

Public Skills Australia

Northern Territory Report 2025-2026

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

June 2026



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Introduction

1.1 Background

Public Skills Australia is one of ten Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) that work with our industry-sectors to identify current workforce challenges and potential skills shortages. Public Skills Australia is the JSC that works with the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. JSCs are responsible for:

- › supporting the current Vocational Education and Training (VET) reforms under the National Skills Agreement (NSA)
- › working with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to aid workforce planning, industry stewardship and training package development as well as promoting, implementing and monitoring the use of training packages.

1.2 Local Government Project

The Local Government Skills Audit and Review of the Uptake and Utility of the LGA Local Government Training Package (the Project) emanated from Public Skills Australia's 2024 Federal, State/Territory, and Local Government Workforce Plan. The Project seeks to understand workforce trends, occupational shortages, skills gaps, training needs, and future challenges faced by local councils across Australia.

1.3 Partners

The Project was supported by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) (as a company member of Public Skills Australia and the national peak body for Local Government) and the Local Government Association of Northern Territory (LGANT) as the peak industry association and representative body for all local councils¹ across the Northern Territory. Both ALGA and LGANT provided input into the jurisdictional workshop findings, survey questionnaire, supported survey-related communications, facilitated workshop participation and survey responses follow-up. ALGA further contributed to the longitudinal data provided through provision of the *2018 and 2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Surveys* that have informed this report.

¹ For the purpose of this report, Local Governments will be referred to as local councils.

1.4 2025-26 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capacity Survey

In support of the combined project, Public Skills Australia and ALGA collaborated on the *2025-26 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capacity Survey (the survey)*.

The survey forms part of a longitudinal series, with previous iterations conducted in 2018 and 2022, and minor updates made over time. The survey was hosted on 'Qualtrics,' an online survey platform, through which local councils had the opportunity to participate. Respondents were typically employees responsible for people and culture and learning and development, with input from other local council employees where relevant. Survey responses then underwent a data-cleaning process prior to analysis.²

1.5 Workshops

The workshops aimed to provide in-depth qualitative evidence and involved participation from employees responsible for people and culture as well as learning and development within their local councils. The workshop objectives were to:



1.6 Northern Territory Report 2025-2026

The Northern Territory Report 2025-2026 (the report) is one of the seven jurisdictional reports and offers the outcomes from both the survey and workshops. The analysis provided in this report is based only on the data provided by those local councils who responded to the survey and/or participated in the workshops. References to local councils should be understood to refer to those responding local councils that either completed the survey or participated in workshops – unless otherwise specified.

² This includes interpretation of results being guided by several methodological considerations which can be found at Appendix A.

1.7 Structure

This report is structured into two primary sections:

Section 1: Quantitative Data
› Based on the 2025-26 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capacity Survey › Based on seven responding Northern Territory local councils
Section 2: Qualitative Results
› Based on in-person and online workshops › Based on consultations in these workshops with 14 Northern Territory local councils

1.8 Key Findings

Key findings taken from Northern Territory local councils are summarised below.

Section	Key Findings
Service Delivery Context	Northern Territory local councils are required to provide an array of complex and highly regulated services, especially in remote First Nation communities where local knowledge and contextualisation is critical. This is due to other non-government organisations that would otherwise provide services in larger jurisdictions having limited resources or capacity to deliver such services. In remote areas, services are largely delivered on government funding as local councils are unable to raise rates.

Section	Key Findings
Skills Audit and Assessment	The diverse nature of communities in the Northern Territory requires employees to possess a broad range of skills, irrespective of the occupation. This includes a blend of occupation-specific skills and transferrable skills (including digital literacy, AI expertise, communication, emotional intelligence and problem solving), supported by interpersonal skills (including community engagement, stakeholder management and cross-cultural awareness).
Training Needs and Challenges	VET remains the most relevant pathway for many local council occupations. Relative to the size of its workforce, Northern Territory local councils are using the LGATP regularly across four qualifications, with the Unit of Competency (UoC) 'Work in local government' at the centre of enrolment. However, local councils also want VET courses that reflect the realities of Northern Territory, including cultural, geographic and operational challenges in remote and First Nation communities. Local councils have also been utilising more non-accredited courses to meet training gaps in interpersonal skills such as leadership, people management and cultural awareness.
Future Workforce Outlook	Local councils expect employees with generalist skillsets that can be applied across a range of services and communities to have the highest demand in the future. This includes skills such as emotional intelligence, adaptability and resilience to nurture First Nation employment pathways and mitigate turnover. It is further anticipated that increasing community expectations, and mental health and wellbeing challenges will add to the complexity surrounding service provision into the future having flow on implications for occupations, skills and training.

Quantitative Data

2.1 Service Delivery Context

Key Findings:

Northern Territory local councils are required to provide an array of complex and highly regulated services, especially in remote First Nation communities where local knowledge and contextualisation is critical. This is due to other non-government organisations that would otherwise provide services in larger jurisdictions having limited resources or capacity to deliver such services. In remote areas, services are largely delivered on government funding as local councils are unable to raise rates.

Service delivery contexts are driven by the workforces within local councils. To be able to test and validate these contexts, it is critical to first understand the current workforce profile.

2.1.1 Employment numbers

Key data

The Northern Territory Local Government sector employed 3,000 people as of June 2025, representing an average annual growth rate of 0.5 per cent per year between 2018 and 2025.

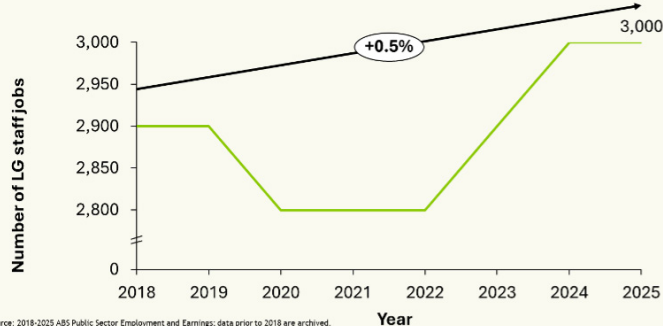


Figure 1:

Northern Territory Local Government employment data, 2018-2025

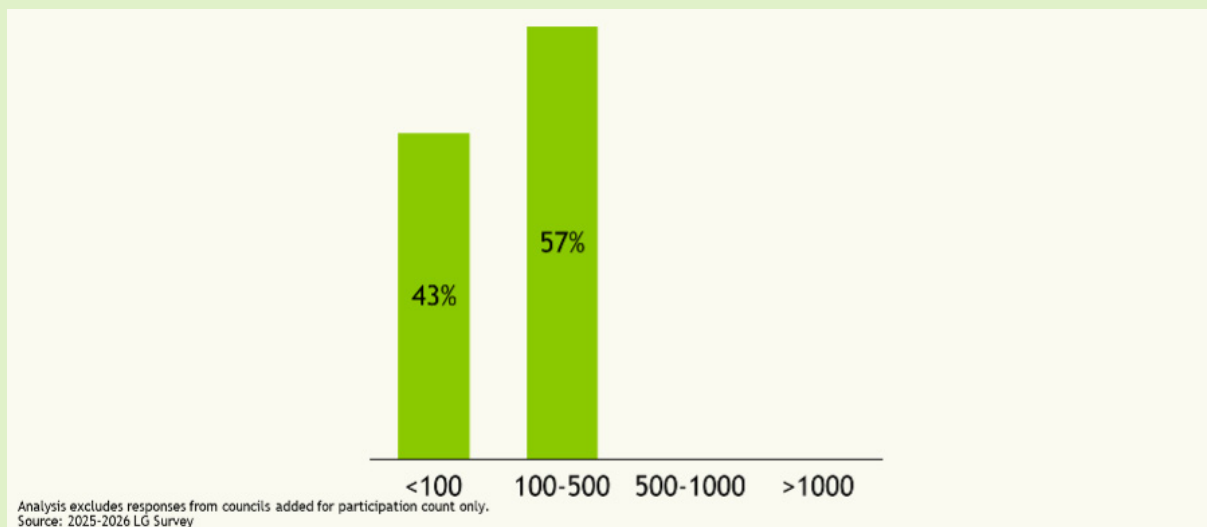
Key data

Based on the survey, 57 per cent of local councils (n=4) anticipated that by June 2026 the size of their workforce would increase, 29 per cent (n=2) expected it to remain the same.

The Northern Territory Local Government sector comprises smaller organisations than other jurisdictions, with all responding local councils employing fewer than 500 employees.

Employment size varies across the responding Northern Territory local councils, ranging from 19 employees at the smallest local council (Coomalie Community Government local council) to 430 employees at the largest (MacDonnell Regional local council).

Figure 2: Northern Territory responding local councils, distribution of employment size, 2025-2026 Survey

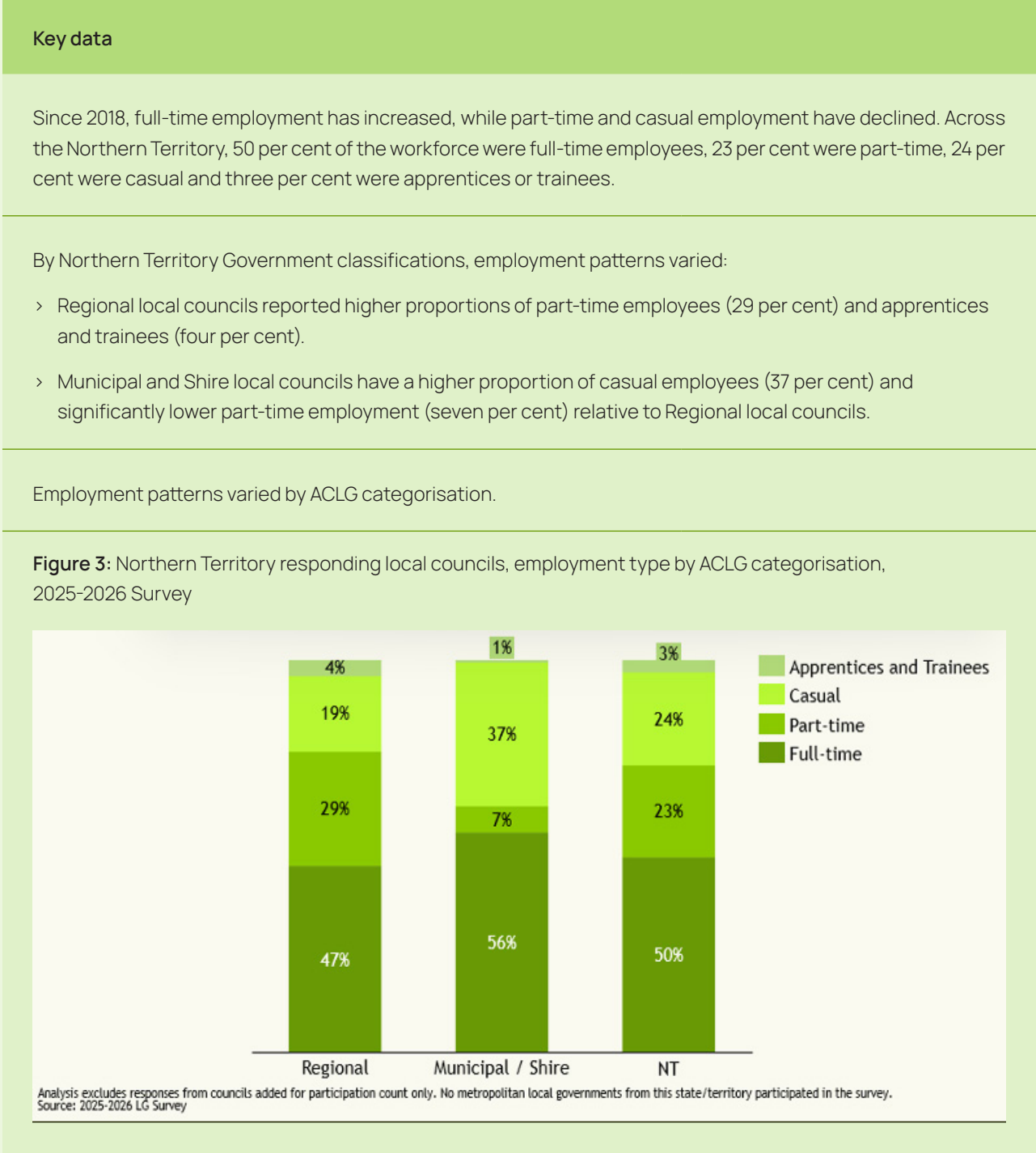


Employment size also varied based on the Australian Classification of Local Governments (ACLG)³ categories:

- › Regional local councils were exclusively small- to mid-sized, with all local councils employing fewer than 500 employees. Two local councils (40 per cent) had fewer than 100 employees, while the remaining three local councils (60 per cent) employed 100-500 employees.
- › Municipal and Shire local councils showed similar distribution, with one local council (50 per cent) employing fewer than 100 employees and one local council (50 per cent) employing 100-500 employees.

³ Multiple systems exist to classify whether a local council is rural/remote, regional or metropolitan. In most instances this classification is self-evident, however there are examples whereby, due to shifting populations a local council could be referred to as metropolitan or regional. Full definition of the Australian Classification of Local Governments categories can be accessed at Appendix B.

2.1.2 Employment categories



2.1.3 Employment gender profile



4 While women do have a growing presence in part-time employment, it may not result in increased senior representation as the survey does not measure progression or tenure.

2.1.4 Workplace diversity⁵

Key data

Fifty-seven per cent (n=4) reported employing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employees. Among these local councils, CALD employees represented an average of 29.5 per cent of the workforce, with representation ranging from 5.8 per cent to 63.3 per cent.

Only one local council (East Arnhem Regional local council) reported employees with disability (three employees), representing 1.1 per cent of that local council's workforce.

One hundred per cent (n=7) of responding local councils reported having First Nations employees.

2.1.5 Workforce age profile

Key data

The Northern Territory Local Government workforce experienced a growth in employees aged 55 and over and a decline in employees aged under 30, while the mid-career cohort has remained relatively stable.

Age distribution varied markedly by Northern Territory local council classification:

- › Regional local councils show an older workforce profile, with employees aged 65 and over accounting for eight per cent of the workforce, while those aged under 30 represent just 15 per cent. The workforce is anchored in mid-career employees aged 30-54, who make up 60 per cent.
- › Municipal and Shire local councils show nearly one-third of employees are aged under 30 (30 per cent), only 4 per cent are aged 65 and over and half of the workforce falls within the mid-career cohort aged 30-54.

⁵ The survey data is subject to limitations, particularly for inclusion-related questions, as most questions were optional and responses relied on self-identification, meaning not all local councils provided data for these measures.

Key data

Figure 5: Northern Territory responding local councils, age profile by ACLG categorisation, 2025-2026 Survey



2.1.6 Employee length of service

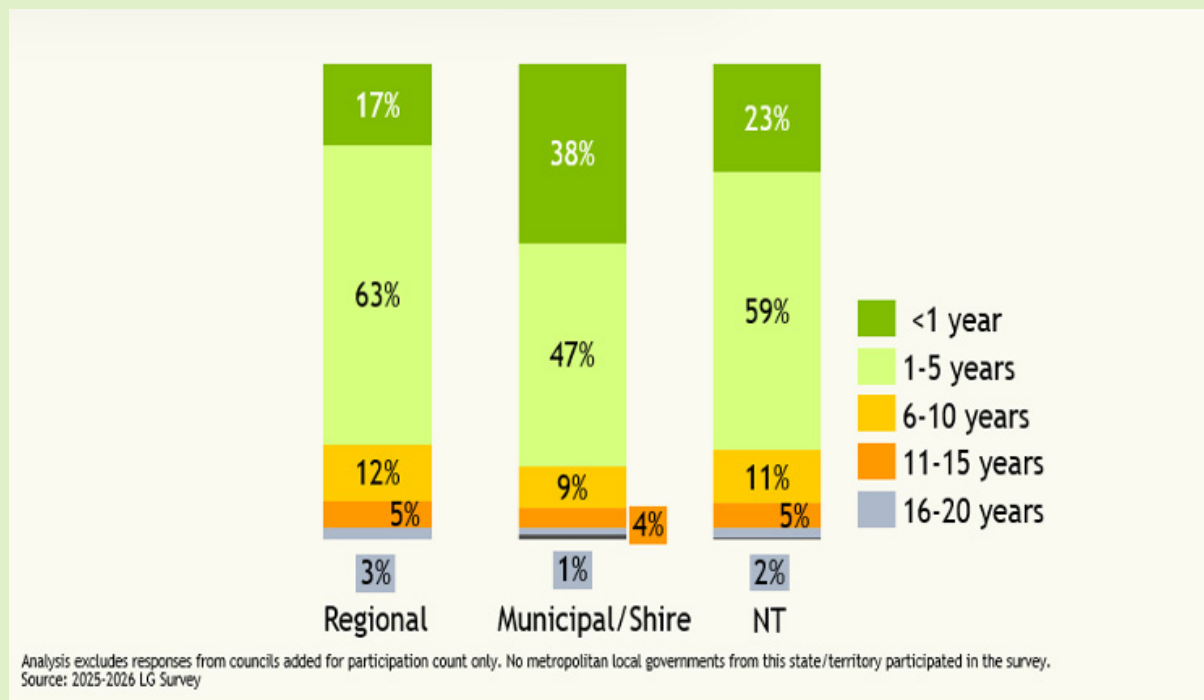
Key data

The workforce is heavily concentrated in the early years of employment, with more than four in five employees (82 per cent) having five years' service or less.

In contrast, only seven per cent of employees have more than ten years of service, with just four employees across all responding local councils having a tenure of 20 years or more.

Key data

Figure 6: Northern Territory responding local councils, employee's length of service by ACLG categorisation 2025-2026 Survey



2.1.7 Employment turnover

Key data

Average unplanned turnover in the Northern Territory (excluding casual, limited tenure, redundant and retiring employees) rose to 37.8 per cent from 29.7 per cent in 2018. Eighty-six per cent of local councils (six local councils) reported experiencing a higher proportion of unplanned turnover compared with retirement in the 12 months to June 2025.

Key data

The occupations experiencing the greatest unplanned turnover according to responding local councils are:

- › housing officers
- › youth workers
- › childcare workers
- › municipal workers
- › works depot
- › technical service occupations.

2.2 Skills Audit and Assessment

Key Findings:

The diverse nature of communities in the Northern Territory requires employees to possess a broad range of skills, irrespective of the occupation. This includes a blend of occupation-specific skills and transferrable skills (including digital literacy, AI expertise, communication, emotional intelligence and problem solving), supported by interpersonal skills (including community engagement, stakeholder management and cross-cultural awareness).

2.2.1 Skills landscape

The current skills landscape identifies the breadth of skills utilised within Local Government based on a thematic analysis of data collection from the Critical Occupations and Skills workshops in each State and Territory. Workshop participants consistently described local council workforce skills as three broad tiers, as shown below:

Interpersonal skills	Transferable professional skills	Occupation-specific skills
These skills enhance interaction, collaboration and relationship-building, focusing on communication and social dynamics. These skills are crucial for teamwork, stakeholder engagement, people management and customer service.	Broad, role-independent capabilities that enable effective work across different functions, departments or industries. These skills are practical and task-oriented, focusing on how work gets done.	Technical or specialised abilities required to perform tasks unique to a specific job or profession. These skills are role-dependent and often linked to formal training, certifications or regulatory requirements.

This thematic analysis identifies the consistent skills clusters that were repeated regardless of different occupations and local contexts and aligns these to the three broad tiers identified above:

Tier	Skills Theme	Specific skill types	
Interpersonal Skills	Communication	› Professional communication (written and verbal) › Report and technical writing › Basic literacy and numeracy › Relationship building and management	› Teamwork › Stakeholder engagement, management and consultation
	Customer and community focus	› Customer service › Community advocacy › Youth engagement › Cross-cultural awareness	› Community consultation and education › Cultural competency
	Leadership, people management and mentoring	› People leadership and management › Mentoring and coaching	› Diplomacy › Influencing › Team leadership
Transferrable Professional Skills	Organisation and workflow	› Digital literacy › Prioritisation and planning › Coordination	› Record keeping / management › Attention to detail
	Project planning and time management	› Project management › Project scoping	› Strategic planning and execution

Tier	Skills Theme	Specific skill types	
Transferrable Professional Skills	Problem solving, critical thinking and analysis	› Political acumen › Strategic thinking › Problem solving	› Innovation › Advisory skills
	Conflict management and enforcement	› Conflict management / resolution › Negotiation	› Behavioural management › Investigation and reporting › De-escalation
	Change management and transformation	› Project management	› Organisational planning
	Data, reporting and analytics	› Monitoring and evaluation	
Occupation Specific Skills	Environmental sustainability	› Environmental management › Climate adaptation	› Disaster resilience
	Digital and technology systems	› Digital / IT systems & software competency › Artificial Intelligence	› Drones
	Risk and safety	› Risk assessment › Risk management › Risk mitigation › Workplace health and safety › Incident management	› Hazards identification and management › Traffic management › Maintenance and planning

Tier	Skills Theme	Specific skill types	
Occupation Specific Skills	Legislation, regulation and governance	› Legislation and regulation interpretation › Audit and compliance › Policy analysis and development	› Confidentiality › Operation and regulation knowledge
	Finance and procurement	› Financial management › Budgeting › Procurement › Circular economy › Grant writing	› Grant management and acquittal › Logistics › Inventory › Asset management
	Technical skills	› HR analytic skills › Diesel filters › Heavy vehicles › Elevated heights › Animal caring	› Plant operations › Small equipment operations › Land management › First aid › Mapping and design

2.2.2 Occupation shortage

Eighty-six per cent of local councils (n=6) reported experiencing occupational shortages in 2024-2025, indicating that shortages are not isolated issues but represent a systemic workforce challenge. Community engagement officers, human resources (HR) professionals and customer service occupations have remained the most common shortages since 2018, with a growing proportion of local councils reporting shortages in these areas.

Table 1: Northern Territory responding local councils, top occupational shortages, 2025-2026 Survey

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=7)
Professional and Technical	Community Engagement Officers	6	85.7%
	WHS Professionals	4	57.1%
	HR Professionals	4	57.1%
	Engineers	2	28.6%
	Accountants	1	14.3%
	Project Managers	1	14.3%
	Asset/Facilities Managers	1	14.3%
	Procurement Managers	1	14.3%
	Librarians	1	14.3%

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=7)
Operational and Trade	Customer Service	4	57.1%
	Care Persons	3	42.9%
	Youth Support Worker	3	42.9%
	Supervisors/Team Leaders	3	28.6%
	Accounts/Payroll Clerk	3	28.6%
	Waste Management/ Recycling	2	28.6%
	Trades - Horticultural	1	14.3%
	Labourers	1	14.3%
	Wastewater/ Sewerage Operator	1	14.3%
	Truck Drivers	1	14.3%

Shortage profiles varied by ACLG category:

Regional local councils cited the most common occupations in shortage were community engagement officers, Work, Health and Safety professionals, HR professionals as well as customer service and care and youth support workers.

Municipal and Shire local councils faced concentrated high-skill shortages for WHS professionals and HR professionals.

Local councils commonly accepted less qualified applicants in community engagement, care and customer service occupations. This was a mitigating strategy against occupational shortages but also undertaken in the knowledge that fully qualified employees were not always necessary with engineering technicians for example being able to fulfill most tasks with appropriate oversight.

2.2.3 Drivers of occupational shortages

Remote location was identified as the primary driver of occupational shortages. See Table 2 below for the full list of significant drivers.

Table 2: Northern Territory responding local councils, drivers of occupational shortages, 2025-2026 Survey

Driver of skills shortages	% local governments responding (n=7)
Regional/rural/remote location	43%
Uncompetitive salaries/remuneration	29%
Lack of housing/accommodation	29%
Insufficient qualifications/training/experience	29%
Insufficient qualified candidates/applicants	14%

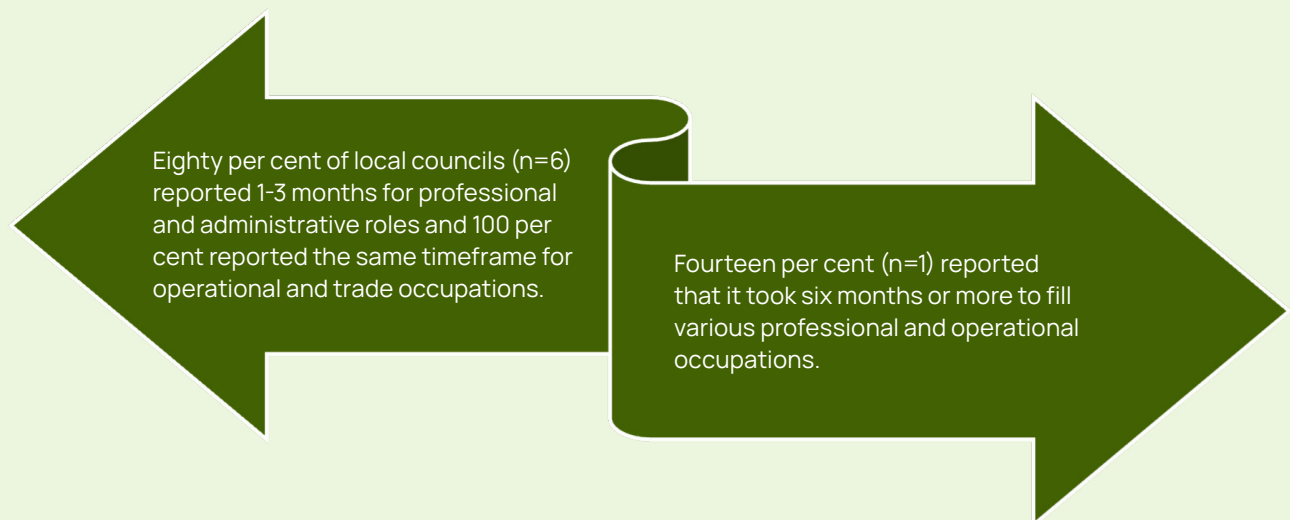
Based on ACLG classification, the following themes emerged:

Regional local councils: Remote location dominates as the primary barrier, compounded by acute housing scarcity and the cultural complexity of a predominantly First Nations workforce, which requires specialist cultural competence. Distance from metropolitan training providers and professional networks creates structural disadvantages in addition to salary constraints.

Municipal and Shire local councils: Remuneration competitiveness and talent attraction are also key workforce pressures. Local councils compete simultaneously with the private sector, mining operations and larger local councils interstate for scarce specialist professionals.

2.2.4 Vacancies

Across the Local Government industry-sector, 86 per cent (n=6) were not fully staffed, with average vacancy rates of 9.6 per cent among the four local councils that reported vacancy numbers. There were similar vacancy rates between regional and municipal and shire local councils.



2.2.5 Strategies to address occupational shortages and skills gaps

Local councils noted the following as successful strategies to fill occupational gaps:

Reskilled or upskilled existing employees (71 per cent (n=5))
Used advertising and social media platforms (71 per cent (n=5))
Engaged external recruitment agencies (29 per cent (n=2))
Reported using contingent employees (29 per cent (n=2))
Sought candidates through graduate pathways (14 per cent (n=1))

To address skill gaps, local councils identified the following:

Reported offering informal on-the-job training (71 per cent (n=5))
Provided targeted training courses (71 per cent (n=5))
Allowed employees to temporarily 'act' in higher positions or cross into other occupations to develop internal capability while filling immediate gaps (43 per cent (n=3))
Offered coaching and mentoring (43 per cent (n=3))
Facilitated secondments or exchanges to other workplaces (29 per cent (n=2))

2.2.6 Service and resource sharing

None of the responding Northern Territory local councils reported undertaking service and/or resource sharing with other councils. However, many councils already aggregate services internally across multiple dispersed settlements, reducing the marginal benefit of formal in-ter-council sharing arrangements.

2.3 Training Needs and Challenges

Key Findings:

VET remains the most relevant pathway for many local council occupations. Relative to the size of its workforce, Northern Territory local councils are using the LGATP regularly across four qualifications, with the Unit of Competency (UoC) 'Work in local government' at the centre of enrolment. However, local councils also want VET courses that reflect the realities of Northern Territory, including cultural, geographic and operational challenges in remote and First Nation communities. Local councils have also been utilising more non-accredited courses to meet training gaps in interpersonal skills such as leadership, people management and cultural awareness.

2.3.1 Training needs

Unmet training needs are more concentrated in leadership, supervision, change management and digital capability compared to 2018, when gaps were largely technical and operational and driven by limited local course availability and logistics. See Figure 7 below for unmet training needs in descending order.



Figure 7: Northern Territory responding local councils, unmet training needs, 2025-2026 Survey

Unmet training needs are driven by lack of availability of local quality training and budget, time, and mandatory compliance requirements as detailed in Table 3 below. Unmet training needs in 2025 largely reflect the same access and cost barriers evident in 2018, including limited locally available courses, high travel and delivery costs and the logistical difficulty of training dispersed workforces.

Table 3: Northern Territory responding local councils, drivers of unmet training needs, 2025-2026 Survey

Driver of unmet training need	% local governments responding (n=7)
Travel cost of sending staff away to attend training is too high	57%
Council budget is insufficient for this training	43%
Employees haven't had time to attend training	43%
Lack of time to organise training	43%
Unable to source quality training programs and/or trainers that can be delivered locally	43%

Driver of unmet training need	% local governments responding (n=7)
Unable to source training programs with relevant content	43%
Lack of support from managers/supervisors to send staff on training courses	29%
Mandatory training consuming the entire training budget	29%

2.3.2 Training expenditure

Most local councils maintained the same training investment despite changes in government funding levels. Regional local councils (40 per cent) are more likely to have increased their overall total training expenditure compared to Municipal and Shire local councils. A detailed breakdown is provided in Table 4 below.

Pressures			
Increased focus on providing training and development opportunities for both central office and community-based employees			
Local councils relied on cost-effective, tailored external facilitators to address leadership vacancies			
Table 4: Northern Territory responding local councils, change in training expenditure by ACLG, 2025-2026 Survey			
Change in training expenditure	Regional	Municipal/Shire	NT
Decreased	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (14%)
Increased	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	2 (29%)
Remained the same	3 (60%)	1 (50%)	4 (57%)
Total	5	2	7

2.3.3 Preferred delivery mode

Blended learning through a combination of face-to-face and online training is the preferred delivery mode, which was selected by 57 per cent of local councils (n=4). Table 5 below provides the detailed breakdown of ACLG classification.

Table 5: Northern Territory responding local councils, preferred training delivery mode by Northern Territory Council type, 2025-2026 Survey

Preferred training delivery mode	Regional	Municipal/Shire	NT
Blended learning (in person, self-paced and virtual)	3 (60%)	1 (50%)	4 (57%)
In person, face-to-face delivery	1 (20%)	1 (50%)	2 (29%)
Virtual delivery	1 (20%)	0	1 (14%)
Total	5	2	7

2.3.4 Training delivery challenges

Local councils identified the following distinct challenges affecting training delivery overall, alongside additional constraints specific to in-person delivery.

Cross-cutting training delivery challenges:	
Workforce capability constraints	Limited literacy and numeracy skills among community-based employees restrict participation in training.
Time to complete training	Employees struggle to find time for training alongside operational duties, particularly where training is ongoing or mandatory.
Sustaining compliance	High employee turnover increases the cost and effort required to keep all employees up to date with training.

Challenges for in-person delivery:	
Cost and logistics	Travel costs, remoteness and dispersed locations make in-person training expensive and difficult to coordinate.
Availability and suitability of training	Local councils face limited access to locally available training, including culturally appropriate programs.
Planning and coordination burden	Organising face-to-face delivery across multiple locations places significant strain on limited local council capacity.

2.3.5 First Nations training and development

One local council reported undertaking joint training with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), specifically cultural awareness training. This likely reflects the Northern Territory context, where cultural capability is often embedded within local councils through a high proportion of First Nations employees, strong community governance structures and day-to-day engagement with local communities. Practical constraints in remote settings, including limited organisational capacity, training budgets and logistical challenges, may also limit the uptake of structured joint training initiatives with ACCOs.

2.3.6 Uptake of Local Government Training Package

The LGATP superseded the LGA04 in February 2021. This reduced the Local Government Training Package from 37 qualifications to five. The five qualifications are as follows:

- › Certificate II in Local Government
- › Certificate III in Local Government
- › Certificate IV in Local Government
- › Diploma of Local Government
- › Diploma of Local Government - Elected Member

Of these qualifications, four are being used with enrolment and completion data provided in Figures 8 – 11 below.

Figure 8: LGATP Certificate II, Enrolments and Completions, 2019-2024

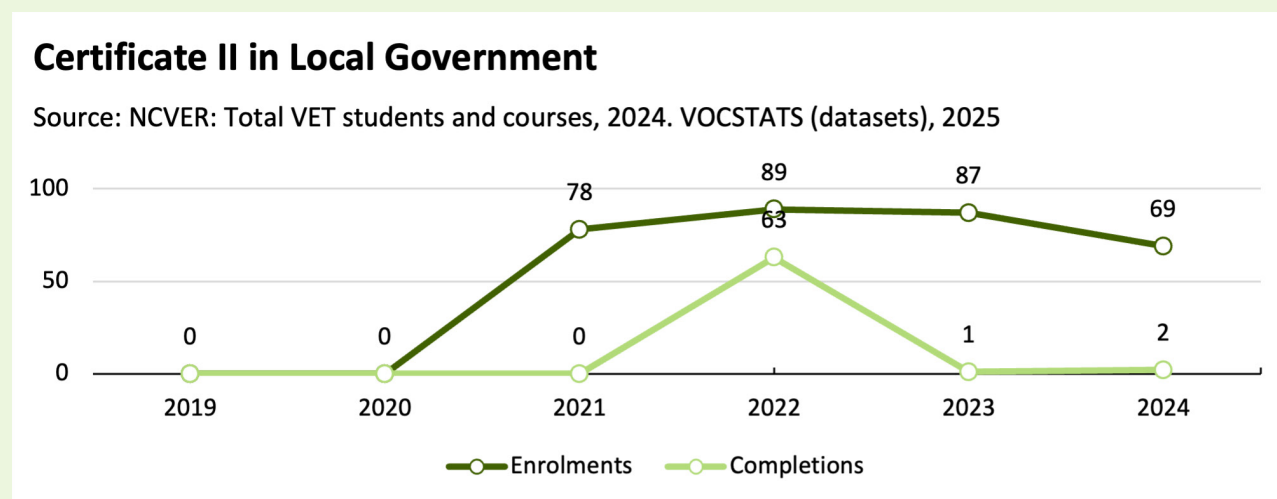


Figure 9: LGATP Certificate III, Enrolments and Completions, 2019-2024

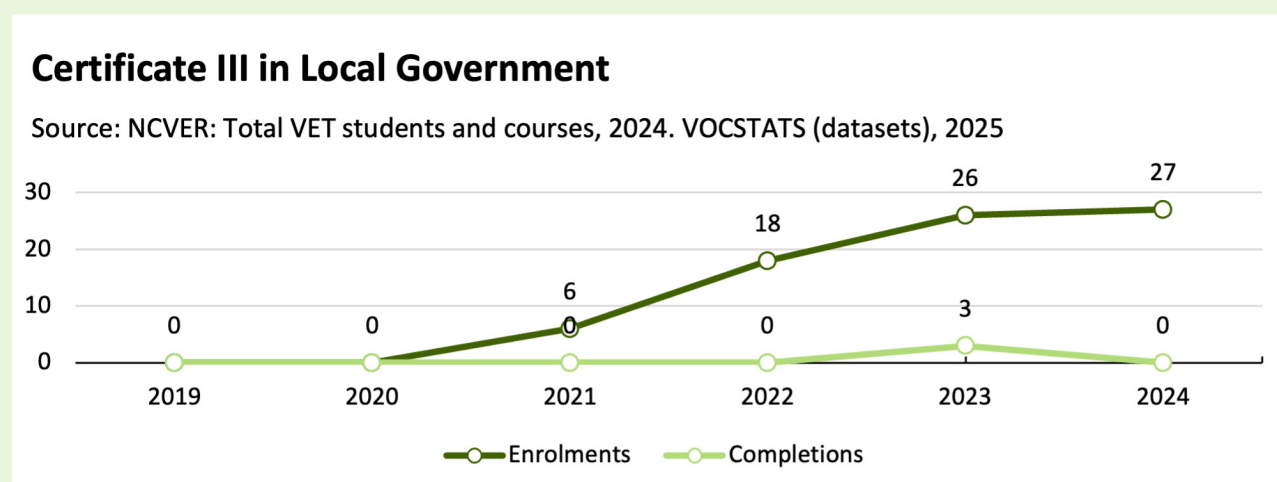


Figure 10: LGATP Certificate IV, Enrolments and Completions, 2019-2024

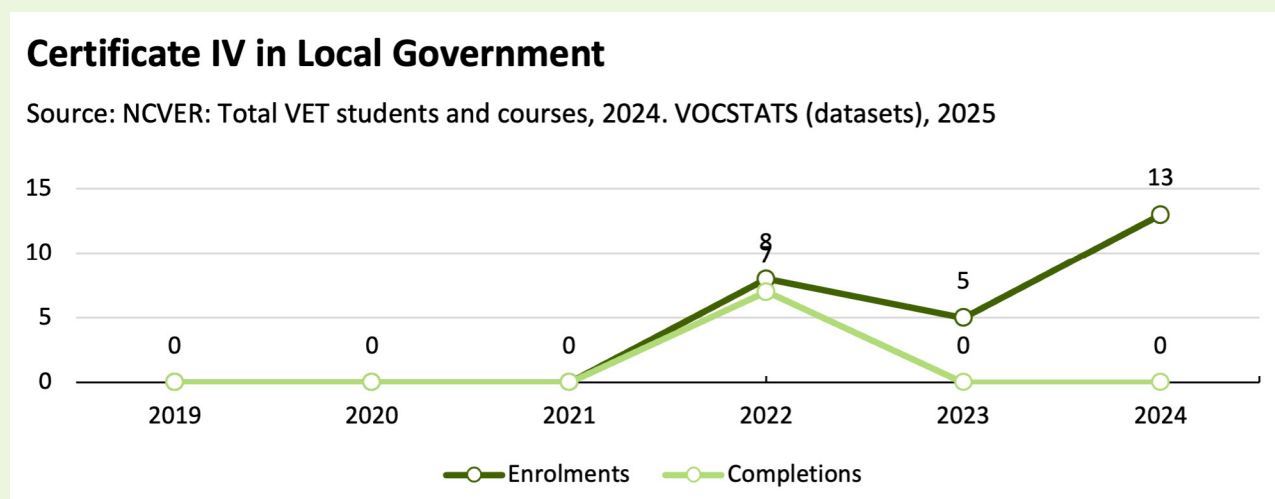
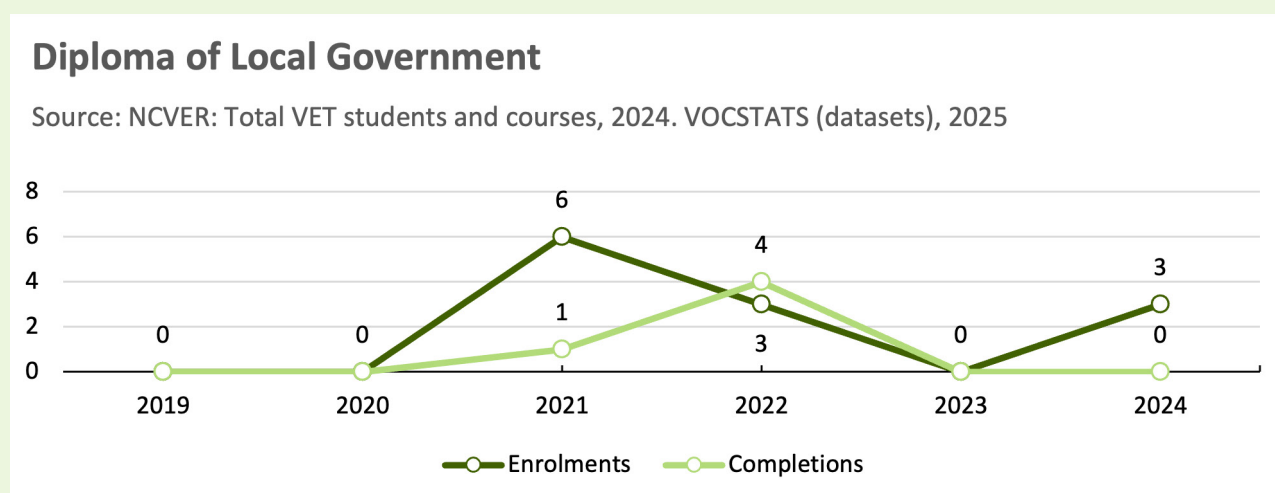


Figure 11: LGATP Diploma of Local Government, Enrolments and Completions, 2019-2024



A further breakdown by Unit of Competency (UoC) is provided in Table 6 below. UoCs are focused on core Local Government functions, such as working in Local Government, rates administration and community consultation and engagement. Overall, the training package is intended to support work-related training, rather than act primarily as a recruitment pathway into the approximately 400 occupations within Local Government. Since the LGATP was reviewed enrolments across the UoC are concentrated in a small number of UoCs, most notably 'Work in local government' which accounted for nearly half of all UoC enrolments in 2024.

Table 6: LGATP Enrolment data by Unit of Competency, 2022-2024

Units of Competency	Enrolments		
	2022	2023	2024
LGACOR001 - Work in local government	96	91	84
LGACOR005 - Represent council in the community	0	12	18
LGAOPS002 - Prepare site for new operational works	6	15	18
LGAOPS001 - Prepare for operational works	4	3	17
LGACOR008 - Provide advice to council	0	1	9
LGACOR007 - Conduct community consultations	0	3	8
LGAOPS004 - Evaluate works maintenance needs and priorities	3	2	8
LGAREG003 - Manage conflict situations in a regulatory environment	0	0	6
LGAOPS003 - Develop works maintenance schedule	3	8	3
LGACOR006 - Provide public education	0	0	2
LGACOR010 - Oversee asset management strategy	2	0	2
LGAOPS005 - Manage civil plant and resources	0	4	0
TOTALS	114	139	175

2.3.7 Uptake of apprentices/trainees

Most report inadequate trainee and/or apprentice intake. Eighty-six per cent of local councils (six local councils) reported that they do not believe they are taking on enough trainees to meet future skilling needs, while 71 per cent (five local councils) reported their current apprentice intake is insufficient.

Local councils identified a common set of constraints limiting apprentice and trainee uptake, centred on workforce capacity, supervision availability, and recruitment feasibility. Key barriers include:

Workforce capacity and resourcing constraints	Insufficient time and resources to support apprentices and trainees alongside core service delivery with high vacancy levels reducing the capacity to take on and develop new entrants.
Supervision and mentoring limitations	Local councils are limited in providing appropriate on-the-job supervision and progression opportunities.
Recruitment challenges for community-based occupations	Where candidates are unwilling to travel or work in remote locations, this limits the pool of suitable entrants even where training opportunities exist.
Budget pressures	Local councils are restricted in funding and sustaining apprenticeship and traineeship positions, particularly where supervisory support is already stretched.

2.3.8 Engagement with State and Federal initiatives

All responding local councils had engaged with state or federal education, training, or other initiatives to support workforce development over recent years:

Initiatives provided by Local Government Association of Northern Territory (LGANT) and traineeships.	Local councils also reported engaging with foundation Skills programs for literacy/numeracy, compliance training (First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)), equipment certifications and Tangentyere Employment Services.
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2.4 Future Workforce Outlook

Key Findings:

Local councils expect employees with generalist skillsets that can be applied across a range of services and communities to have the highest demand in the future. This includes skills such as emotional intelligence, adaptability and resilience to nurture First Nation employment pathways and mitigate turnover. It is further anticipated that increasing community expectations, and mental health and wellbeing challenges will add to the complexity surrounding service provision into the future having flow on implications for occupations, skills and training.

2.4.1 Emerging occupational shortages

The same occupations that are hardest to fill now are expected to remain critical in the future. Community engagement officers (57 per cent), HR professionals (43 per cent), and youth support workers (29 per cent) remain in persistent shortage as predicted in 2018, while work health and safety (WHS) professionals (57 per cent) and customer service (57 per cent) emerged as new predicted shortages. Table 7 below details the full range of critical future shortages.

Table 7: Northern Territory responding local councils, occupational shortages in the future, 2025-2026 Survey

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=7)
Professional and Technical	WHS Professionals	4	57.1%
	Community Engagement Officers	4	57.1%
	HR Professionals	3	42.9%
	Engineers	2	28.6%
	Accountants	2	28.6%
	Governance/Risk Managers	2	28.6%
	Project Managers	2	28.6%
	Asset/Facilities Managers	1	14.3%
	Librarians	1	14.3%
	Welfare Workers	1	14.3%
Operational and Trade	Customer Service	4	57.1%
	Supervisors/Team Leaders	3	42.9%
	Accounts/Payroll Clerk	3	42.9%
	Care Persons	3	42.9%
	Youth Support Worker	2	28.6%
	Trades - Horticultural	1	14.3%
	Truck Drivers	1	14.3%
	Labourers	1	14.3%
	Waste Management/Recycling	1	14.3%
	Trades - Fabrication	1	14.3%

2.4.2 Factors impacting future skilling needs

Funding pressures remain a consistent driver of future skilling needs, continuing to shape workforce size, capability, and service delivery decisions.

However, the focus has shifted away from earlier expectations of technology-led disruption, such as computerisation and drone use, toward growing community needs, improving infrastructure delivery and increasing governance and compliance requirements. Table 8 below provides the full breakdown of factors impacting future skilling needs.

Table 8: Northern Territory responding local councils, factors impacting future skilling needs, 2025-2026 Survey

Factor	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=7)
Changes in government funding levels	6	86%
Increasing community needs and expectations	5	71%
Major council or external infrastructure projects	5	71%
Growth in local government area	5	71%
Increasing levels of governance and compliance	4	57%
Generational workforce changes	3	43%

2.4.3 Future occupational analysis

In 2025-26, 43 per cent of responding local councils reported undertaking analysis of future occupations and requirements, an increase from 17 per cent in 2018. While this represents a notable rise, workforce analysis remains relatively limited overall, suggesting that local councils continue to face capacity constraints in undertaking formal workforce planning.

2.4.4 New occupations expected to emerge

Four responding local councils identified new occupations expected to emerge over the next three years, which includes:

Multi-skilled generalist occupations	The small scale of many local councils means they need versatile employees who can work across multiple service delivery areas. One local council specifically noted that it combined occupations requiring remote-work capability to service multiple dispersed communities, reflecting the Northern Territory’s geographic challenges.
Specialist compliance and regulatory management	WHS manager; IT department, waste, and environment manager; assets manager and community safety manager.

2.4.5 External pressures on workforce attraction and retention

Local councils noted the following external pressures ranked by significant impact:

Housing pressures Are the most significant impact, reflecting housing shortages in remote communities.	Community hostility/customer behaviour Reflecting remote service contexts, cross-cultural complexity and heightened exposure to community tension and safety risks.
Natural disasters Reflects the Northern Territory’s cyclone exposure and remote emergency response challenges.	Mental ill health Reflects workforce wellbeing challenges amplified by remote area isolation, family separation, community hostility pressures, and limited access to mental health services
Long term funding certainty Reflecting uncertainty about maintaining workforce levels in constrained fiscal environments.	

2.4.6 Future skills needs and strategies

The following strategies were cited by responding local councils as needed to address future skill needs:

Funding and financial support	Increased general funding and specific funding for remote training delivery where travel, dispersed locations and limited local provision increase delivery effort and expense.
Multi-level government coordination	Increased Territory and Federal Government involvement, recognising that local council-scale challenges require intervention beyond local capacity.
External recruitment support	Engagement of external community recruitment providers, noting that very small local councils lack internal HR capability and struggle to compete in tight labour markets without specialist support.
Shared resources through peak body facilitation	Stronger Northern Territory-wide collaboration to sustain specialist capabilities that small local councils cannot maintain independently.

To address these themes, the following strategies were identified by local councils:

86 per cent (n=6)	57 per cent (n=4)	29 per cent (n=2)	29 per cent (n=2)	29 per cent (n=2)
Targeted training and development	Flexible training and development	Improving access to educational opportunities.	Building industry partnerships.	Sharing resource arrangements.

Qualitative Results

3.1 Workshop Introduction

Across October 2025, a series of Local Government Skills Audit Workshops were undertaken involving representatives from 14 of the 18 councils in Northern Territory. This section provides an overview of the insights from these workshops, capturing both the shared and unique experiences of local councils in different settings. In the Northern Territory, workshops were held in:

Workshop Location	Date	Participating Local councils
Darwin	21 October 2025	1. Belyuen Community Government Council 2. City of Darwin 3. East Arnhem Regional Council 4. Groote Archipelago Regional Council 5. Tiwi Islands Regional Council 6. Wagait Shire Council 7. West Arnhem Regional Council 8. West Daly Regional Council
Alice Springs	22 October 2025	9. Alice Springs Town Council 10. MacDonnell Regional Council 11. Central Desert Regional Council
Online	28 October 2025	12. Barkly Regional Council 13. Coomalie Community Government Council 14. Victoria Daly Regional Council

Workshops involved four sessions, exploring the themes identified (giving rise to findings and insights):

**Service Delivery
Context**

**Skills Audit and
Assessment**

**Training Needs
and Challenges**

**Future Workforce
Outlook**

3.2 Service Delivery Context

The first activity focused on identifying workforce challenges and service delivery shifts across local councils. Participants worked in small groups to explore how these challenges vary by location and size. Through focused discussions, local council employees examined which services are most impacted by occupations and skills gaps, how these services are evolving and what skills and knowledge are becoming more important. This section summarises the key insights that emerged from those conversations.

The range of operating environments and scope of responsibilities across Northern Territory local councils is diverse.

The service delivery landscape for local councils in the Northern Territory is diverse, however across all areas, housing shortages, affordability issues, geographical isolation, and the high cost of living present significant barriers to both service delivery and workforce stability. Some other distinctive features of the Northern Territory service delivery landscape include:

The broad range of services provided	Community services, such as childcare, aged care and NDIS programs, are within the remit of many Northern Territory local councils and are additional to their core service delivery responsibilities which include municipal and essential services. This expanded remit means Northern Territory local councils, who often step in as providers of last resort, are required to provide complex and highly regulated services, especially in remote areas where other organisations have limited resources or capacity to deliver.
Significant and diverse First Nations populations	In some regions, local councils exclusively service First Nations communities, making local knowledge and contextualisation critical for effective delivery.
Reliance on government funding to provide services	Many Northern Territory local councils cannot raise revenue through local rates because much of the land they administer is not rateable, which make these local councils dependent on government funding to operate. Such funding is often tied to strict compliance and reporting requirements, which can create a disproportionate burden on smaller local councils with limited corporate/administrative capacity.
Transient populations	Local councils face frequent population fluctuations, which increase pressure on services, particularly when rising population numbers do not lead to an increase in ratepayers.
Smaller local council teams require employees to perform multiple functions	Smaller local councils operate with small teams where employees often 'wear many hats,' due to insufficient resourcing to enable dedicated specialist positions. For example, it is not uncommon for a Municipal Services Manager to also provide WHS advice, or for HR managers to double as ICT support.

Service delivery spans across a large range of service areas in the Northern Territory.

Participating local councils identified certain service areas as essential but challenging to deliver. The service areas are:

Local infrastructure maintenance and asset management	Local councils oversee the maintenance and repair of roads and other infrastructure, often with limited resources and technical employees. The challenge of keeping assets up to standard is a significant financial burden for local councils, in one example a local council cited the cost of infrastructure and asset upkeep to \$3 million annually.
Waste management	A core responsibility for all local councils, involving regular collection, disposal and compliance with environmental regulations. Local councils must adapt to changing legislation, which can add complexity to service delivery.
Community services	Provided in a variety of ways by local councils, many of which are highly regulated and require formal qualifications, such as childcare, aged care, youth work, NDIS services and night patrol. Night patrol stands out as a distinctly place-based service, designed and delivered in line with community needs, often serving as a culturally appropriate first responder for domestic violence and mental health issues.
Community infrastructure and programs	Involves management of community facilities such as pools and libraries and delivery of sport and recreation programs. These services require ongoing investment in staffing, maintenance, and program development.
Local law enforcement	Required by local councils through enforcing local by-laws and providing animal control services, responding to community concerns, and promoting safety. Local councils face the challenge of implementing and enforcing by-laws due to resource constraints and cross-cultural differences found in communities, especially in remote areas.
Utilities	Provided by select local councils who are responsible for supporting this critical service for the region. This includes utilities like power and water, particularly where other providers are absent and involves maintaining infrastructure and ensuring service reliability.
Tree management, or arborist services	Management of risks from hazardous trees in the local council areas. This is a critical role for some local councils who face shortages of qualified employees in their region and across the entire Northern Territory.

Ferry transport

Within the remit of Tiwi Islands Regional Local council, who are responsible for operating a ferry transport service in the region. This ensures community connectivity and access to essential services, however, can be challenged by high compliance requirements and difficulty employing people with the skills required.

The operating environment in the Northern Territory presents a range of service delivery challenges.

Local councils across the Northern Territory face a range of service delivery challenges, shaped by local context, resource constraints and increasing community expectations. Service delivery challenges across the Northern Territory include:

Increasing regulatory and compliance requirements

Local councils are subject to extensive reporting obligations, exacerbated by their reliance on grant funding, and manage rising liability and risk, often with limited financial resources. The compliance demands are layered on top of existing workloads. At the same time, many local councils recognised the importance of maintaining good governance and processes to ensure compliance with codes of conduct, particularly around local council decision-making.

Digital gap and technology change

Urban and metropolitan local councils across Australia are digitise at a faster pace than Northern Territory local councils, such as in software, AI, and automation. Technology changes in Northern Territory local councils often move out of step with the realities of service delivery, and working with outdated systems is detrimental to both operational efficiency and career development and retention of employees.

Literacy and numeracy gaps

Local councils report that some employees have limited literacy and numeracy skills needed to access and benefit from training, which limits their ability to take on new responsibilities. Training programs are often inaccessible or not tailored to the needs of employees, further compounding the challenge.

Increasing cost pressures and funding uncertainty

Supply chain costs, cost of living and rising compliance demands all contribute to financial strain. Local councils are also grappling with changes to funding models, such as the transition from Community Development Program (CDP) to the Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES), which creates uncertainty about future workforce support.

Cultural competency	Cultural competency is critical to effective service delivery yet challenging to deliver effectively due to the diversity of cultures across the Northern Territory.
Service pressures	Service demands frequently shift due to population fluctuations and residents residing in a mix of rate-paying and non-rate-paying properties. For local councils with a greater reliance on revenue generated from rate-paying properties, sudden increases in population numbers increases service pressures without providing additional revenue. This unpredictability makes it challenging for local councils to deliver adequate services and to plan effectively. Additionally, rural, and remote communities often expect the same level of services as larger towns and cities, further compounding these pressures.

3.3 Skills Audit and Assessment

The second activity focused on identifying the occupations most critical for delivering council services both now and in the future. Through small-group discussions, participants identified and debated up to ten priority occupations, drawing on shared experiences of service delivery, workforce pressures and future readiness. These conversations revealed common challenges, emerging occupation types and the diversity of occupation needs across council types and regions.

There was no consistent pattern in the critical occupations identified, with significant variability across local councils.

Participants identified a wide range of critical occupations, but no consistent 'top 10' list emerged across the state. Occupation priorities varied according to local council type, service delivery model, and geographic context, highlighting the diversity of workforce needs.

Community-focused occupations: These include aged care, childcare, youth workers, NDIS services, night patrol, community program coordinator.	Infrastructure and trades occupations: Trades, particularly mechanics, works officer.	Internal operations occupations: Managerial occupations including project manager, operational manager and Contract Manager, IT officer, HR officer, administration officer, finance officer.
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Frequently cited critical occupations mentioned across workshops are captured in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Critical occupations identified across workshops

Role	Frequency
1. Community services occupations (including aged care, childcare, youth workers, NDIS services, night patrol)	9
2. Managerial occupations (including Project Manager, Operational Manager and Contract Manager)	5
3. WHS Officer	5
4. Trades, particularly mechanic	5
5. Works Officer	4
6. IT Officer	3
7. HR Officer	3
8. Administration Officer	3
9. Community Program Coordinator	3
10. Finance Officer	2

These occupations are crucial both now and, in the future, yet they are challenging to fill.

Participants categorised all priority occupations as important now, and important in the future, noting the following challenges:

Keeping pace with meeting regulatory requirements and increasingly high public expectations for technology. For example, ICT services are lagging potentially making local council IT occupations in the Northern Territory less attractive for career development.	There is a growing focus on employee wellbeing, including psychosocial risks as local councils are increasingly involved in delivering highly regulated community services.
Many managers and technical employees report spending significant time on administrative tasks, which can detract from their core duties.	Competition from the private sector, particularly for Project Managers, who are in short supply across the Northern Territory.
Workforce shortages particularly in project managers means that many employees from technical or operational backgrounds (sometimes relatively early in their careers) are promoted to managers with limited formal management training or support.	

Local councils across the Northern Territory have expressed strong interest in exploring different service delivery models to ensure all critical occupations can be filled and service needs met. Local councils advocated for a move towards shared services, where local councils collaborate to provide corporate or technical services, particularly for occupations like HR, finance, and mechanics. It was noted that this arrangement had been in place previously but was reduced through a series of policy shift. Current arrangements are now maintained on an ad hoc basis.

Other models and workforce initiatives discussed in the workshops included outsourcing (contracting external providers) and offshoring (employing overseas providers).

3.4 Training Needs and Challenges

This activity explored how well current training pathways support priority occupations and skills. Using a workshop survey tool and group discussions, participants assessed the relevance of Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education and non-accredited training.⁶ They identified barriers to VET participation and shared perspectives on its accessibility, efficiency and quality.

Local councils see VET and short courses as the most relevant pathways.

Participants identified the following themes in relation to the different training types:

VET remains the most relevant pathway for many local council occupations, particularly technical, operational and community-facing occupations. Many occupations require employees to hold specific VET qualifications to meet compliance requirements (e.g., early childhood education and care settings, aged care).

Micro-credentials and short courses are seen as an optimal approach as they provide targeted training with shorter duration, which is preferable for local councils and trainees. This is because it aligns with urgent workforce needs and reduces time away from work and family.

Non-accredited training is valued for skills such as leadership, management, cultural development and resilience. Local councils appreciate its flexibility and ability to adapt to local contexts. However, non-accredited training was consistently ranked lower than VET across all workshops, reflecting the critical importance of technical skills and formal recognition delivered through VET.

6 This report refers to Vocational Education and Training (VET), non-accredited training, and higher education (HE). Where these terms are used, they are to be understood to refer to the following: VET - units of competencies and qualifications contained in Training Packages used within the VET sector delivered through Registered Training Organisations and TAFEs (Technical and Further Education); Non-accredited training - training that is not aligned to VET units of competencies or qualifications; and HE - education delivered by universities and other similar institutions.

VET facilitates work-related training but lacks contextualisation.

While VET overwhelmingly supports work-related training in Northern Territory, some participants were unclear on its role and raised concerns about relevance:

Training is often insufficiently contextualised to the unique Northern Territory operating environment. Local councils want courses that reflect the realities of Northern Territory local council work, including cultural, geographic and operational challenges in remote and First Nations communities, with case studies drawn from real-world experiences.

Current VET courses may at times include 'superfluous' content that does not align with operational priorities in remote communities.

Participants frequently called for more on-the-job training, which was seen as more accessible and culturally appropriate.

Local councils identified several barriers limiting VET's effectiveness.

Local councils identified several barriers that need to be addressed for VET to better support workforce needs for priority occupations:

Geographic isolation: Many VET programs require travel to urban centres, which is costly and disruptive, especially for remote employees and their families. For example, on Tiwi Islands, it is culturally appropriate for families to travel together, increasing costs. Local councils reported spending more on travel than on actual training.

Limited local delivery and supervision: Few Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are willing or able to deliver tailored, in-community training, especially for niche or highly contextual skills. Regional local councils stressed the need for RTOs experienced in delivering training in community settings and to First Nations learners, including cultural sensitivity and use of translated materials or interpreters. Some qualifications require supervision (e.g. mechanic apprenticeships), which is challenging where senior employees are unavailable.

Course length: Standard VET courses often take one to two years, which is impractical for remote or transient workforces and out of step with local councils' urgent need to fill skills gaps.

Literacy requirements: Limited English literacy and digital skills among some employees restrict access to VET training. Many First Nations employees speak English as a third or fourth language and find the standard of English used in VET courses a significant barrier to participation. The level of evidence RTOs is required to collect to certify participant competency is restrictive to participants with limited literacy, particularly limiting training effectiveness when the extent of the tasks required are not relevant to the core competencies.

Cost issues: Local councils expressed frustration that short courses which train participants in specific and relevant skill sets are often significantly more expensive than lengthy courses (which often contain unnecessary content and are time consuming).

3.5 Future Workforce Outlook

This activity focused on determining the skills required both now and in the future. Participants worked in groups to discuss evolving skill requirements and to build shared understanding across local councils. These conversations highlighted shifts in capability needs, emerging skill gaps and regional variations in workforce priorities. The following sections summarise the key insights and implications that emerged from these discussions.

Skills demand occurs across three 'tiers'

Workshop participants consistently described council workforce skills falling into three broad tiers, as shown below (while noting that some overlap exists between these categories):

Occupation-specific skills:

Technical or specialised abilities required to perform tasks unique to a specific occupation or profession.

These skills are occupation-dependent and often linked to formal training, certifications, or regulatory requirements.

Transferable professional skills:

Broad, occupation-independent capabilities that enable effective work across different functions, departments, or industries.

These skills are practical and task-oriented, focusing on how work gets done.

Interpersonal skills:

These skills enhance interaction, collaboration, and relationship-building, focusing on communication and social dynamics.

These skills are crucial for teamwork, stakeholder engagement, people management, and customer service.

Table 10 below shows the skills that are most in demand in each category across local councils in Northern Territory.

Table 10: Skills most in demand by category across Northern Territory local councils

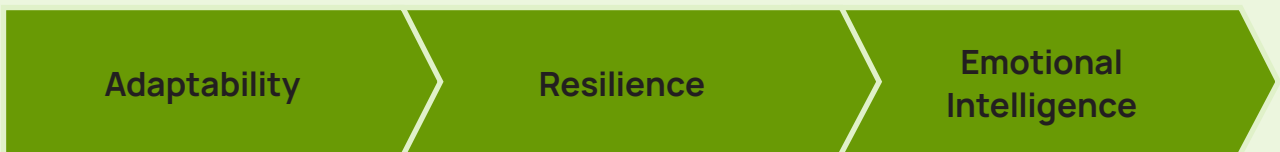
Occupation-specific skills	Transferable Professional Skills	Interpersonal Skills
› Artificial intelligence › Contract management › Cyber security › Financial knowledge › Expertise in occupation-specific IT systems › Legislative compliance and interpretation › Record management › Technical certificates (e.g., Certificate III in construction for works teams, mechanic apprenticeship for mechanics, heavy vehicle licenses for truck drivers) › Expertise in WHS (Work Health & Safety)	› Community education › Community engagement › Digital literacy › Problem solving › Report writing › Risk management › Time management	› Communication skills (written and verbal) › Conflict management › Cross-cultural awareness / cultural competency › Customer service › Stakeholder management › Teamwork

Based on the workshop discussion, the following themes were identified:

- Diverse skill sets are required by local council employees in the Northern Territory, who are often required to 'wear many hats' due to limited employees and resources.** This generalist approach demands a blend of occupation-specific skills (such as WHS, record management, technical certificates, cyber security, and IT systems) and cross-functional skills (including digital literacy, AI expertise, communication, emotional intelligence and problem solving).
- Transferrable professional skills are essential for local councils to respond effectively to community needs, which can change rapidly.** For example, in Alice Springs, population changes driven by mining projects or the mobility of people between communities can dramatically alter service delivery needs. This drives the need for skills such as community engagement, community education, stakeholder management, cross-cultural awareness and adaptability. Regional and shire local councils often deliver services out of the usual responsibilities of local councils, which drives the need for transferrable skills.
- Developing managerial skills is important to support early promotion of technical employees into managerial occupations.** This fast-tracking means many managers may have limited formal training in people management, contract management, risk management, conflict management and strategic leadership. Skills such as financial knowledge, customer service, report writing and legislative compliance become increasingly important as managers oversee complex projects and third-party contracts.
- Interpersonal skills and behavioural traits can support local pathways and workforce stability.** The most important interpersonal skills and behavioural traits to develop, particularly for new employees and local First Nations employees, were seen as resilience, adaptability and teamwork. High employee turnover and the focus on creating employment pathways for local First Nations employees have emphasised the importance of cultivating the necessary interpersonal skills and behavioural traits within the workforce.

Behavioural Traits

There was considerable discussion across the workshops on a fourth tier relating to behavioural traits, personal qualities, aptitudes, mindsets and behavioural tendencies that influence how someone approaches work and interacts with others. In the Northern Territory context, the traits highlighted included:



Appendices

Appendix A: Detailed Methodology

The project was delivered over four phases:

Jurisdictional workshops: in every state and territory from September to November 2025.

Workshop response analysis and reporting: from October to December 2025.

Survey collection: from 24 November 2025 to 30 January 2026.

Survey response analysis and national report: from February to March 2026.

This Report features a comprehensive qualitative component due to the inclusion of workshop data alongside surveys conducted in prior years. Both the survey data and insights from the workshops were critical to develop a deeper understanding of workforce challenges.

The workshops aimed to provide in-depth qualitative evidence and involved participation from employees responsible for people and culture, as well as learning and development, within their local councils. The workshops had three key objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1

To understand the services that local councils provide and how these are changing across different regions and sectors.

OBJECTIVE 2

To explore the current and future occupations, jobs and skills needs of LGAs and how they vary by location and LGA size.

OBJECTIVE 3

To seek input on the relevance and responsiveness of current training to these needs and consider alternative responses and pathways.

The 2025-2026 survey forms part of a longitudinal series, with previous iterations conducted in 2018 and 2022, with minor updates made over time. In August 2025, Public Skills Australia and ALGA agreed to jointly support the design, delivery and promotion of the Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey (the survey). The survey was hosted on 'Qualtrics', an online survey platform, through which all local councils had the opportunity to participate. Respondents were typically employees responsible for people and culture and learning and development, with input from other local council employees where relevant.

Survey responses underwent a thorough data-cleaning process prior to analysis. Interpretation of results is guided by the following methodological considerations:

- › The survey data is subject to limitations, particularly for inclusion-related questions, as most questions were optional and responses relied on self-identification, meaning not all local councils provided data for these measures.
- › Percentages are calculated based on responding local councils for each specific question, not total survey participants, unless otherwise stated.
- › Changes since previous years (2018 and 2022) are reported in graphs and tables in percentage points (pp), reflecting absolute shifts in the proportion of local councils and supporting comparison across survey years with different response counts.
- › For most comparisons, 2018 data is used to reflect longitudinal changes and account for COVID-related impacts, while 2022 data is used when 2018 data is unavailable. In some cases, new questions introduced this year prevent immediate comparisons.
- › Workforce statistics are reported as employee headcount (Q3) unless otherwise specified.
- › Vacancy rates are calculated as a percentage of total employees and council-level percentages are rounded to whole numbers.
- › The survey was conducted between November 2025 and February 2026, capturing workforce data as of June 2025 (FY2024-25) alongside forward-looking assessments for 2025-2026. This timing enables local councils to reflect on completed recruitment and training cycles while planning for the year ahead.

Appendix B: Terms

For consistency and clarity in interpreting the survey results, the following definitions have been adopted in this report:

Term	Description			
Geographical classification	Multiple systems exist to classify whether a Local Government Area (LGA) is rural/remote, regional or metropolitan, and councils often span multiple boundaries. The Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG) categorises local councils into 22 groups based on socioeconomic characteristics and their capacity to deliver diverse services to the community. We have adopted three categories from these ACLG groups: <table><tr><td>Rural/remote: Local councils servicing populations across very small to large population categories, including councils classified as remote.</td><td>Regional: Non-metropolitan local councils with primary urban centres located in regional areas.</td><td>Metropolitan: Local councils located within capital city metropolitan areas, including inner city, established suburban and outer-metropolitan or urban-fringe local government areas.</td></tr></table>	Rural/remote: Local councils servicing populations across very small to large population categories, including councils classified as remote.	Regional: Non-metropolitan local councils with primary urban centres located in regional areas.	Metropolitan: Local councils located within capital city metropolitan areas, including inner city, established suburban and outer-metropolitan or urban-fringe local government areas.
Rural/remote: Local councils servicing populations across very small to large population categories, including councils classified as remote.	Regional: Non-metropolitan local councils with primary urban centres located in regional areas.	Metropolitan: Local councils located within capital city metropolitan areas, including inner city, established suburban and outer-metropolitan or urban-fringe local government areas.		
ACLG classifications	ACLG classifications are likely to have shifted slightly since the 2018 and 2022 survey.			
'Local councils' versus 'Local Government'	In the Australian context, the term ' <i>local council</i> ' refers to the elected arm of council, whereas the term ' <i>Local Government</i> ' refers to the administrative and management arm of council.			

Term	Description
'Occupation' in the context of the survey	Using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) for occupation classification despite the introduction of the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA), as ANZSCO allows us to maintain consistency and compare results with previous years. Occupation, as defined by ANZSCO, refers to a set of jobs that share similar tasks and responsibilities, generally requiring comparable skills, knowledge and expertise. ANZSCO groups jobs into occupations based on the type of work performed and the skills required.
'Job' versus 'occupation'	'Job' is used in preference to 'occupation' for workshop reporting since it is more familiar and easier for people to relate to. A job refers to an individual position held by a person, involving specific roles, duties and responsibilities within an organisation. It relates to a person's current employment status. In contrast, an occupation is a broader classification, encompassing a variety of jobs that share similar core characteristics, independent of a particular employer or location.
FTEs	Full time equivalents.
Skills gap	The gap between the skill level of the employee and the skills needed to perform their role description, as intended by their employer.
Skills shortage	A labour shortage that requires the recruitment of more people into the workforce.

Appendix C: Workshop Critical Occupations and Skills Assessment

The table below summarises the comprehensive list of skills and jobs discussed in workshops with key stakeholders.

Skills in *italics* were identified as important for the future

Skills gaps are highlighted in **bold**

Job	Skill
IT Officers/ICT	Cyber security
	Connectivity
	Troubleshooting
	Record management
	Communication skills
	<i>AI expertise</i>
	<i>Connectivity</i>
	<i>Record management</i>
	<i>Trend awareness</i>
	<i>Problem solving (adaptability)</i>
	<i>Cross-cultural awareness</i>
	Regulatory compliance
	Grant writing
	Stakeholder engagement
	Project management
	<i>Customer service</i>
	<i>Strategic advisory</i>

Job	Skill
Governance, compliance, and risk	Report writing
	Local Government knowledge
	Legislative framework
	Legal interpretation
	Risk management
	<i>Compliance across industries</i>
	<i>Recordkeeping</i>
	<i>Policy development</i>
	<i>Diplomacy</i>
	<i>Confidentiality</i>
	<i>Cross-cultural awareness</i>
HR Officers	Communication skills
	Risk mitigation
	Legislation interpretation
	Negotiation skills
	Psychosocial skills
	<i>Computer skills</i>
	<i>HR analytic skills</i>
	<i>Diversity and inclusion</i>
	Training
	Professional development
	Organisational planning
	Compliance

Job	Skill
	Industrial relations
	Conflict management
	Recruitment
	AI expertise
	Online capability/remote training
	<i>Time management</i>
WHS officer	Risk assessment
	Cert IV
	Computer literacy
	Microsoft office suite knowledge
	Policy and process development
	<i>Communication skills (written and verbal)</i>
	<i>Attention to detail</i>
	<i>Analytical skills</i>
	<i>Psychosocial skills</i>
	<i>Advisory skills</i>
	Legislative knowledge
	Auditing
	Investigation
Managerial occupations (project managers, operational managers)	Budgeting
	People management
	Emotional intelligence
	Resilience

Job	Skill
	Strategic, planning and execution
	Problem solving
	Digital literacy
	AI expertise
	<i>Efficiency and innovation</i>
	Change management
Finance/administration officer	Budgeting
	Reporting
	Fraud and compliance
	Stakeholder management
	Strategic finance management
	<i>Risk management</i>
	Digital literacy
	Investing expertise
	Financial knowledge
	Software use/systems knowledge
	Procurement
	Grants and acquittals
	<i>Customer service</i>
	Interpersonal
	Communication skills (written and oral)
	Cultural awareness
	Management skills

Job	Skill
	<i>AI knowledge</i>
	<i>Time management</i>
Industrial relations advisor	Legislations/regulations knowledge
	People management
	Conflict management
	Training
	Report writing
	<i>Negotiation</i>
	<i>Advocacy</i>
	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
	<i>Investigation</i>
Contract management	Legislative knowledge
	Technical capability
	Monitoring and evaluation
	Communication skills
	Report writing
	Financial management
	Stakeholder engagement
	Risk management
	Traffic management
Essential services officer	Trade qualifications
	Work in crisis
	Resilience

Job	Skill
	Troubleshooting
	Willingness to work outside work hours
	Adaptable to changing infrastructure frameworks
	Emerging trade qualifications (e.g., solar certificate)
	Environmental management
	Digital skills
	Cross-cultural awareness
Mechanics	Trade qualifications
	Procurement
	General financial knowledge
	WHS procedures
	Risk assessment
	Diesel fitters
	Heavy vehicles
	Relationship management
	Logistics
	Time management
	Cross-cultural awareness
	Asset management
	Inventory
Trades (including construction)	New technology services (e.g., drones)
	Digital literacy
	Innovative thinking

Job	Skill
	Engagement skills
	Attention to detail
	<i>Health and safety awareness</i>
	Technology literacy
	Mentoring skills
Community engagement	Persuasiveness
	Communication skills (verbal and written)
	Stakeholder management
	Web design
	Microsoft office suite knowledge
	AI expertise
	Political and science social knowledge
	IT skills
	<i>Cultural competency</i>
Community services (childcare, aged care, youth workers, NDIS services, night patrol)	Formal qualifications
	Legislative compliance
	Empathy
	Communication skills (verbal and written)
	Resilience
	Problem-solving
	<i>Knowledge of clients</i>
	Digital literacy
	Grant writing

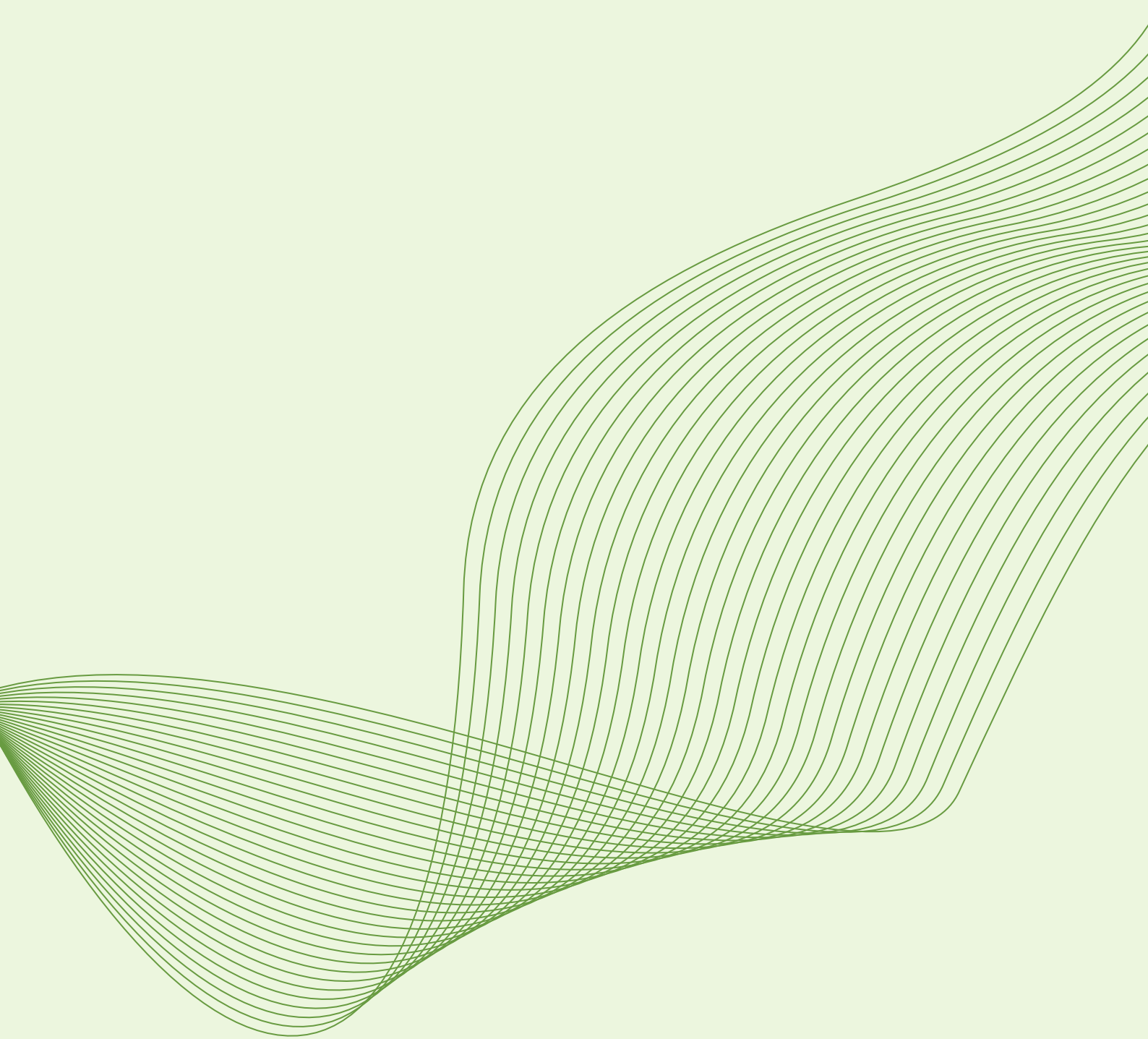
Job	Skill
	Stakeholder engagement
	<i>Scoping</i>
	<i>Resources</i>
	<i>Time management</i>
	Evaluation
	Leadership
	Local knowledge
	Cultural relationship management
	<i>Professional development</i>
	Recordkeeping
	Ability to work flexible working hours
	Customer service
Works officer (arborist, landscape manager)	Technical qualifications
	WHS
	Time management
	Teamwork
	Trustworthy and high integrity
	Conflict resolution
	Digital literacy
	<i>Working in difficult climates</i>
	<i>Resilience</i>
	Interpersonal relationships
	Customer service

Job	Skill
	Basic literacy and numeracy
	Elevated heights qualification
	Reporting
Animal shelter manager	Technical qualifications
	Reporting
	Financial management
	Customer service
	Community engagement
	Team management
	<i>Digital literacy</i>
	Fundraising
	<i>Animal caring</i>
	<i>Assessment</i>
Municipal services officer/ manager (e.g., waste)	Coordination
	Communication
	Coaching
	Negotiation
	Operational knowledge
	<i>Regulatory knowledge</i>
	<i>Water management</i>
	<i>Leadership</i>
	<i>Finance knowledge</i>
	Legislative knowledge

Job	Skill
	<i>Customer service</i>
	Technical skills
	System knowledge
	Conflict management
	Plant operations
	Small equipment operations (use and maintenance)
	WHS
	Traffic management
	Risk management
	<i>Circular economy knowledge</i>
	<i>Land management skills</i>
Housing officers	Customer service
	Asset management
	Maintenance and planning
	Conflict management
	Problem-solving
	Regulatory and legislative knowledge
	<i>Research and development</i>
	Coordination
	<i>Communication</i>
	Budgeting
	Reporting

Job	Skill
Swimming program coordinators/lifeguardsv	Formal qualifications (CPR/First aid)
	Awareness
	Customer service skills
	Emotional intelligence
	Planning
	<i>Lifesaving equipment</i>
	<i>Behavioural management</i>
	<i>Climate change issues</i>
Library program coordinator	DWEI system knowledge
	Technology
	Customer service
	Youth engagement
	<i>AI expertise</i>
	<i>Adaptability</i>
Civil engineer	Project management
	Contract management
	Asset management
	Executive reporting
	Communication skills
	Mapping and design
	Relationship building skills
	Community consultation
	<i>Environmental change</i>

Job	Skill
Local council ranger and land and animal management	<i>Resilience</i>
	<i>Circular economy considerations</i>
	Technical qualification
	Legislative knowledge
	Incident management
	Natural resource management
	Advocacy
	Customer service
	Community education and awareness
	Hazard management



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