-month project

2

Review first aid units of competency for Surf Life Saving in the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)

Workforce Insight: Surf Life Saving First Aid

JSC Function: Training Product Development

Objective: Ensure the *Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)* reflects the first aid requirements of Surf Life Saving.

Approach: This strategy will collaborate with Surf Life Saving Australia and state/territory Surf Life Saving organisations to compare the level of current first aid training units of competency with current skill requirements in surf lifesaving. This may result in an update to the *Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)*.

Key Stakeholders

- › AFAC
- › Surf Life Saving Australia
- › Training Package Assurance Body
- › State Training Authorities/
Senior Responsible Officer

Deliverable: Reviewed training products

Impact: Equip surf lifesavers with the skills required to meet current and future needs in keeping Australia's coastline safe.

Anticipated timing: 12-month project

3

Review prerequisite requirements for PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident

Workforce Insight: Hazardous Materials

JSC Function: Training Product Development

Objective: Support increased access to hazardous materials training by reviewing a key unit of competency for the Fire and Emergency Services industry.

Approach: This strategy will engage with key Fire and Emergency Services employers and unions, and mining stakeholders (through AUSMASA) to review the *PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident* and *PUASAR025 Undertake confined space rescue* units of competency.

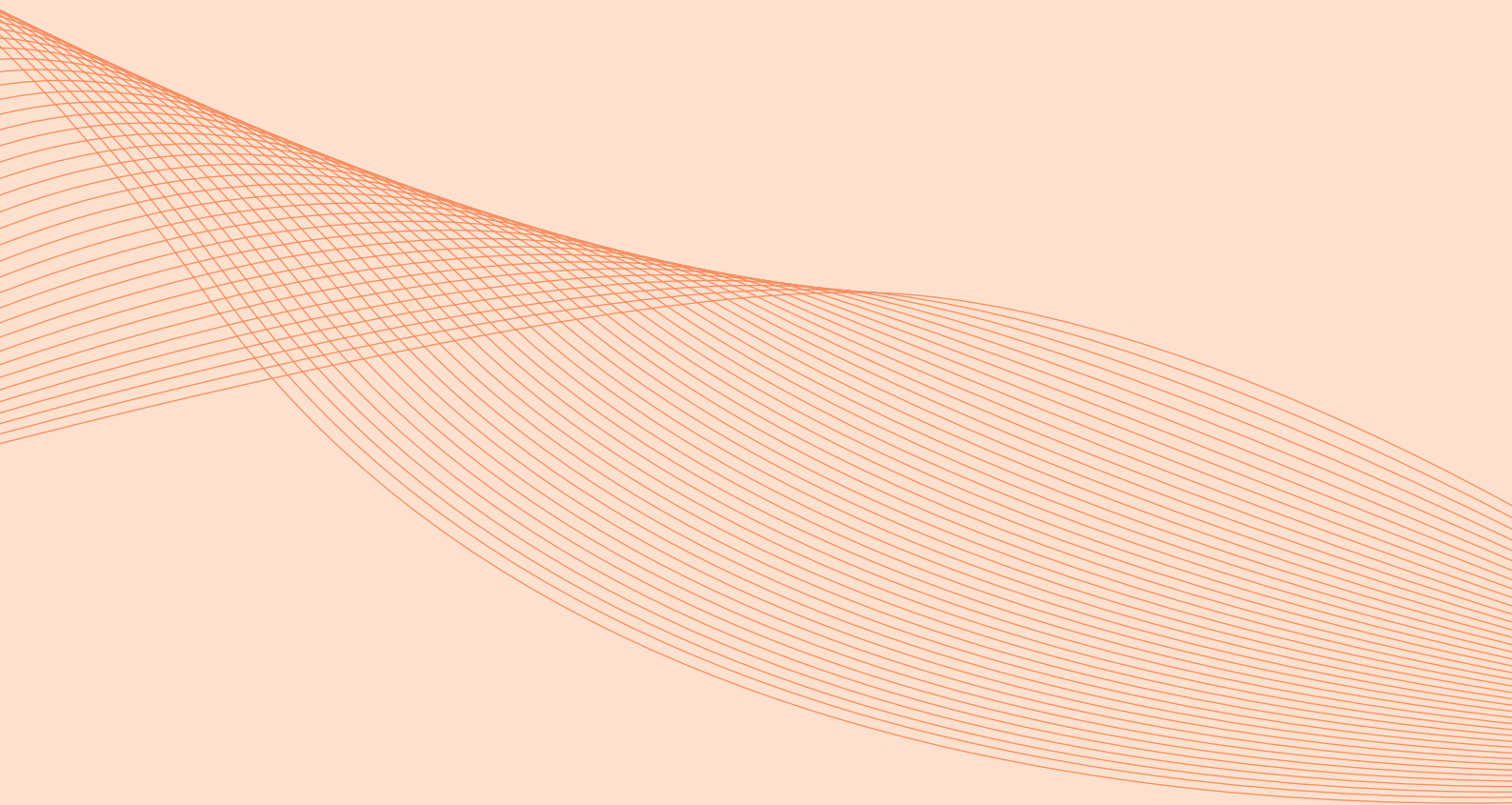
Key Stakeholders

- > AFAC
- > United Firefighters Union Australia
- > Training Package Assurance Body
- > State Training Authorities/
Senior Responsible Officer

Deliverable: Reviewed Units of Competency

Impact: Increase accessible training to enable safe and effective hazardous materials response.

Anticipated timing: 18-month project



2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report – Fire and Emergency Services Strategies Updates

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Emergency Tree Operations	Completed	Develop a Findings Report highlighting the wide range of tree operations conducted by Fire and Emergency Services to analyse capability requirements and consider the contextualisation of existing training products to meet these requirements.	This project was completed as of September 2025. Since publication of the <i>2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report</i> , the Emergency Tree Operations Findings Report has been validated and submitted to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
Volunteer Leadership Project	June 2026	The objective of this project is to identify and address capability requirements for non-operational leadership across Fire and Emergency Service volunteer organisations. It seeks to capture the current and emerging needs of volunteer leaders.	In collaboration with Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders, the Volunteer Leadership Skills Review Report has been drafted and is now progressing through Public Skills Australia's governance process. This project is on track to being completed on time by June 2026. It is anticipated that through the completion of this project, the industry-sector will develop a clearer understanding of leadership development needs and practices. This will better position agencies to support volunteer leaders and enhance organisational culture.

Public Skills Australia identified workforce strategies for the Fire and Emergency Services industry-sector as part of the *2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. Updates on the progress of these strategies and activity projects are provided below.

Key Stakeholders	Connection to 2026 Strategies
› Australian Council of State Emergency Services › Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) › National State Emergency Services Volunteers Association › Registered Training Organisations › State/Territory State Emergency Services Organisations › United Firefighters Union Australia	Ministerial Priority 2026 This project will contribute to building a shared, evidence-based view of the challenges and opportunities for the Fire and Emergency Services industry-sector. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Lead industry-sector intelligence sharing, relationship building and cross-collaboration. Drivers of Change connections Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks.
› Australian Council of State Emergency Services › AFAC › National State Emergency Services Volunteers Association › State/Territory Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service Agencies › Surf Life Saving Australia	Ministerial Priority 2026 This project will contribute to identifying opportunities to strengthen capabilities of the public safety and government workforces in preparing for and responding to emergency events, including identification of emerging or revised skill requirements. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Facilitate the promotion, uptake and implementation of training products. Drivers of Change connections Workforce inclusivity

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Understanding the Youth Volunteer	June 2026	To identify drivers and challenges to recruiting, engaging and retaining youth volunteers.	In collaboration with Fire and Emergency Services volunteer organisations, this project aims to strengthen youth volunteer retention in Fire and Emergency Services by identifying the key drivers of attraction, recruitment and sustained engagement. A literature review was undertaken to inform the research design. This was followed by a facilitated workshop with a wide range of Fire and Emergency Services youth volunteer stakeholders. Initial feedback has indicated that while young people are highly motivated by a desire to contribute to their community, they often face barriers such as competing study and work commitments, and limited structured development pathways. When complete, this project will produce an evidence-based Insights Report outlining findings for organisations relating to attracting, recruiting, engaging and retaining youth volunteers.
Complex Infrastructure Training Needs Analysis	August 2026	To identify training needs and skill requirements of firefighters responding to emergencies in complex infrastructure (such as tunnels and high-rise and multi-purpose dwellings).	In collaboration with key Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders this project will define current and emerging skills and knowledge requirements for emergencies involving complex infrastructure. This will be used as the evidence base to determine the potential future updates to relevant Public Safety Training Package products. Consultations with stakeholders have been undertaken and the first milestone of a <i>Stakeholder Insights Report</i> has been completed. Further stakeholder consultations are planned between February through April 2026, with a subsequent training needs analysis to be completed.

Key Stakeholders

- › AFAC
- › National State Emergency Services Volunteers Association
- › Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council
- › Bushfires NT
- › Country Fire Authority
- › Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA
- › Emergency Management Victoria
- › NT Emergency Service
- › Rural Fire Services NSW
- › NSW Surf Life Saving
- › Surf Life Saving Australia
- › SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission
- › Tasmania Fire Service
- › Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Connection to 2026 Strategies

Ministerial Priority 2026

This project will contribute to addressing Australia's productivity challenges, including undertaking activity that supports building a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforces.

Strategic Plan Priorities 2026

Support our industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.

Drivers of Change connections

Challenges to workforce productivity.

- › AFAC
- › Fire Protection Association Australia
- › State/Territory Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service Agencies
- › United Firefighters Union Australia

Ministerial Priority 2026

This project will contribute to identifying opportunities to strengthen capabilities of the public safety and government workforces in preparing for and responding to emergency events, including identification of emerging or revised skill requirements.

Strategic Plan Priorities 2026

Support our industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.

Drivers of Change connections

Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks.

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Emerging Technologies Skills Review	December 2026	To develop a deeper understanding of training and skill needs when responding to emergencies and relating to emerging technologies.	In collaboration with key Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders this project will identify key job roles and positions affected by incidents involving electric vehicles and high-powered lithium-ion batteries, highlight emerging skills requirements and identify relevant training package products requiring update to address capability needs. An activity submission was approved by DEWR in December 2025. This project has started the benchmarking of existing research and doctrine to determine current and anticipated skilling requirements. Additionally, initial consultations began in March 2026.

Key Stakeholders

- › AFAC
- › Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
- › Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance
- › Powering Skills Organisation
- › United Firefighters Union Australia

Connection to 2026 Strategies

Ministerial Priority 2026

This project will contribute to identifying opportunities to strengthen capabilities of the public safety and government workforces in preparing for and responding to emergency events, including identification of emerging or revised skill requirements.

Strategic Plan Priorities 2026

Support our industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.

Drivers of Change connections

Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks.

Existing Industry-Sector Strategies

National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

Department of Home Affairs

2018 – 2030

The *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* was developed as an advancement to the *2011 National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* and in line with the global *Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. The framework was co-designed by all levels of government, industry and community representatives and intends to guide Australia's capability in reducing "disaster risk associated with natural hazards".

The four priorities of the framework are:

- › Understand disaster risk
- › Accountable decisions
- › Enhanced investment
- › Governance, ownership and responsibility

In August 2023, the Second National Action plan was endorsed by all Emergency Management Ministers and provides an update on how the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* can continue to be implemented. Specifically, National Action 21 describes that Australia must "*Better align recovery and resilience activities, governance, funding, policy and processes to support betterment and long-term disaster risk reduction.*"

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context and guidance on Australia's whole-of-society approach to disaster risk reduction, informing consultation with Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Volunteer Leadership Project
- › Emergency Tree Operations
- › Emerging Technologies Skills Review

Specifically, all three strategies were informed by National Action 8 – *Facilitate greater emergency management sector professionalisation, capability and participation, including volunteerism.*

2026 Workforce Strategies

Support uptake of disaster recovery training products will be informed by National Action 21 from the Second National Action Plan: *Better align recovery and resilience activities, governance, funding, policy and processes to support betterment and long-term disaster risk reduction.*

Australian Disaster Recovery Framework

National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMA)

2022 – ongoing

This framework provides a practical and comprehensive description of disaster recovery context, governance, doctrine and policy. Although each state and territory in Australia has their own disaster recovery policies, the framework provides a common understanding for how disaster recovery can be undertaken.

The framework further supports recovery activities for all individuals that may be involved in recovery, including practitioners or leaders at all levels of government, private companies, community personnel and charities. As the stewards of the framework, NEMA will review the framework periodically as required.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context and guidance on the Australian Government's current approach to disaster recovery, informing consultation with Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

The National Recovery Principles in this framework outline the context, complexity and approaches to disaster recovery that underpin successful recovery. These principles informed the development of the *Volunteer Leadership Project*.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Support uptake of disaster recovery training products will be informed and guided by section 3.7 *Recovery training* which provides context and principles for the project.

AFAC Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC)

2023 – 2027

The *AFAC Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027* guides Fire and Emergency Services across Australia and New Zealand to strengthen community safety and resilience by fostering collaboration, innovation, strong governance and workforce capability. AFAC's strategy is underpinned by six strategic directions:

- › Supporting resilient communities through risk reduction
- › Providing a trusted response
- › Using credible and timely information and data
- › Safe, capable and diverse workforce
- › Informed by knowledge, innovation and research
- › Effective and transparent governance

As part of its commitment to the strategic directions, AFAC provides an annual *Strategic Directions Achievement Report*. The 2025 edition provides five examples from different organisations against each strategic direction that highlight how they have been performed across the 12-month reporting period.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided guidance on how Australian Fire and Emergency Services organisations collaborate and innovate, informing consultation with Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Emergency Tree Operations
- › Volunteer Leadership Project
- › Understanding the Youth Volunteer
- › Complex Infrastructure Training Needs Analysis

Emerging Technologies Skills Review

Collectively, the span of 2025 Workforce Strategies are substantively informed by *Strategic Direction 4 – Safe, capable and diverse workforce*. This Strategic Direction aims to ensure that the Fire and Emergency Services workforce, inclusive of its paid employees and volunteers, maintain the requisite current and emerging skills and knowledge.

2026 Workforce Strategies

All three proposed Fire and Emergency Services strategies will be guided by AFAC National Council's Strategic Directions, especially *Direction 1 – Supporting resilient communities through risk reduction* and *Direction 4 – Safe, capable and diverse workforce* which provides specific guidance for workforce planning strategies.

National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033

Volunteering Australia

2023 – 2033

The *National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033* is a 10-year national blueprint co-designed with the volunteering ecosystem to strengthen and sustain volunteering in Australia.

The strategy includes 11 strategic objectives across three focus areas:

- › Individual potential and the volunteer experience
- › Community and social impact
- › Conditions for volunteering to thrive

The strategy is accompanied by the *Action Plan 2024-2027*, the first three-year plan setting out co-designed actions aimed at addressing the implementation of the strategy.

Additionally, the *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework* will be utilised to measure the progress of the action plan and strategy, against measurable outcomes.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context and guidance on future-proofing Australia's volunteer workforce, informing consultation with Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Volunteer Leadership Project
- › Understanding the Youth Volunteer

Specifically, the Volunteer Leadership Project is informed by Strategic Objective 3.4 *Recognise the Importance of Volunteer Management*. The *Understanding the Youth Volunteer Project* is informed by Strategic Objective 1.2 *Make Volunteering Inclusive and Accessible*.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Review first aid Units of Competency for Surf Life Saving in the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue) will be informed by Strategic Objectives 1.2 *Make Volunteering Inclusive and Accessible* and 2.3 *Recognise the Inherent Value of Volunteering*.

Champions of Change Coalition – Fire and Emergency

Champions of Change Coalition – Fire and Emergency Group

2025 – ongoing

The Champions of Change Coalition is a sector wide leadership initiative supported by AFAC that brings together senior personnel from fire, emergency and land management organisations across Australia and New Zealand. The Coalition's aim is to drive sustained gender equity, build inclusive, respectful workplaces and increase women's representation especially in frontline and leadership roles through collective action, inclusive leadership, flexible workplace practices and transparent reporting.

The annual impact report released in 2025 highlights the achievements of the coalition and includes, but is not limited to:

- › Capturing and publicly reporting gender equality data.
- › Research undertaken to enhance gender appropriate PPE and PPC. This work will result in the release of a Fit for All framework in early 2026.
- › Facilitating inter-organisation workshops to discuss recruitment and retention, career progression and workplace culture to improve gender equality.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on the Fire and Emergency Services approach to improving gender equality and diversity, informing consultation with Fire and Emergency Services stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

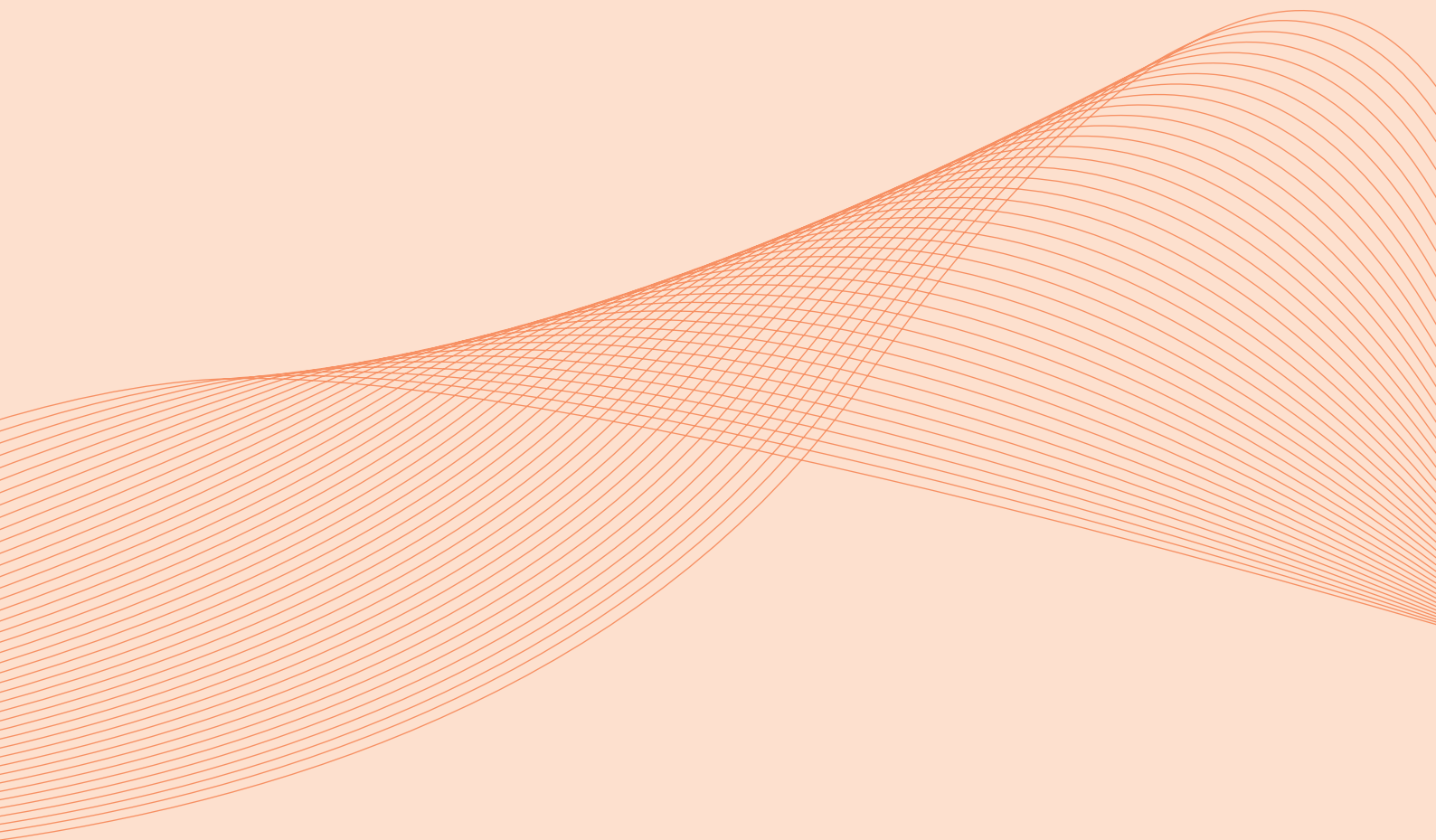
Informed the development of:

- › Volunteer Leadership Project
- › Understanding the Youth Volunteer
- › Emerging Technologies Skills Review

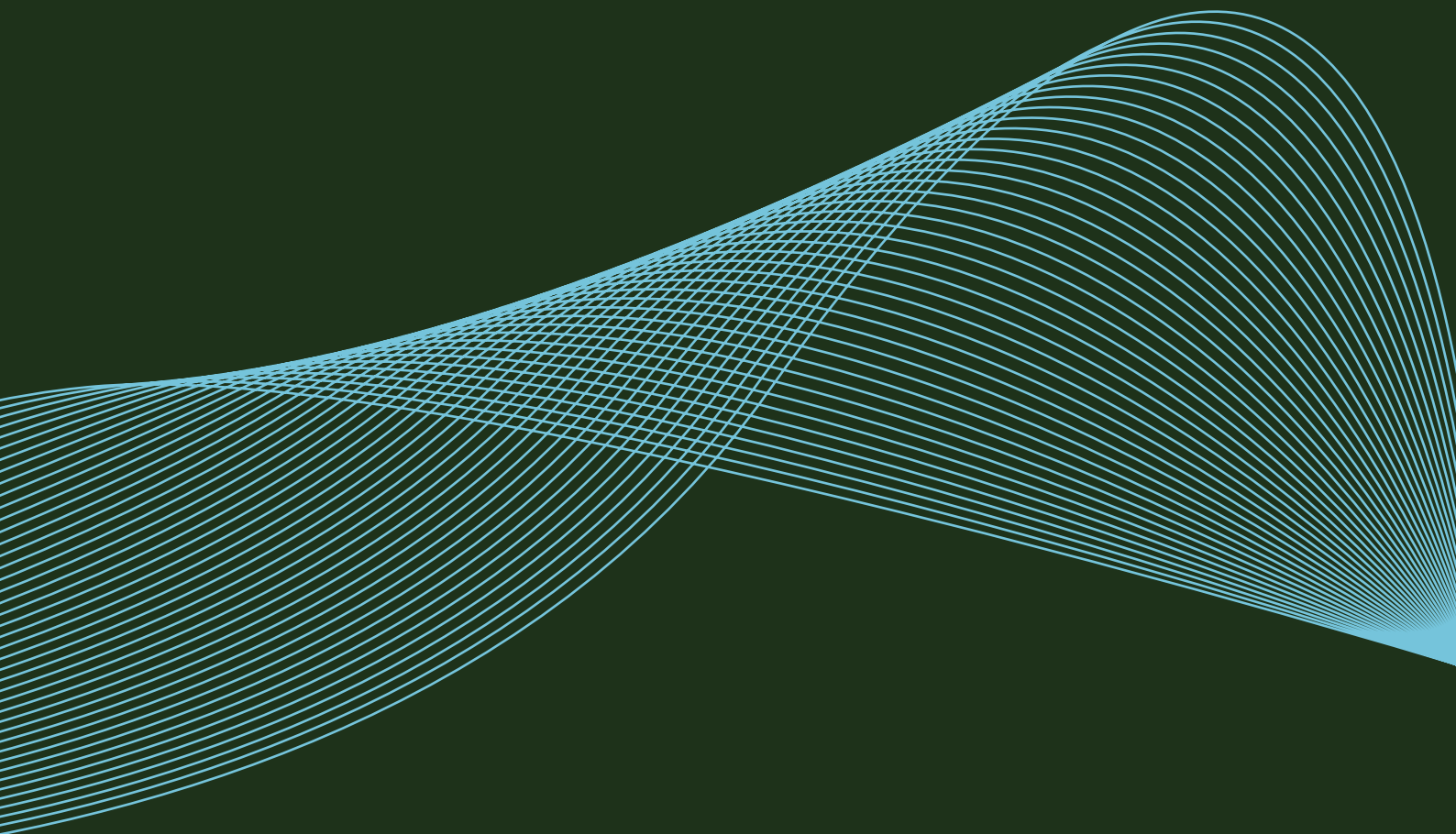
All three strategies were informed by the data, strategies and actions of the Coalition which aim to enhance gender equality, representation, safety and inclusivity across the breadth of roles within Fire and Emergency Services.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Review prerequisite requirements for PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident will be informed by the Coalition, especially as it pertains to flexible work and ensuring tools and technology are gender appropriate.



Police



Industry-Sector Overview

Policing is a critical public safety industry-sector comprising eight state and territory police forces alongside the Australian Federal Police, each operating in distinct legislative frameworks. The police workforce is characterised by its scale, diversity and increasingly specialised capability.

Operational (sworn) officers are increasingly supported by additional auxiliary officers (at times known as semi-sworn) such as Protective Service Officers and a rapidly growing cohort of unsworn specialists in intelligence, forensics, digital investigations, cybercrime and emergency management. Police must maintain 24/7 operational readiness to respond to crime, maintain public safety and support community resilience.

The following datapoints have been identified through this Industry Overview for the Police workforce:

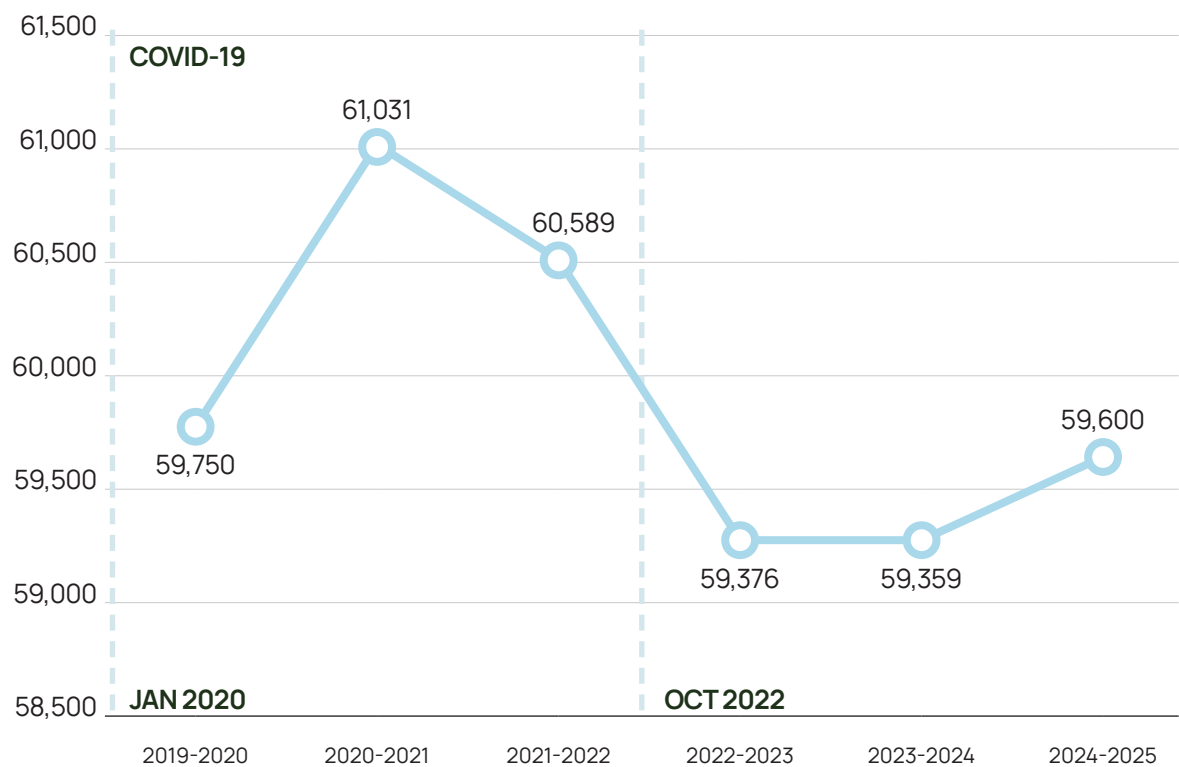
- › **Nationally fluctuating workforce:** Over the last five years, police officer numbers have fluctuated across Australia. Although from, June 2020 to June 2021, national sworn police officer FTE increased, this was followed by two years of FTE reductions before stabilising. This trend was experienced consistently across all states and territories, with seven of eight jurisdictions recording increases in police officer FTE from June 2020 to June 2021, and six of eight jurisdictions experiencing decreases from June 2022 to June 2023.⁶⁷
- › **Workforce commitments:** Each state and territory government, through election commitments and associated funding allocations, along with enhanced recruitment drives, have taken considered action to increase their workforce numbers and improve retention rates.⁶⁸ Importantly, these actions have positively impacted their workforce numbers, with six out of eight jurisdictions recording increases in sworn police officer FTE from June 2023 to June 2024. Although, some jurisdictions continue to face challenges in meeting their total workforce targets.

⁶⁷ Productivity Commission, Police services – Table 6A.2, [data set], Productivity Commission, 2026, accessed 24 February 2026.

⁶⁸ A Mayes, 'The 2025 WA state election promises made by Labor, Liberal, Greens and Nationals', ABC, 2 March 2025, accessed 29 January 2026; ABC (23 May 2025) 'Victoria Police to shorten training course to boost policing', ABC, accessed 29 January 2026; ACT Government, New Ministerial directions for ACT Policing [media release], ACT Government, 1 October 2025, accessed 29 January 2026; Government of South Australia, Highest number of police applications on record [media release], Government of South Australia, 21 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026; Parliamentary Budget Office, 2023 ALP election policy costings, Parliament of New South Wales website, 2023, accessed 29 January 2026; Queensland Government, Crisafulli Government delivers 118 new police officers to frontline to make Queensland safer [media release], Queensland Government, 4 December 2025, accessed 29 January 2026; S Vivian, 'NT government pledges 200 more police officers to bolster force in \$200m funding announcement', ABC, 3 April 2024, accessed 29 January 2026; Tasmanian Government, Strong Plan to Crack Down on Crime, Tasmanian Government website, 2025, accessed 29 January 2026.

National Workforce

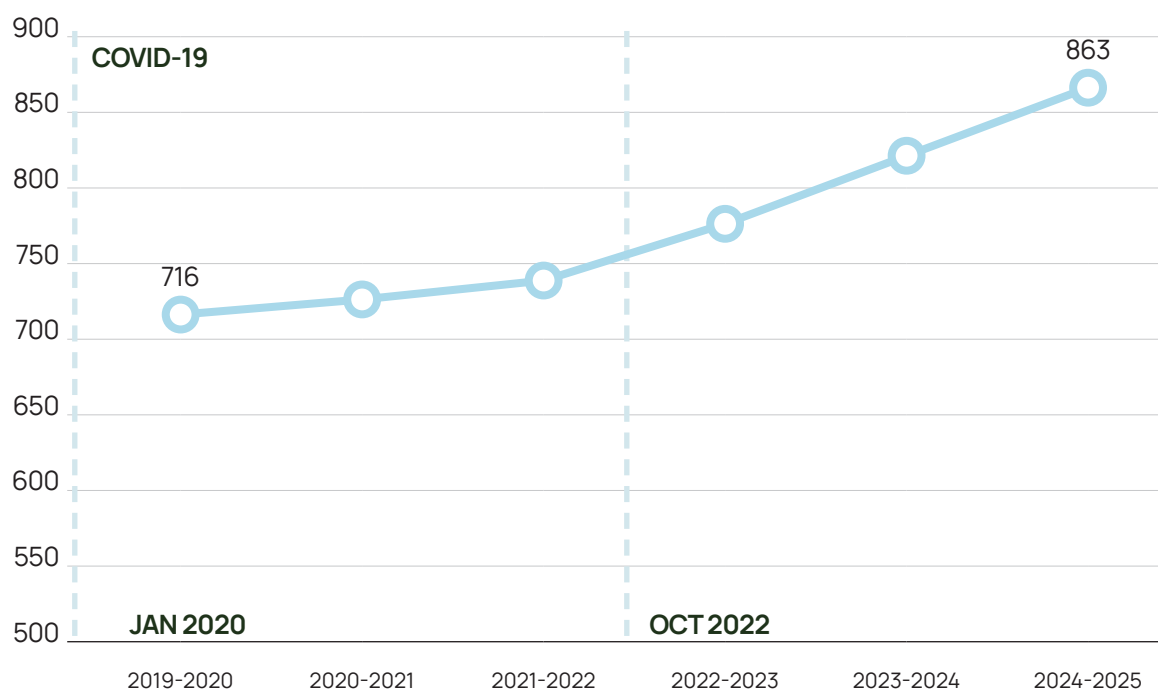
Yearly National Sworn Police Officer FTE – AUSTRALIA



Source: Productivity Commission, Police services, Table 6A.2, 2026
NOTE: Dotted vertical lines represent COVID-19 period

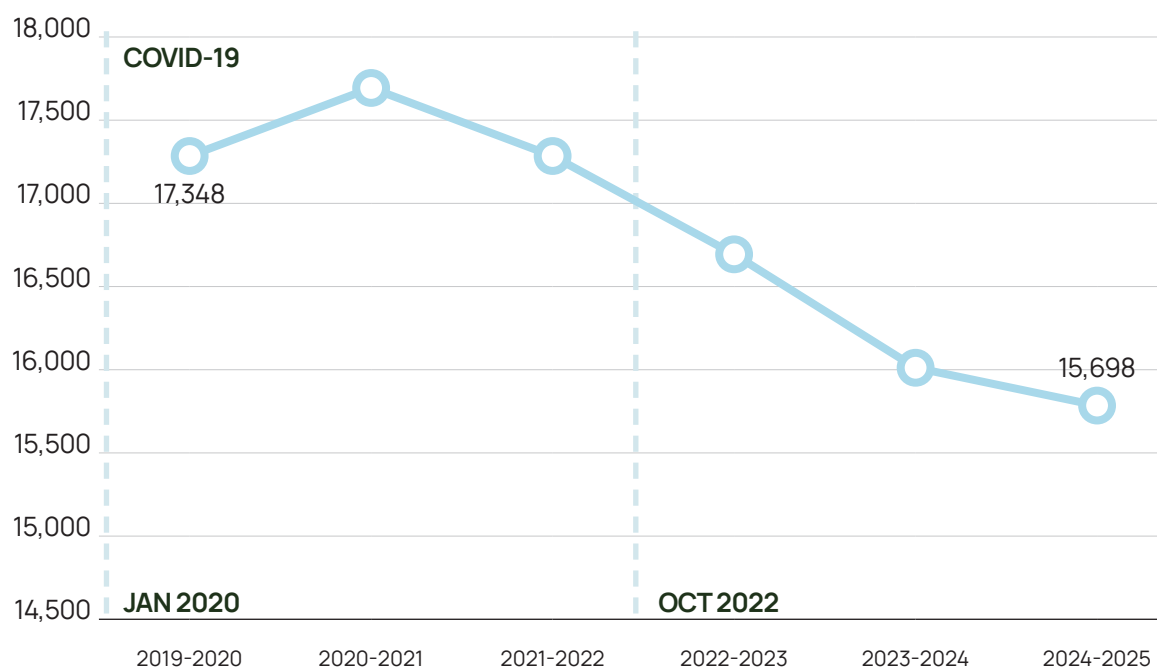
State/Territory Police and the Australian Federal Police Workforce

Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

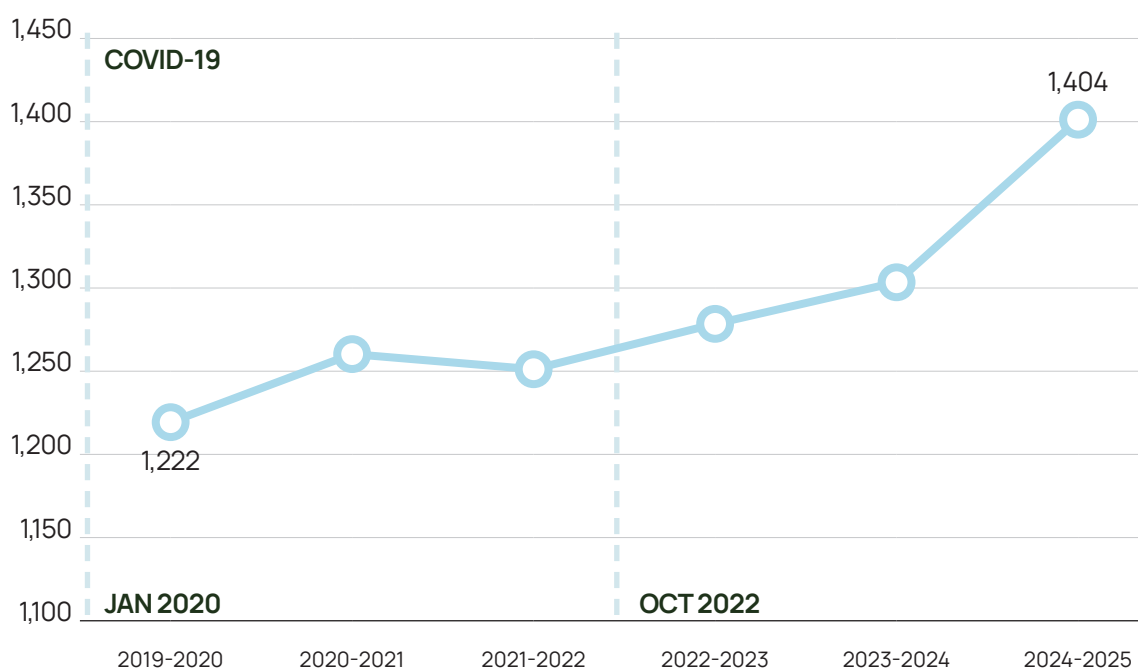


Source: Productivity Commission, Police services, Table 6A.2, 2026
NOTE: Dotted vertical lines represent COVID-19 period

Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – NEW SOUTH WALES

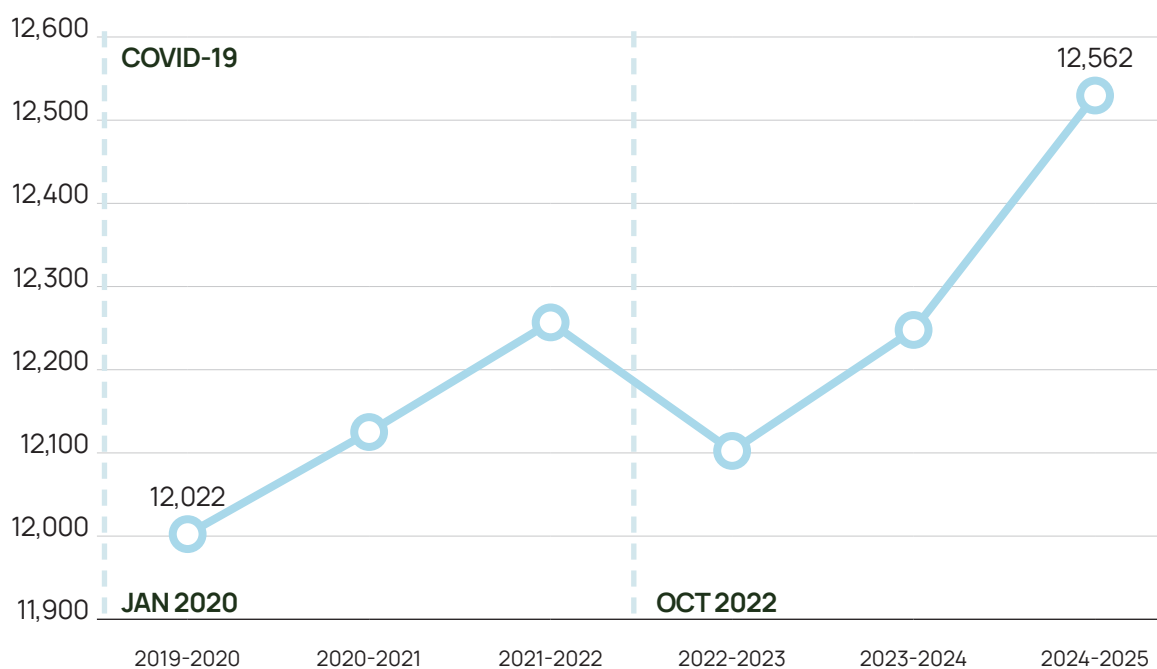


Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – NORTHERN TERRITORY

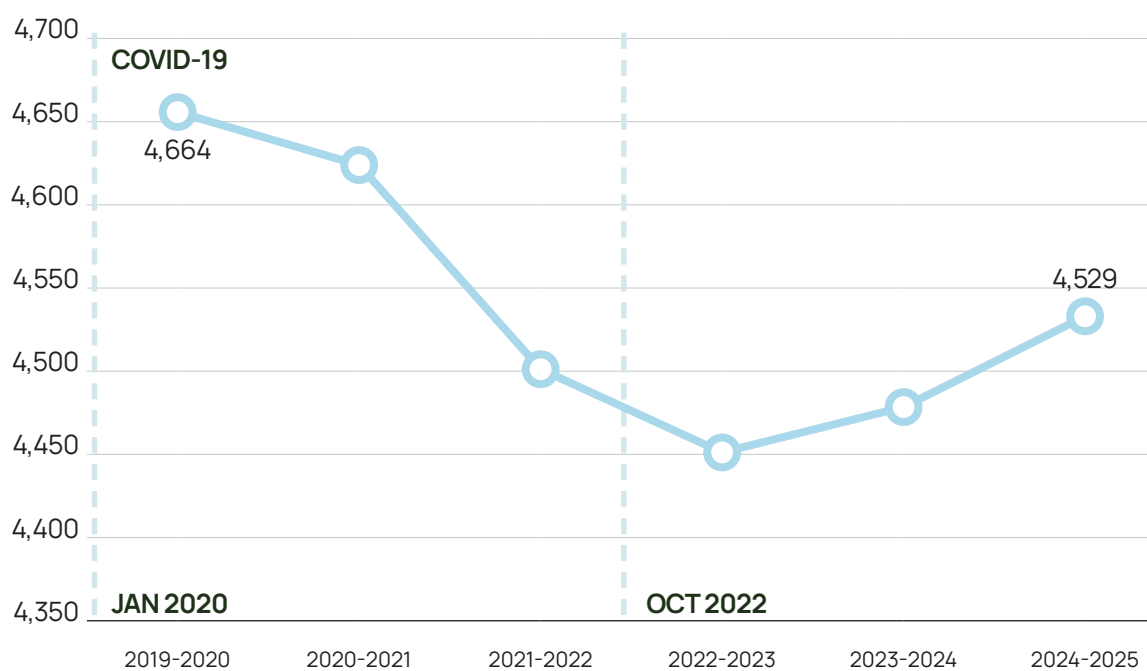


Source: Productivity Commission, [Police services](#), Table 6A.2, 2026
 NOTE: Dotted vertical lines represent COVID-19 period

Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – QUEENSLAND

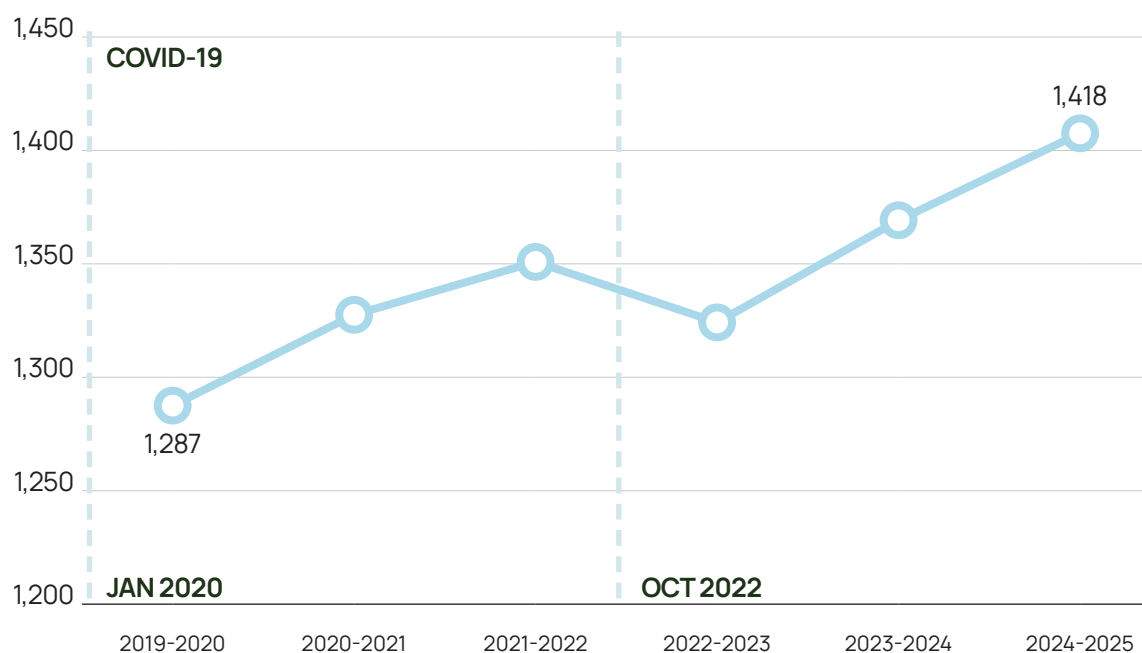


Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – SOUTH AUSTRALIA

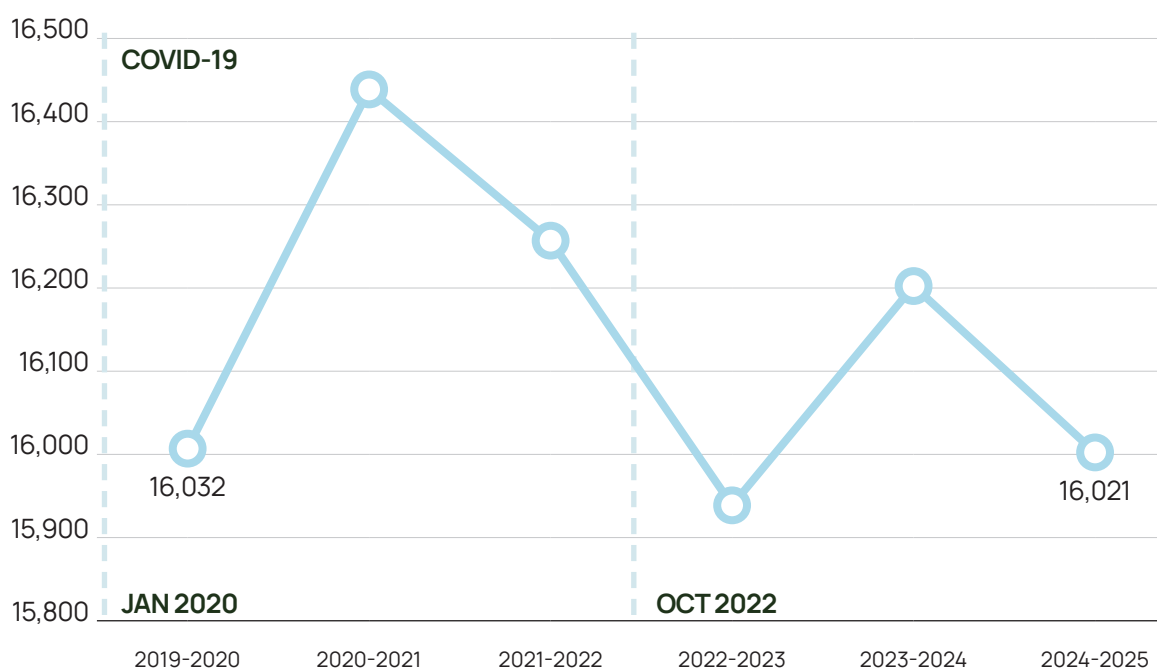


Source: Productivity Commission, [Police services](#), Table 6A.2, 2026
NOTE: Dotted vertical lines represent COVID-19 period

Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – TASMANIA

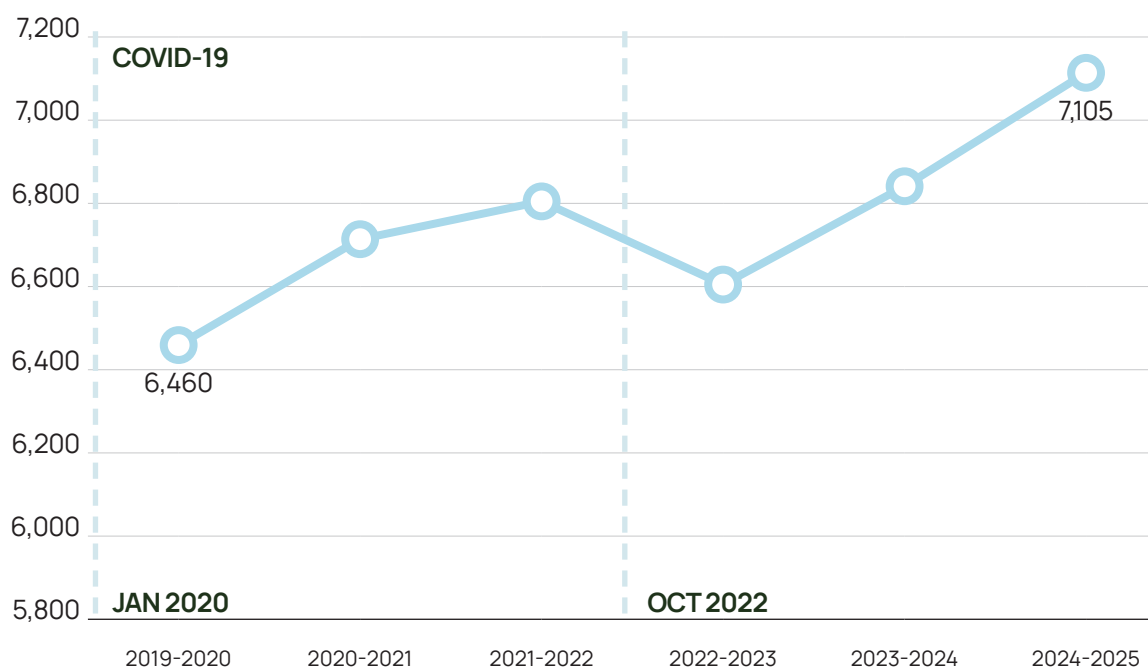


Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – VICTORIA



Source: Productivity Commission, *Police services*, Table 6A.2, 2026
 NOTE: Dotted vertical lines represent COVID-19 period

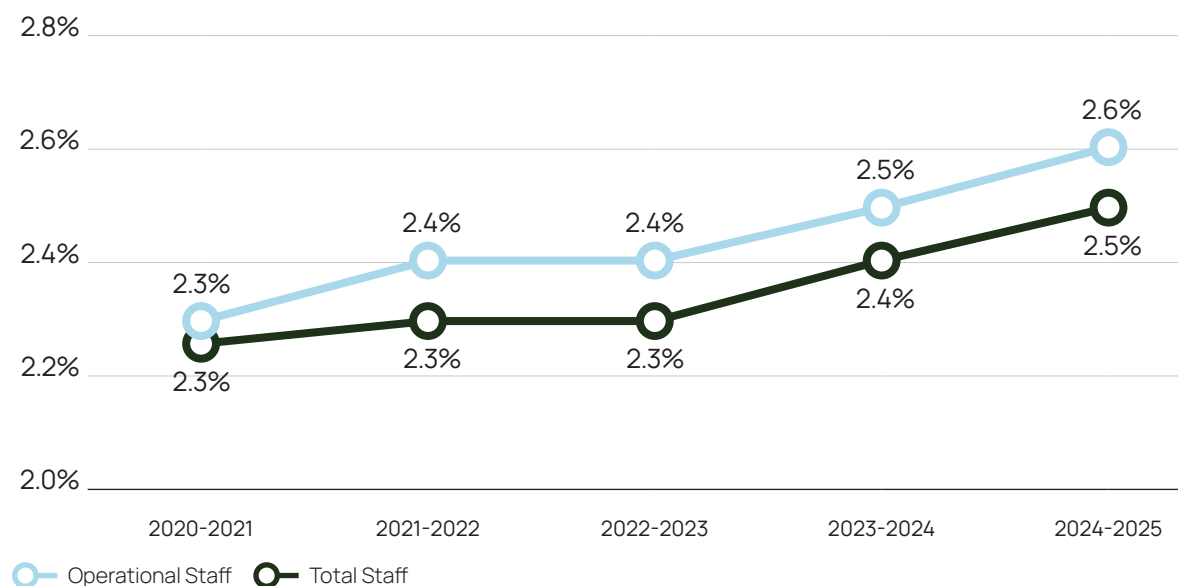
Yearly Sworn Police Officer FTE – WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Source: Productivity Commission, [Police services](#), Table 6A.2, 2026
NOTE: Dotted vertical lines represent COVID-19 period

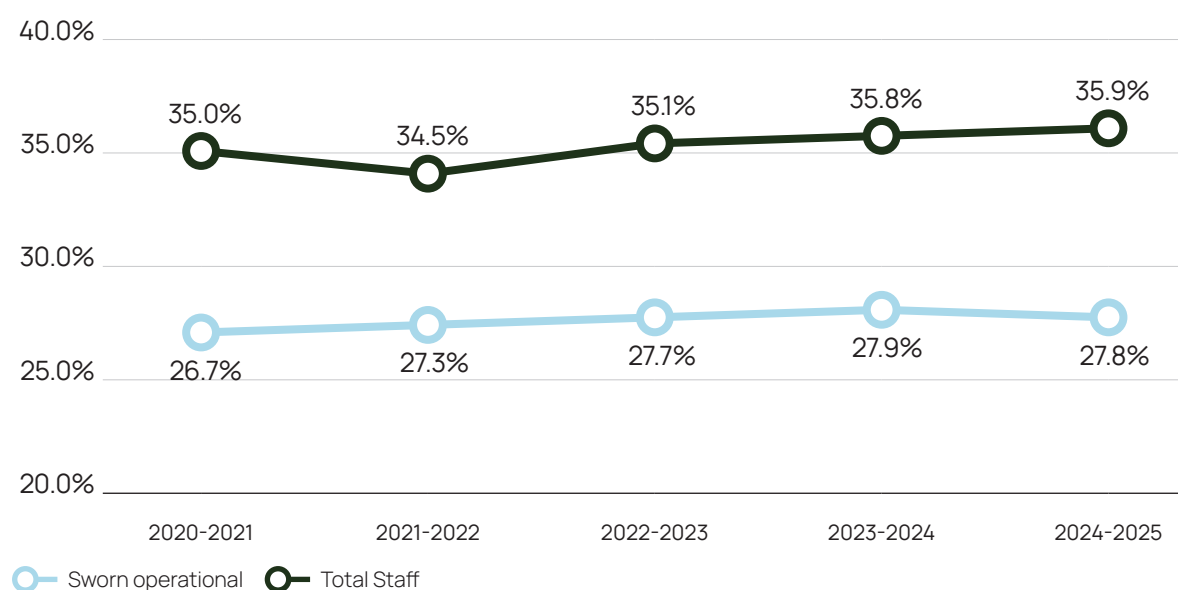
Industry Profile

Yearly First Nations Proportion of Police Employees



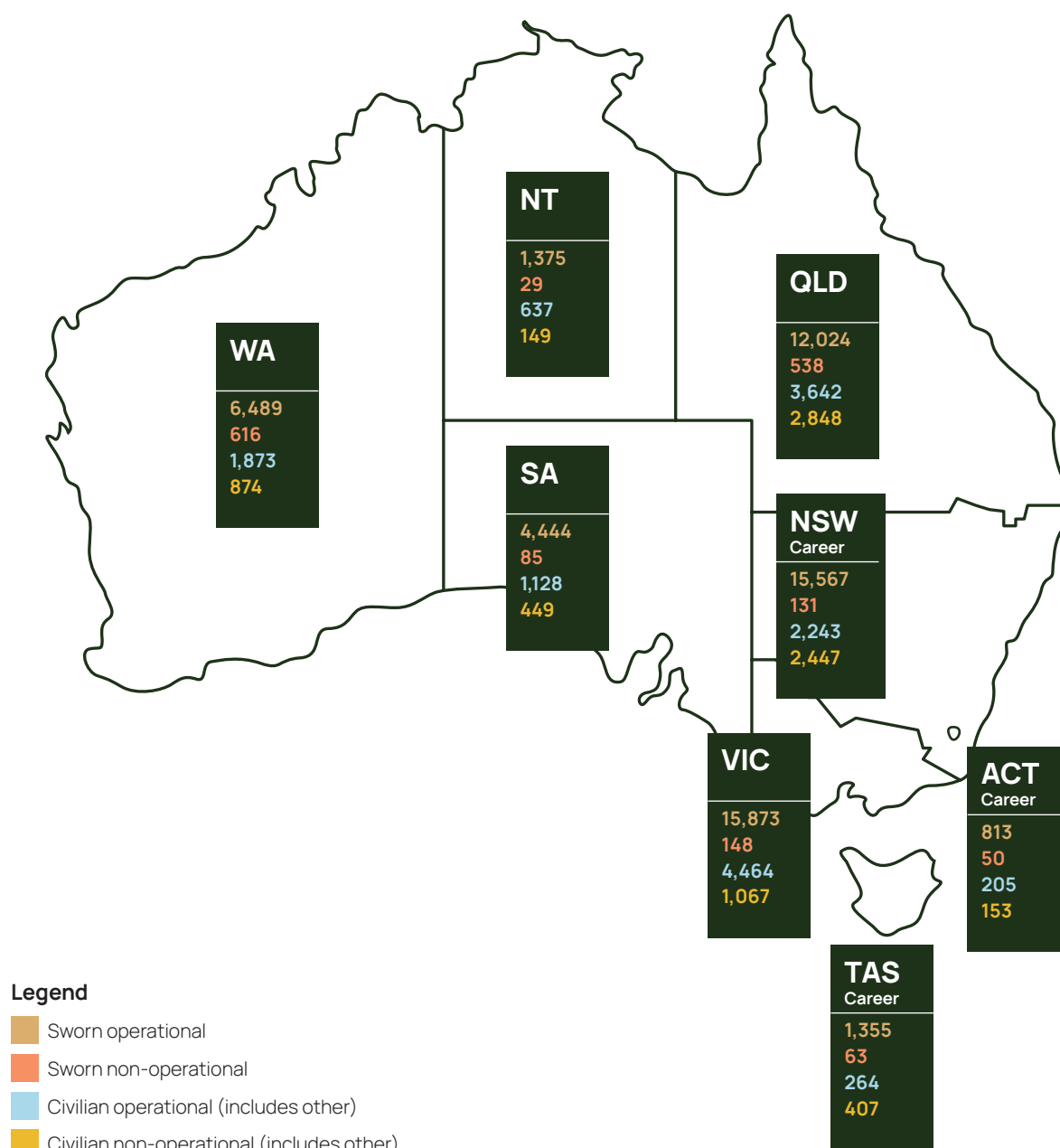
Source: Productivity Commission, [Police services](#), Table 6A.2, 2026

Yearly Female Gender Proportion of Police Staff and all Police Employees



Source: Productivity Commission, [Police services](#), Table 6A.2, 2026

National Police Employees by State and Territory in 2025



Source: Productivity Commission, [Police services](#), Table 6A.2, 2026

Workforce Insights

This Report identifies the following themes and industry insights relating to the police workforce:

Theme	Industry Insights
1. Digital Forensics	Skills shortages and strong demand for similar skills may require the establishment of multiple entry pathways for digital forensic professionals into policing. The VET system is well established to deliver a nationally consistent approach to training, however, the Police Training Package currently does not contain a qualification specialising in digital forensics.
2. Rural, Regional and Remote Police Leadership	Police officers being required to take on more leadership responsibilities earlier in their careers, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas, where workforce shortages are more pronounced. This may require more support in accelerating leadership skills development.

1. Digital Forensics

Broader digital transformation and the increasing adoption of technology means that evidence can be found on a growing array of devices, such as computer systems, mobile phones, cars, doorbells and dog collars.⁶⁹ According to testimonial evidence in the United Kingdom, most criminal investigations now contain elements of digital evidence that require retrieval and examination by digital forensic experts, whether that be from computers, mobile phones, CCTV, GPS systems or other digital devices.⁷⁰ Despite the increased demand for digital forensics, there has not been a corresponding uplift in capability and coordination in this area.⁷¹ This has led to a substantial backlog of digital forensics work.⁷² Stakeholder consultations in Australia indicated that digital forensics required to support contemporary investigations needs a different set of skills to other forensic field sciences such as fingerprint and firearms examination. In contrast digital evidence is more easily destroyed, can span multiple jurisdictions and is evolving at a rapid pace.⁷³

⁶⁹ IBM, [What is computer forensics?](#), IBM website, n.d., accessed 12 November 2025.

⁷⁰ E Scott, [Forensic science and the criminal justice system](#). UK Parliament House of Lords Library 2021, accessed 5 March 2026, p.37.

⁷¹ His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), [An inspection into how well the police and other organisations use digital forensics in their investigations](#), 2022, accessed 12 November 2025.

⁷² His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), [An inspection into how well the police and other organisations use digital forensics in their investigations](#), 2022, accessed 12 November 2025.

⁷³ M Ng, J James and R Bull, ["What you say in the lab, stays in the lab": A reflexive thematic analysis of current challenges and future directions of digital forensic investigations in the UK](#), Forensic Science International: Digital Investigation, 2024, 51:1-9.

Through consultations, it was identified that digital forensic skills required in policing covers three domains:

- › **Foundation skills across policing:** Police working on investigations involving digital evidence require an understanding of how data has been gathered, acquired and any limitations that data may have, in the same way as they would need to understand physical forensic evidence.⁷⁴ It is critical that police involved in digital evidence collection know how to collect and store data without altering it, given that seemingly harmless actions such as opening, printing or saving files can change metadata permanently and place the evidence in question.⁷⁵
- › **Core Digital Forensic Examiner Skills:** Digital forensic examiners must have a core set of skills and must be adaptable and focus on problem solving as they work with ever changing digital environments. They must be able to continually adapt to changes in technology, operating system and devices.⁷⁶
- › **Specialist Digital Forensics Roles:** In addition to the foundational and core digital examiner skills, consultation identified that there are likely several specialist digital forensic areas requiring more advanced skills. This would include an Advanced Digital Forensic Examiner, Mobile Device Forensic Specialist, Cloud and Network Forensics Specialist and Quality Assurance / Technical Reviewer.

Cyber Security Professionals, including digital forensic specialists, is a segment of the workforce that is experiencing sustained demand, with employment in this group projected to grow 14.2 per cent between 2024 and 2029.⁷⁷ This is more than double the national average rate of growth at 6.6 per cent.⁷⁸

As there is significant cross-over in the digital skills required by the private sector and those in demand for digital forensics in policing, this gives rise to competition with the private sector where wages are generally higher.

Persistent shortages of skilled cyber employees have been noted, with Jobs and Skills Australia's Occupation Shortage List analysis finding several cyber security occupations in national shortage, indicating challenges in filling vacancies for most jurisdictions.⁷⁹ This is likely compounded by the wider recruitment and retention challenge policing has faced in recent years. Skills shortages and strong demand for similar skills may require the establishment of multiple entry pathways for digital forensic professionals.

⁷⁴ Dr. G Liddy, To research international digital forensics strategies to inform future operating models, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 2023, accessed 20 November 2025.

⁷⁵ IBM, What is computer forensics?, IBM website, n.d., accessed 12 November 2025.

⁷⁶ National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), National Digital Forensic Science Strategy, NPCC, 2020, accessed 18 November 2025.

⁷⁷ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), Cyber security skills in demand as labour market evolves, JSA, accessed 20 November 2025. The group considered as cyber security specialists by JSA for this report was Database and Systems Administrators and ICT Security Specialists.

⁷⁸ JSA, Cyber security skills in demand as labour market evolves, JSA, accessed 20 November 2025.

⁷⁹ JSA, Australian Labour Market for Migrants – October 2025, JSA website, 2025, p 9, accessed 20 November 2025. The report notes: Cyber Governance Risk and Compliance Specialist (ANZSCO 262114), Cyber Security Architect (ANZSCO 262117) and Cyber Security Operations Coordinator (ANZSCO 262118) as being in shortage.

Internationally, alternative pathways have been established including paid internships for ex-defence personnel that include digital forensics training and apprenticeship schemes that offer a pathway into a career in digital forensics.⁸⁰ Additionally, establishing career pathways needs be considered as a part of overall workforce planning approaches particularly to retain younger cohorts in the digital forensics roles.⁸¹

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Skills shortages and strong demand for similar skills may require the establishment of multiple entry pathways for digital forensic professionals into policing.

Stakeholder consultation identified that the POL Police Training Package could be leveraged to develop much needed digital forensics skills. Internationally, a lack of consistency in digital forensics training has been identified as a risk to both the efficiency and quality of digital forensic investigations. Developing training products through the VET system will provide police nationally consistent, industry-endorsed skills standards that will support mitigating the risks encountered internationally. Additionally, these skills could be developed to cover general duties police officers right through to digital forensic specialist roles, ensuring police can develop consistent skills for handling digital forensics evidence.⁸²

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

The VET system is well established to deliver a nationally consistent approach to training, however, the Police Training Package currently does not contain a qualification specialising in digital forensics.

⁸⁰ Forensic Capability Network (FCN), [Second cohort of digital forensic apprentices begin work](#), FCN website, 2024, accessed 18 November 2025.

⁸¹ FCN, [Second cohort of digital forensic apprentices begin work](#), FCN website, 2024, accessed 18 November 2025.

⁸² Winston Churchill Trust, [To research international digital forensics strategies to inform future operating models](#), Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 2023, accessed 20 November 2025.

2. Rural, Regional and Remote Police Leadership

As a whole, police have experienced workforce shortages driven by two years of FTE reductions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike the large patrols and area commands in metropolitan areas, regional, rural and remote communities police stations often deploy fewer than five officers with some stations deploying only one or two officers.⁸³ As such, the ripple effects of workforce shortages have a greater impact on regional, rural and remote communities where the loss of only 1-2 police officers equates to a large proportion of the operational capacity in those communities.⁸⁴

Alongside workforce shortages, recruitment challenges for regional, rural and remote communities can make it difficult for police jurisdictions to increase the number of officers deployed in these communities.⁸⁵ While most police jurisdictions have established incentive programs to encourage regional, rural and remote placements,⁸⁶ engagement with industry-sector stakeholders indicated that shortages in regional, rural and remote locations are persisting.

Industry-sector consultation identified that these shortages, alongside wider demographic shifts and higher turnover in policing in recent years, has resulted in police officers being required to take on more leadership responsibilities earlier in their careers. This means that those police officers may not have the depth of experience to draw from when having to take on these leadership roles and may require greater levels of support to accelerate the development of their leadership skills.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Police officers are being required to take on more leadership responsibilities earlier in their careers – particularly in regional, rural and remote areas, which may require more support in accelerating leadership skills development.

Further industry consultation confirmed that, while this is an area that required more examination, there is no direct requirement for any training product development or implementation, promotion and monitoring activity.

⁸³ J Rodgers and N Asquith, 'Safety and Security in Remote, Rural, and Regional Policing', *International Journal of Rural Criminology*, 2022, 7(1):96–123, p 105, doi:10.18061/ijrc.v7i1.9103.

⁸⁵ J Rodgers and N Asquith, 'Safety and Security in Remote, Rural, and Regional Policing', *International Journal of Rural Criminology*, 2022, 7(1):96–123, doi:10.18061/ijrc.v7i1.9103.

⁸⁶ In Tasmania, the minimum tenure in non-metropolitan areas is two years. The New South Wales Police Force has incentives for police officers attached to positions in regional areas.

Police Workforce Strategies

Proposed Strategy 2026

Public Skills Australia proposes the following strategies to aligned to the workforce insights identified to support the Police industry-sector:

1

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics

Workforce Insight: Digital Forensics

JSC Function: Training Product Development

Objective: Develop a digital forensics qualification to be included in the POL Police Training Package.

Approach: This strategy will engage the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) and the National Institute of Forensic Science to develop a digital forensics qualification.

The approach will be to work through ANZPAA to engage subject matter experts through specialist advisory groups.

Deliverable: Accredited Training Products

Impact: Develop nationally consistent approach to training digital forensics for policing and support addressing an area of skills shortage.

Key Stakeholders

- › ANZPAA
- › National Institute of Forensic Science (NIFS)
- › State/Territory Police organisations and Australian Federal Police
- › Forensic Services South Australia
- › ACT Government Analytical Laboratory
- › Canberra Institute of Technology

Anticipated timing: 18-month project



2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report – Police Strategies Updates

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Police Training Package Release 11.0 and Release 12.0	June 2026	Updating the Police Training Package to embed Qualification Reform principles to deliver streamlined and relevant qualifications. This includes reducing duplication, aligning with current and emerging workforce needs and responding proactively to industry and student expectations.	In collaboration with ANZPAA, State/Territory Police organisations and Australian Federal Police, this project will update the Police Training Package. Release 11.0 will update: > <i>Diploma of Police Bomb Technical Response</i> > <i>Diploma of Police Search and Rescue Coordination (Marine / Land)</i> > <i>Advanced Diploma of Police Search and Rescue Management</i> Public Skills Australia has conducted public consultation on the proposed draft training products and plans to progress the project for ministerial endorsement by June 2026. Release 12.0 will update: > <i>Advanced Diploma of Police Supervision</i> > <i>Graduate Certificate in Police Management</i> > <i>Graduate Certificate in Police Prosecution</i> Future training product updates will likely be commenced aligned to Police Commissioner and ANZPAA priorities outlined in ANZPAA's forthcoming <i>Annual Plan</i>. This may include focus areas such as Witness Protection, Negotiation, Close Personal Protection and Digital Forensics. The <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i> strategy will be complementary to future updates of the Police Training Package, and is expected to be included in Release 13.0.

Public Skills Australia identified workforce strategies for the Police industry-sector as part of the *2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. Updates on the progress of these strategies and activity projects are provided below.

Key Stakeholders	Connection to 2026 Strategies
> Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) > Police Federation of Australia > State Training Organisations/ Senior Responsible Officer	Ministerial Priority 2026 This project will contribute to reflecting the possible impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and broader digital transformation in workforce planning analysis, and in the design and review of qualifications and training products. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Support the Police industry-sector to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready. Drivers of Change connections Emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), greater automation and broader digital transformation. 2026 Police Strategies Connection Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics.

Project Title	Completion	Summary	Update
Police Occupational Pathways Project	December 2026	Develop a greater understanding of the factors influencing operational capacity in metropolitan and remote/regional/rural policing. This analysis will also seek to determine the role of VET system in addressing workforce pipeline challenges.	In collaboration with ANZPAA, State/Territory Police organisations and Australian Federal Police, this project will use the Police Training Package qualifications to map common skills across occupational roles and identify how the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system could support efforts to address capacity challenges in occupational roles. An activity submission was approved by DEWR in December 2025. This project began mapping Police Training Package qualifications to understand skills similarities between police occupational roles. Key police stakeholders to undertake consultations starting March 2026 have also been identified.
Case Study Analysis of Skilling and Professional Development Profile Mapping	Complete	This strategy sought to use previous work where police organisations mapped their Workforce Demographic Data to the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) Skills and Capabilities Profile as a case study to demonstrates good practice and identify key areas of skills and training gaps.	In collaboration with ANZPAA, this project sought to engage with 1-2 police organisations to detail their approach in mapping Workforce Demographic Data to ANZPAA's Skills and Capabilities Profile. Further consultations were undertaken to further explore the concept. As a result of these consultations, it was indicated that further scoping of this strategy may not be feasible as priorities in police had shifted towards digital skills. Additionally, key contacts in police jurisdictions that had previously participated in skills mapping have since left those organisations, making engagement and data collection more difficult at this time.

Key Stakeholders	Connection to 2026 Strategies
› Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency › Police Federation of Australia › State/Territory Police Organisations and Australian Federal Police › State Training Organisations/ Senior Responsible Officer	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. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Support the Police industry-sector to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready. Drivers of Change connections Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks.
› ANZPAA › Police Federation of Australia	Ministerial Priority 2026 This project aimed to contribute to addressing Australia's productivity challenges, including undertaking activity that supports building a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce. Strategic Plan Priorities 2026 Support the Police industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready. Drivers of Change connections Workforce Productivity Challenges

Existing Industry-Sector Strategies

Australian Federal Police / ACT Policing

Australian Federal Police (including ACT Policing) Corporate Plan 2025-26

Australian Federal Police (AFP)

2025-26 to 2028-29

The AFP works annually towards its three key outcomes defined in the *AFP Portfolio Budget Statement*. These outcomes govern the AFP's yearly goals and are measured and reported against in each Annual Report cycle. They are:

- › National and International Policing
- › ACT Policing
- › Specialist Protective Services and International Policing Partnerships.

Since the previous year, the AFP has reviewed and refined its capability framework, improving investment prioritisation and enhancing operational effectiveness.

In the next cycle the AFP plans to:

- › Enhance data capabilities, strengthen AI practices and upgrade ICT systems in accordance with the 2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy.
- › Support the health and resilience of its workforce, streamline recruitment and continue incorporating diversity and inclusion principles.
- › Shift from a response-based model to a prevention culture, enhance covert online engagement strategies and update training and learning systems and modalities.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on the AFP and ACT Policing priorities informing consultations with ANZPAA and the AFP.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of *Police Occupational Pathways* Project through the identification of *Workforce* as an "enterprise-level risk." This risk describes targeted recruitment, training and personal development as opportunities to enable the AFP's strategic objectives.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics will be informed by the AFP's documented *operating environment*, especially, the identified technological change trend which highlights the need for digital literacies and technology-skills in the Workforce.

New South Wales Police Force

Our Focus Our Future: Connected Workforce Connected Communities	
NSW Police Force	2024 – ongoing
Since the release of the <i>Our Focus Our Future</i> strategic framework, the NSW Police Force has sworn in a new Commissioner (October 2025), resulting in an updated framework. The new strategic framework, <i>FORCE2030</i>, sets out five strategic pillars that will inform annual plans, business plans and individual performance: › Crime Reduction and Public Safety › Our Community › Our People › Innovation and Capability › Strategic Partnerships. This new strategic framework will guide continuous innovation, training and workforce development.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia’s work	
Consultation and engagement Provided context on NSW Police Force’s long-term organisational and operational focus through to 2030 in consultations with ANZPAA and NSW Police Force stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies Informed the development of the <i>Police Occupational Pathways</i> Project through the commitment by outlining clear workforce goals and principles to “engage our people and back them with strong leadership, the right training, development and a safe environment to deliver a rewarding career.” 2026 Workforce Strategies <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i> will be informed by New South Wales Police Force’s <i>FORCE2030</i> Strategic Framework, especially the <i>Innovation and Capability</i> pillar that encourages innovation and enhanced capability through technology.	

New South Wales Police Force

'Be a Cop in Your Hometown' initiative	
NSW Police Force	2024 – ongoing
The <i>Be a Cop in Your Hometown</i> initiative aims to strengthen regional and rural policing by placing officers in or near their hometowns after graduation. Combined with salary and other benefits incentives, the initiative has boosted recruitment in regional areas, with the NSW Police Force graduating its largest single class in over a decade in May 2025. The initiative remains ongoing with a range of priority Police Districts still identified.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia's work	
Consultation and engagement Provided context on workforce growth initiatives, informing consultation with ANZPAA and NSW Police Force stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies This initiative focuses on creating long-term and rewarding regional police careers. It provided a valuable approach to consider in broader policing contexts which was integrated into the development of the <i>Police Occupational Pathways</i> Project. 2026 Workforce Strategies Ongoing insights and findings from this strategy are likely to inform specific Training Package projects such as <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i>, which ensures that new training products are futureproofed to meet the needs of evolving workforces. This initiative will also be considered in Public Skills Australia's future consultations that will seek to further understand the impact of workforce challenges in regional policing.	

Northern Territory Police Force

Our Plan 2024-2027	
NT Police	2024 – 2027
This plan outlines a strategic roadmap to enhance public safety and address evolving crime trends in the Northern Territory. The plan sets out three goals, underpinned by 15 measurable outcomes that guide executive and operational plans: › Engagement and trust › Prevention, protection and enforcement › Capability. Progress against the first year of the plan is reported on in the <i>2024-25 Annual Report</i> with quantitative and qualitative data supporting the achievements of each outcome.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia’s work	
Consultation and engagement Provided context on organisational and operational priorities, informing consultation with ANZPAA and NT Police stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies <i>Goal 3 – Capability</i> of this strategy emphasises a commitment to building a highly capable workforce through training, technology and leadership, which informed the development of the <i>Police Occupational Pathways</i> Project. 2026 Workforce Strategies <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i> will be informed by NT Police Force’s goals, specifically <i>Goal 3 – Capability</i>, which refers to building highly capable and well-trained personnel skilled with advanced technology.	

Queensland Police Service

Strategic Plan 2024-2028 and Strategic Workforce Plan 2024-2028	
Queensland Police Service (QPS)	2024 – 2028
Since the release of the 2024-2028 plan, QPS has released an updated Strategic Plan and Strategic Workforce Plan for 2025-2029. The updated Strategic Plan sets out the objectives, opportunities and risks for the Queensland Police Service for the next four years. The four objectives are: › Healthy and engaged workforce › Community safety › Engaged and trusted relationships › Effective and efficient service delivery. In this reporting period, QPS highlights achievements against these four objectives, including but not limited to: › Enhanced and expanded protection of domestic violence victims and vulnerable persons › Enhanced youth crime intervention strategies › Continued operation of specialist capabilities across canine, mounted, air, water and road policing services › Improved protection of children › Strengthened partnerships with community. For the next reporting period, QPS identified several opportunities including, but not limited to: › Continuing to grow its workforce and enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of its people › Developing a skilled workforce capable of responding to evolving demands › Adopting digital innovation.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia’s work	
Consultation and engagement Provided context on organisational objectives and workforce planning priorities, informing consultation with ANZPAA and QPS stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies Informed the development of: › Police Training Package Release 11 › <i>Police Occupational Pathways</i> Project Both strategies were informed by the <i>Strategic Plan</i> and <i>Strategic Workforce Plan</i> due to their combined focus on developing a skilled and resilient workforce to respond to future challenges and evolving demands. 2026 Workforce Strategies <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i> will be informed by QPS’s strategic opportunities and risks. Specifically, this work will be informed by the: › Fifth strategic opportunity that commits to adopting digital innovation with ethical and transparent practices. › Fourth strategic risk identified as not staying ahead of the rapidly evolving landscape of online and technology-enabled crime.	

South Australia Police

2030 Strategy – Safer Communities

South Australia Police (SAPOL)

2024 – 2030

This strategy emphasises the importance of having a robust and aligned workforce to ensure community needs are met and is guided by five principles.

- › Our people, our strength
- › Prevention first
- › Community centred, socially minded
- › Collaborative partnerships
- › Technology enabled policing.

In the current reporting period, SAPOL continued to use these five principles to guide its performance, especially across its three core capability programs:

- › Public Safety
- › Crime and Criminal Justice Services
- › Road Safety.

This reporting period also included an external, independent review of its operational District Policing Model. It is anticipated the findings from this report will be implemented in the following 12 months.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on SA Police's five principles guiding organisational policing priorities and informed consultation with ANZPAA and SA Police stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Police Training Package Release 11
- › *Police Occupational Pathways* Project

Both strategies were informed by SAPOL's commitment to be innovative and flexible in recruitment and training strategies to ensure we have the right workforce.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics will be informed by SAPOL's five principles, specifically, principle five *Technology Enabled Policing*. This principle describes that "Optimising the use of technology provides new opportunities for disruption, enforcement, criminal investigation and prosecution."

Tasmania Police

Tasmania Police Strategy: Our Way Forward – 2023-2028

Tasmania Police

2023 – 2028

This strategy outlines Tasmania Police's current operating environment, along with three priority areas that are reported against annually:

- › Our community
- › Our people
- › Our business.

Across 2024-25, Tasmania Police reported several highlights aligned to the three priority areas, including:

- › Reviewing capability and upgrading equipment
- › Enhancing leadership framework and training
- › Advancing its recruitment strategies and exploring roster improvements.

Tasmania Police acknowledge the following challenges and will consider them in their strategy moving forward:

- › Technological advancements
- › Our community is changing
- › Policing is a demanding career
- › Increased reporting of family and sexual violence
- › Complex social challenges
- › Increasing accountability and expectations.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided guidance Tasmania Police's key challenges and organisational priorities informing consultations with ANZPAA and Tasmania Police Stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

The development of the *Police Occupational Pathways* Project was informed by a key challenge identified in this strategy, stating that Tasmania Police "are experiencing a shift in the career paths of our police officers, with a move away from long term career officer."

2026 Workforce Strategies

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics will be informed by Tasmania Police's future direction, with Technological advancements identified as one of six key challenges for the organisation.

Tasmania Police

Disability Inclusion Plan – 2023–2027

Tasmania Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM)

2023 – 2027

This plan sets out the department's goals and objectives for building on and strengthening itself as a disability-confident workplace, and ensuring a supportive, positive and inclusive environment for all.

The plan sets out 39 actions across seven outcome areas. As part of the plan, for each of the seven outcome areas, DPFEM identifies what achievements have been made, what they will continue to implement and what they can do better.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on focus of disability inclusion initiatives now in place in Tasmania Police, informing consultation with ANZPAA and Tasmania Police stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Police Training Package Release 11
- › *Police Occupational Pathways* Project

Both projects were informed by Tasmania Police's commitment to ensuring it delivers an inclusive service that maximises opportunities for employees and volunteers with disabilities. *Outcome Area 5* provided useful guidance on ensuring that both projects considered the needs of persons with disability.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics will be informed by DPFEM's *Outcome Area 1*, specifically, Action No. 1.2 Increase employment opportunities as part of the state-level framework, ensuring that any future training products are inclusive.

Tasmania Police

LGBTIQA+ Action Plan – 2023-2026

Tasmania Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM)

2023 – 2026

This Action Plan sets out expectations and goals for a three-year period to strengthen relationships with LGBTIQA+ communities and support personnel, volunteers and others who are a part of this community.

The action plan includes four objectives that are assigned a responsible area/person:

- › To continue to build the trust and confidence that LGBTIQA+ communities have in DPFEM
- › To work collaboratively with organisations and personnel of the LGBTIQA+ communities to foster continuous improvement
- › To provide ongoing training and education to our personnel and volunteers to enhance their understanding of LGBTIQA+ challenges, cultural competency and sensitivity
- › To support all DPFEM LGBTIQA+ personnel, personnel, volunteers and their allies.

Tasmania Police continues to report on its workplace diversity achievements through its annual report, highlighting the initiatives it has undertaken to promote a respectful and inclusive workplace.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided context on focus of diversity and inclusion initiatives in Tasmania Police, informing consultation with ANZPAA and Tasmania Police stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Police Training Package Release 11
- › *Police Occupational Pathways* Project

Similar to above, both projects have been informed by Tasmania Police's commitment to being a safe and inclusive workplace. Specifically, *Objective 3 – To provide ongoing training and education to our staff and volunteers to enhance their understanding of LGBTIQA+ issues, cultural competency and sensitivity* provided several actions for consideration in both projects.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics will be informed by DPFEM's *Objective 4 – To support all DPFEM LGBTIQA+ personnel, personnel, volunteers and their allies*, ensuring that any future training products are inclusive.

Victoria Police

Keeping You Safe: Victoria Police Strategy 2023-2028	
Victoria Police	2023 – 2028
Since the release of the <i>Keeping You Safe</i> strategy, Victoria Police has updated its direction to the <i>A Safe Victoria</i> strategy. Refreshed in 2025, after two years of the previous plan, the new direction sets out three priorities: › Build trust and confidence › Reduce crime and harm › Enable our people. This strategy also clearly sets out Victoria Police's operating model and principles that will guide its performance. This performance will be reported on in the coming Annual Report.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia's work	
Consultation and engagement Provided guidance on organisational and operational priorities, informing consultation with ANZPAA and Victoria Police stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies Informed the development of: › Police Training Package Release 11 › <i>Police Occupational Pathways</i> Project Through its key priority of <i>Enable our people</i>, both projects are informed by Victoria Police's desire to ensuring their workforce is highly skilled and high performing. 2026 Workforce Strategies <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i> will be informed by Victoria Police's <i>Operating Model</i> as it places technology at the core of its operating Inputs.	

Western Australia Police Force

WA Police Strategic Framework

WA Police Force

2024 – ongoing

This strategic framework outlines the values, functions, priorities and operational fundamentals that are integral to how WA Police conduct themselves while undertaking their core duties. Central to the strategy are the six fundamentals:

- › Timely and quality responses to calls for help
- › High visibility policing
- › Respectful engagement
- › Victim safety
- › Timely and quality investigations
- › Accountable prosecutions.

These six fundamentals are reported against under the annual reporting system.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided guidance on operational objectives for WA Police, informing consultation with ANZPAA and WA Police stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of:

- › Police Training Package Release 11
- › *Police Occupational Pathways* Project

Both projects are informed by one of WA Police Force's *Performance* key priority which details that "our performance is driven by striving to do the right things efficiently and effectively." These goals were integrated into both projects.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics will be informed by WA Police Force's *Fundamentals*, specifically its *Timely and Quality Investigations* fundamental that states "we combine proven investigation techniques with innovation to solve crime faster."

The importance of ensuring contemporary training and practice in the area of Digital Forensics is vital. The development of qualifications in this forensics discipline will likely support the WA Police force in the sixth fundamental of *Accountable prosecutions*.

Western Australia Police Force

Organisation Capability Review	
WA Police Force	2024 – ongoing
The <i>WA Police Force Organisation Capability Review (2023-24)</i> calls for a clear long-term strategy to enhance operational effectiveness, workforce planning and inter-organisation collaboration. The final report was delivered in November 2024. This report provides observations across 21 capabilities, identified three lines of inquiry for in depth investigation and highlighted two areas of strength. As part of the review, comment was provided on the <i>future operating environment</i> for the WA Police Force. This included identifying that officers will need to become increasingly proficient in the areas of cybercrime, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. WA Police Force is yet to publicly respond to the review.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia’s work	
Consultation and engagement Provided context on potential future organisational requirements identified by WA Police, informing consultation with ANZPAA and WA Police stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies Informed the development of: > Police Training Package Release 11 > <i>Police Occupational Pathways</i> Project Both projects were informed by the outcomes of the review, especially <i>Career development</i> which outlines key areas for workforce improvement. Both projects aim to support police officers to feel valued and ensure skills gaps are minimised, which are key recommendations of the report. 2026 Workforce Strategies <i>Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics</i> will be informed by WA Police Force’s evolving technological capability requirements.	

Proposed Strategies Summary

The *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* proposes six strategies across the Defence, Fire and Emergency Services and Police industry-sectors. These strategies aim to build on and/or complement the existing strategies that were proposed through the *2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights* report and have been completed or continue to be progressed.

Industry-Sector	Strategy
Defence	Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones: Map current Defence micro-credentials on drones and unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to existing units of competency from current VET qualifications.
	Support transition of Defence Veterans to civilian workforce: Support <i>Recommendation 83(c)</i> of the <i>Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide</i> by facilitating up-to-date information facilitated by state and territory initiatives that assist transitioning veterans.
Fire and Emergency Services	Support uptake of disaster recovery training products: Strengthen capabilities of disaster recovery for Fire and Emergency Services and Government personnel by promoting the uptake of disaster recovery training products.
	Review first aid units of competency for Surf Life Saving in the <i>Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)</i>: Ensure the <i>Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)</i> reflects the first aid requirements of Surf Life Saving.
	Review prerequisite requirements for <i>PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident</i>: Support increased access to hazardous materials training through reviewing a key unit of competency for the Fire and Emergency Services industry.
Police	Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics: Develop a digital forensics qualification to be included in the POL Police Training Package.



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
<i>Closing the Gap</i> 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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. <i>Closing the Gap</i> 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 <i>Closing the Gap</i> targets has been mixed. Implementation of <i>Closing the Gap</i> is ongoing to 2031. The Productivity Commission is tracking these targets. <i>Closing the Gap</i> performs a substantive role in informing Public Skills Australia's research and engagement efforts. <i>Closing the Gap</i> informed stakeholder consultation preparation as part of engagement for the <i>2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report</i>.	

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 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 budget sustainability.

The "strong inclusive and sustainable economy" priority supported the development of the *Support transition of Defence veterans to civilian workforce* proposed project, which looks to ensure veterans can translate their Defence skills and experience into civilian-recognised language and occupations, inclusive of those in the APS (where relevant).

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 Department for Workplace Relations 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 informed Public Skills Australia's approach to the 2026 *Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* by ensuring that stakeholder consultations considered any workforce challenges that may be linked to women's economic equality or participation in Public Safety occupations. Future directions identified in Priority Area 3 highlight the need for "action to embed gender equality to support access and retention for women in emerging and growth industries, like clean energy, cyber security and naval ship and submarine building." Public Skills Australia will continue to work closely with industry to progress gender equality in these emerging areas.

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 report makes 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 challenge 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.

This series of reports, specifically, the recommendations made within the reports, informed preparation for stakeholder consultation as part of research and engagement for the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. These recommendations provided context on where future skilling and occupational priorities may exist and how technology may change that impacts how Public Safety occupations are experienced.

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 cyber security 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 focused 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.

This ongoing cyber security work provided important contextual background for stakeholder consultation preparation for the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* and informed the development of the *Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics* project. Specifically, cyber security and skills related to cyber security are similar to those required in digital forensics and may provide a useful reference point for developing digital forensics training.

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 Vocational Education and Training (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 underutilised 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 work of the QRDG regarding qualification reform continues to inform the method and intended outcomes for all proposed strategies that may result in training package updates, including *Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones*, *Review first aid Units of Competency for Surf Life Saving in the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)*, *Review prerequisite requirements for PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident* and *PUASAR025 Undertake confined space rescue*, and *Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics*.

Occupation Standard Classification for Australia

Australian Bureau of Statistics

2024 – ongoing

Formally known as 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.

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 continues to utilise, where possible, the most contemporary version of OSCA to ensure our occupational insights remain relevant and in-line 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.

Along with the Jobs and Skills Australia Occupational Shortage List, the CSOL (specifically the 2025 CSOL Targeted for Consultation Group) provided important context for stakeholder consultation preparation for the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. These lists indicate on a national level where specific occupation demands may currently exist and enabled Public Skills Australia to proactively pursue conversations with Public Safety stakeholders on whether these demands exist within their contexts.

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 Vocational Education and Training (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.

Better Together outlines JSA's key current and emerging datasets that provide useful insights on the intricacies of Australia's labour market for use in development of strategic workforce planning for the JSCs. Please note JSA released an updated version of this iterative report in November 2025, *Connecting for impact – The Jobs and Skills Report 2025*, which will inform the *2027 Workforce Insights Reports*.

The outcomes of *Better Together* provided important context on whole-of-economy skilling and training needs. For the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*, these outcomes informed the development of the *Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones* strategy that aims to ensure the Defence industry-sector maintains a future-ready workforce.

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 proposed workforce strategies *Support Defence skill and capability requirements to operationalise drones*, *Review first aid Units of Competency for Surf Life Saving in the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)*, *Review prerequisite requirements for PUAFIR306 Identify, detect and monitor hazardous materials at an incident* and *PUASAR025 Undertake confined space rescue*, and *Develop Training Products for Digital Forensics*.

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 these reports, especially those in the 'Building a skilled and adaptable workforce' report, informed the development of all seven proposed strategies in the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. Recommendations such as *Recommendation 3.1 Improve the recognition of work-related training* provide important guidance when considering how the VET system can support and enhance whole-of-economy productivity.

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.

This Report provided important context in preparation for stakeholder consultation for the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* through its emphasis on productivity, improved student experience and enhancing inflows of appropriately skilled individuals into the workforce.

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 the 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

This study informed Public Skills Australia's approach to the *2026 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* by ensuring that stakeholder consultations considered any workforce challenges that may be linked to women's economic equality or participation in Public Safety occupations. Public Skills Australia will utilise the GSIS in future work, where relevant, to provide important insight on gender trends in Public Safety occupations.

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 OSL 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 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report*. This list indicates on a national level where specific occupation demands currently exist and enabled Public Skills Australia to proactively pursue conversations with Public Safety 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 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report* in the development and delivery of this 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 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 Public Safety industry-sectors including:

Cross-Industry	Exploring the potential of recognising core skill alignment between Public Safety industry-sectors in the VET sector context.
Defence	Leveraging the VET system to complement Defence's own long term workforce planning and skills requirements that may arise through the forthcoming <i>National Defence Strategy</i> update.
Fire and Emergency Services	Exploring the critical challenge of maintaining capability in the use of prescribed burning and backburning during bushfire suppression and examining capability requirements for divisional commander training.
Police	Examining challenges for police in regional, rural and remote communities with a focus on police leadership responsibilities being taken on earlier in careers.
Drivers of Change	Continue to consider the impact of the identified drivers of change in this year's reports on the Public Safety industry-sector workforces.

Appendix A

Defence Veterans' Programs and Initiatives

Program/Initiative	How it Supports Transitioning and Transitioned Veterans
<i>ACT Government Veterans' Employment Strategy, 2020</i>	Articulates the benefits of both the private and public sectors as career pathways for veterans and their families and highlights the resources available (at the time of publishing) for recruitment, networking and information sharing. ⁸⁷
<i>ACT Public Service (ACTPS) Veterans' Employment Transition Guide, 2018</i>	Provides ADF personnel with guidance on how their skills and experience can be translated into the ACTPS. Provides information on the ACTPS as an employer, as well as tips on identifying the right role and understanding the lifecycle of the application process. ⁸⁸
<i>ADF Transition and Civil Recognition Project</i>	Provides transitioning personnel, and those who have transitioned in 24 months, the opportunity to have skills recognised through RPL, and accredited training where possible. ⁸⁹
<i>ADF Transition Guide App, 2024</i>	Provides a free App to ADF personnel, their families and support networks to understand and navigate the transition into civilian life. Provides the most current transition information from across Defence to assist personnel in preparing for their transition out of the ADF. ⁹⁰
<i>The ADF Personnel and Family Transition Guide (2024-25)</i>	Provides personnel and their families with information about the transition process and supports available, and informs what is provided in the <i>ADF Transition Guide App</i> . ⁹¹
<i>ADF Transition Training & Skills Guide</i>	Provides explanation to personnel across the ADF of the skills acquired during their service and general guidance on how this can apply to the civilian workforce. Guides are grouped by the equivalent military rank from each service area – Navy, Army and Air Force. ⁹²
<i>Department of Premier and Cabinet Tasmania, Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy 2023-2027</i>	Sets out a range of supports and employment opportunities available for veterans in Tasmania and is designed to complement initiatives already underway at a national level. Provides case studies of veterans who have successfully transitioned to a civilian career, now working in the Tasmanian State Service. ⁹³

⁸⁷ ACT Government, [Veterans' Employment Strategy](#), ACT Government, 2020, accessed 19 November 2025.

⁸⁸ ACT Government, [Veterans Employment Transition Guide ACT Public Service](#), ACT Government, 2018, accessed 10 December 2025.

⁸⁹ Department of Defence, [Military Skill Recognition](#), Department of Defence, Australian Government, n.d., accessed 14 November 2025.

⁹⁰ Department of Defence, [Defence Annual Report 2024-25](#), Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 15 December 2025.

⁹¹ Department of Defence, [ADF Member and Family Transition Guide 2024-25](#), Department of Defence, Australian Government, n.d., accessed 15 December 2025.

⁹² Department of Defence, [Training and Skills Guides](#), Department of Defence, Australian Government, n.d., accessed 14 November 2025.

⁹³ Department of Premier and Cabinet, [Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy 2023-2027](#), Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Government, 2023, accessed 5 December 2025.

Program/Initiative	How it Supports Transitioning and Transitioned Veterans
Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Transition Strategy (2023) and Action Plan (2024)	Identifies six priority areas that are intended to support a positive transition out of the ADF. ⁹⁴ The <i>Veteran Transition Action Plan</i> provides the actions to support the implementation of the six priority areas identified in the Strategy, detailing the actions to be undertaken and the responsible organisation. ⁹⁵
Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Employment Program	Delivers initiatives to support employers in improving employment outcomes for ADF veterans. Organisations can join via the Veteran Employment Commitment. Resources such as the Veteran Employment Toolkit, the Core Skills Identifier and an interactive list of veteran employers are available for veterans and their families. ⁹⁶
Department of Veterans' Affairs, Veteran Support and Services Guide 2025	Highlights the support and services available for veterans. Provides a link to programs and support services offered by Federal and State/Territory Government departments. ⁹⁷
Government of Western Australia, Department of Premier and Cabinet – Veteran Employment	Provides information on available opportunities and initiatives for veterans seeking employment in the civilian workforce. Last updated in 2024, the <i>Veteran Employment</i> service outlines Veteran Employment Opportunities through organisations such as Jobs & Skills WA, the Defence Industry Veterans Employment Scheme (DIVES) Scholarship Program for VET and university studies available to eligible veterans (as well as information for potential employers). ⁹⁸
Government of Western Australia, Defence Industry – The Other Force Veterans Defence Industry Career Explorer	Assists veterans' in understanding how their skills and experience align to occupations in Western Australia's defence industry and identifies possible career pathways. ⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Department of Veterans' Affairs, [Veteran Transition Strategy](#), Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian Government, 2023, accessed 19 November 2025.

⁹⁵ Department of Veterans' Affairs, [Veteran Transition Action Plan](#), Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian Government, 2024, accessed 19 November 2025.

⁹⁶ Department of Veterans' Affairs, [Veteran Employment Program](#) [website], Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian Government, n.d., accessed 19 November 2025.

⁹⁷ Department of Veterans' Affairs, [Veteran Support and Services Guide](#), Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian Government, 2025, accessed 5 December 2025.

⁹⁸ Department of Premier and Cabinet, [Veteran Employment](#) [website], Government of Western Australia, 14 March 2024, accessed 16 December 2025.

⁹⁹ Government of Western Australia, [Defence Industry – The Other Force: Veterans Defence Industry Career Explorer](#) [website], Government of Western Australia, n.d., accessed 16 December 2025.

Program/Initiative	How it Supports Transitioning and Transitioned Veterans
New South Wales Government Rank to Grade Guide and Local Government Rank to Grade Guide	Provides veterans with guidance and understanding on how NSW Government and Local Government job grades align to ADF ranks. Tool for employers to understand the skills and experience that veterans can bring to their organisation. ¹⁰⁰
New South Wales Veterans Employment Program (VEP)	Provides veterans with tools to assist in applying for roles in the NSW public service, as well as to employers. The VEP has published online resources, such as a capability definition tool and access to workshops to support veterans in their application to NSW public sector positions. ¹⁰¹
New South Wales Veterans Strategy and Action Plan, 2025-2030	Outlines key themes and the actions that the NSW Government is taking to support its veterans. It is intended to be a 'first step' in response to the <i>Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide</i> and as part of its scope, provides information on the translation of Defence-specific capabilities into civilian requirements. ¹⁰²
Northern Territory Government, Defence Veterans Strategy	Provides outcomes, case studies and lists supports and actions for veterans and their families in the Northern Territory, to assist in the transition out of Defence and ensure access to employment opportunities. ¹⁰³
TAFE NSW Ranks to Recognition	Supports ADF personnel and veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce by assessing and recognising skills, experience and qualifications gained during military service with the intended outcome of a smooth transition for ADF personnel in accessing career opportunities and/or further study. ¹⁰⁴ Delivered in partnership with the NSW Office of Veterans Affairs.
TAFE SA Skills Transition Education Program (STEP)	Provides serving and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families with support to transition to the civilian workforce via career planning, funding assistance to access VET and Recognition of Prior Learning. ¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ NSW Government, [NSW Government Rank to Grade Guide](#) [website], NSW Government, n.d., accessed 10 December 2025.

¹⁰¹ NSW Government, [Veterans Employment Program – About](#) [website] NSW Government, n.d., accessed 10 December 2025.

¹⁰² NSW Veterans Affairs, [NSW Veterans Strategy and Action Plan, 2025-2030](#), NSW Government, 2025, accessed 10 December 2025.

¹⁰³ Northern Territory Government, [Northern Territory Defence Veterans Strategy](#), Northern Territory Government, n.d., accessed 16 December 2025.

¹⁰⁴ TAFE NSW, [Ranks to Recognition](#) [website], n.d., accessed 19 November 2025.

¹⁰⁵ TAFE SA, [Transitioning from the ADF](#) [website], n.d., accessed 10 December 2025.

Program/Initiative	How it Supports Transitioning and Transitioned Veterans
Veterans Queensland	Coordinates contact with multiple functions, including supporting employment pathways for ex-ADF personnel into the Queensland Government and key industries like logistic (as well as information for employers). ¹⁰⁶
Veterans South Australia	Provides information on available services, programs and opportunities in South Australia for Defence veterans and their families. To support veteran transition to the civilian workforce, programs such as the South Australian Veteran Employer Network were established. Veterans South Australia also promotes and supports programs run by other organisations, such as <i>TAFE SA's STEP</i> . ¹⁰⁷
Victorian Government Veterans Employment Workshops	Supports veterans in exploring potential career pathways through workshops held regularly by the Office for Veterans. Workshops provide an opportunity for veterans to connect and network with HR representatives, employers, personnel and other veterans. ¹⁰⁸
Victorian Public Sector, Employing Veterans in the Victorian Public Sector	Provides a central hub for veterans to register for employment opportunities in the Victorian Public Sector (VPS). Provides general guidance on rank across the ADF and their approximate equivalent in the VPS. Provides mentor opportunities, information about networking events and case studies. The initiatives outlined by the Victorian Government put into practice the <i>Public Sector Veteran Employment Strategy (2016)</i> . ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Queensland Government, [Veterans Queensland](#) [website], 5 August 2024, accessed 10 December 2025.

¹⁰⁷ Government of South Australia, [Veterans SA](#) [website], n.d., accessed 10 December 2025.

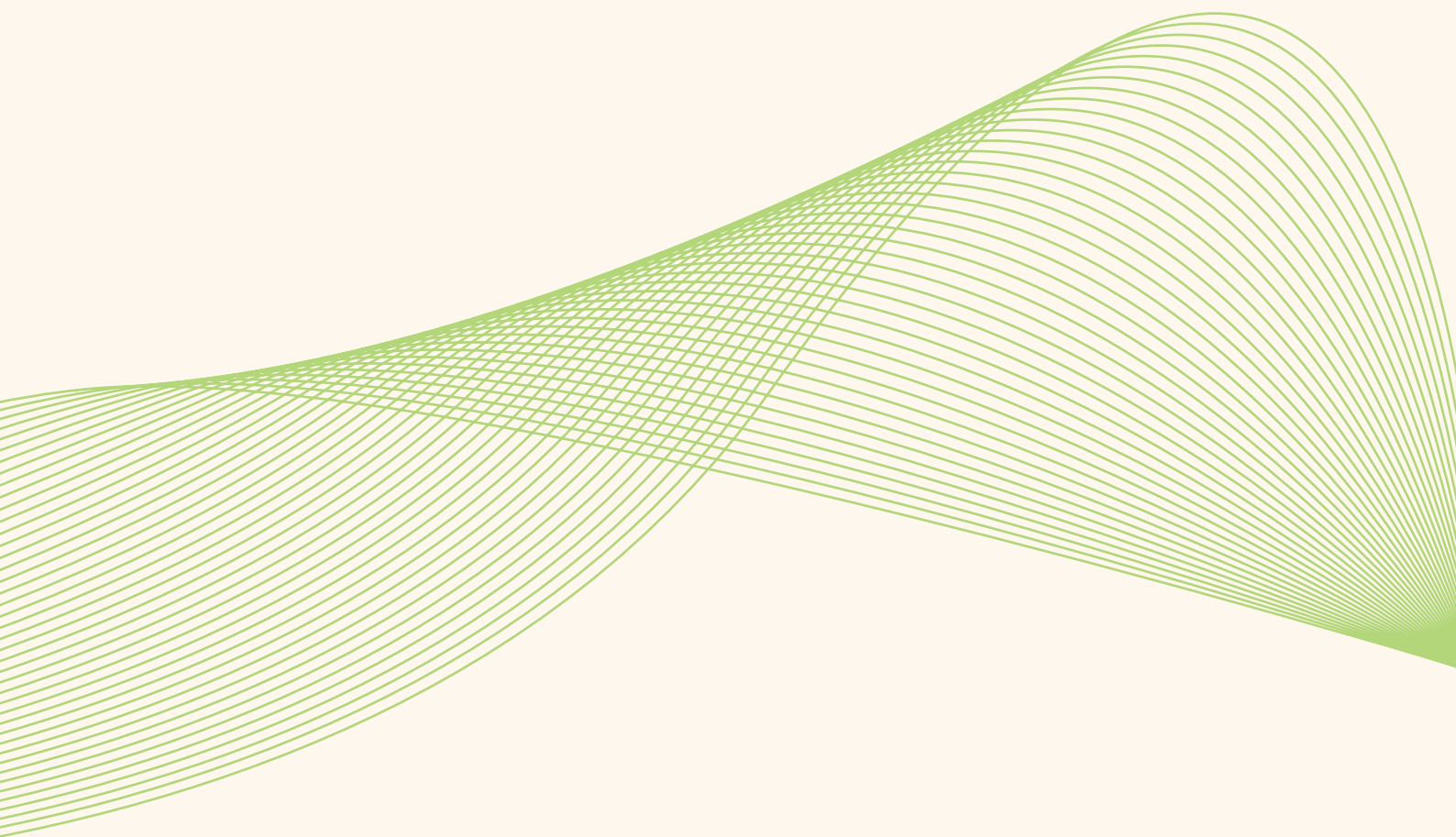
¹⁰⁸ Victorian Government, [Victorian Employment Workshops for Veterans](#) [website], 25 November 2025, accessed 17 December 2025.

¹⁰⁹ Victorian Government, [Opportunities for veterans in the Victorian Public Sector](#) [website], 6 June 2024; Victorian Government, [Employing veterans in the Victorian Public Sector](#) [website], 8 April 2024.

Appendix B

Disaster Recovery Training Products from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

Qualification	<i>PUA50722 Diploma of Public Safety (Recovery Management)</i>
Skill Sets	<i>PUASS00096 Coordinate Functional Recovery Group</i>
	<i>PUASS00097 Lead a Recovery Team</i>
	<i>PUASS00098 Manage a Recovery Centre</i>
	<i>PUASS00099 Manage Recovery – Community Involvement</i>
	<i>PUASS00100 Manage Recovery – Complex Incident Planning</i>
	<i>PUASS00101 Manage Recovery – Data Management</i>
	<i>PUASS00102 Manage Recovery – Finance</i>
	<i>PUASS00103 Manage Recovery – Logistics</i>
	<i>PUASS00104 Manage Recovery – Public Information</i>
Units of Competency	<i>PUARCV004 Apply person-centred approaches to recovery planning and activities</i>
	<i>PUARCV005 Apply recovery concepts and principles</i>
	<i>PUARCV006 Coordinate recovery activities across recovery environments</i>
	<i>PUARCV007 Facilitate long-term recovery planning for a disaster event</i>



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

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

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

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