

Public Skills Australia

Queensland Report 2025-2026

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

June 2026



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

Proudly produced in partnership with



Every Queensland
community deserves
to be a liveable one



Public Skills Australia is a Jobs and Skills Council appointed by
the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 Local Government Project	5
1.3 Partners	5
1.4 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capacity Survey	6
1.5 Workshops	7
1.6 Queensland Report 2025-2026	7
1.7 Structure	7
1.8 Key Findings	8
Quantitative Data	10
2.1 Service Delivery Context	10
2.1.1 Employment numbers	10
2.1.2 Employment categories	12
2.1.3 Employment gender profile	12
2.1.4 Workplace diversity	13
2.1.5 Workforce age profile	14
2.1.6 Employee length of service	15
2.1.7 Employment turnover	15
2.2 Skills Audit and Assessment	16
2.2.1 Skills landscape	16
2.2.2 Occupational shortages	20
2.2.3 Drivers of occupational shortages	22
2.2.4 Vacancies	22
2.2.5 Strategies to address occupational shortages and skills gaps	23

2.3 Training Needs and Challenges	24
2.3.1 Training needs	24
2.3.2 Training expenditure	25
2.3.3 Preferred delivery mode	26
2.3.4 Training delivery challenges	27
2.3.5 Uptake of Local Government Training Package	27
2.3.6 Intake of apprentices/trainees	29
2.3.7 Engagement with State and Federal initiatives	29
2.4 Future Workforce Outlook	30
2.4.1 Emerging occupational shortages	30
2.4.2 Factors impacting future skilling needs	32
2.4.3 Future occupational analysis	33
2.4.4 New occupations expected to emerge	33
2.4.5 External pressures on workforce attraction and retention	33
2.4.6 Addressing future skills needs and strategies	34
Qualitative Results	35
3.1 Workshop Introduction	35
3.2 Service Delivery Context	36
3.3 Skills Audit and Assessment	39
3.4 Training Needs and Challenges	41
3.5 Future Workforce Outlook	44
Appendices	49
Appendix A: Detailed Methodology	49
Appendix B: Terms	51
Appendix C: Workshop Critical Occupations and Skills Assessment	53

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 Queensland (LGAQ) as the peak industry association and representative body for local councils¹ across Queensland. Both ALGA and LGAQ 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.

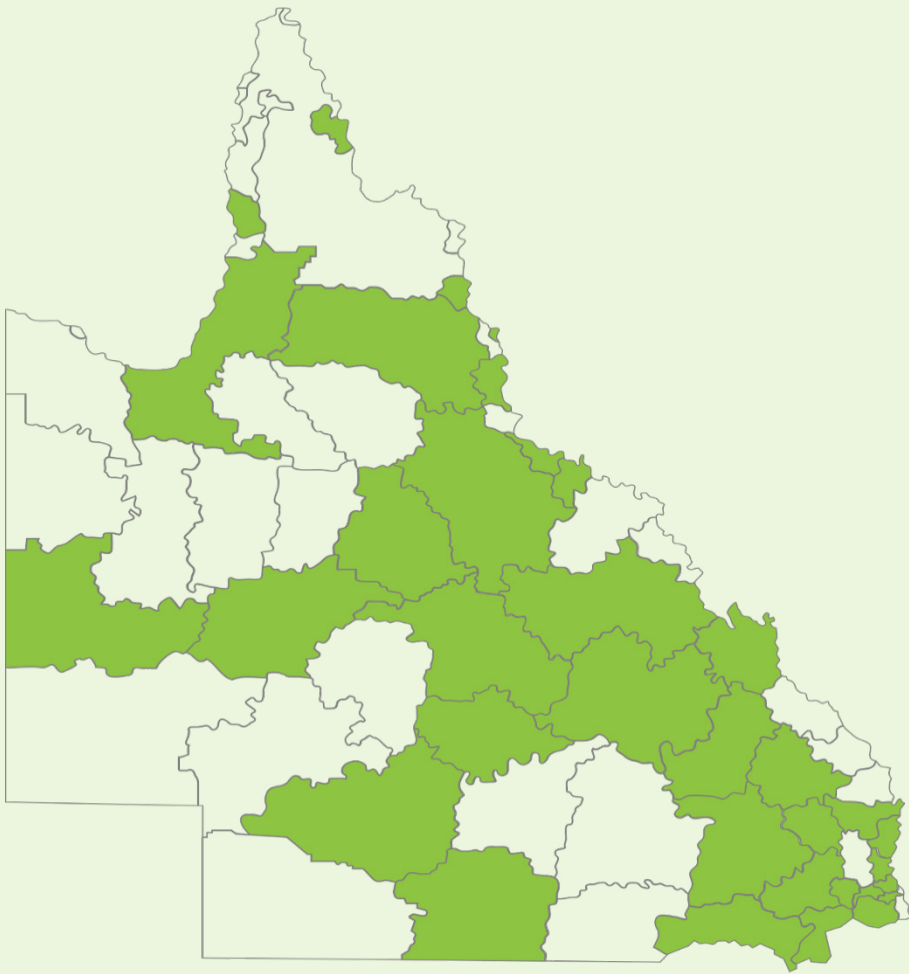


Figure 1: Councils that participated in the 2025-26 survey and/or workshops

1.4 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capacity Survey

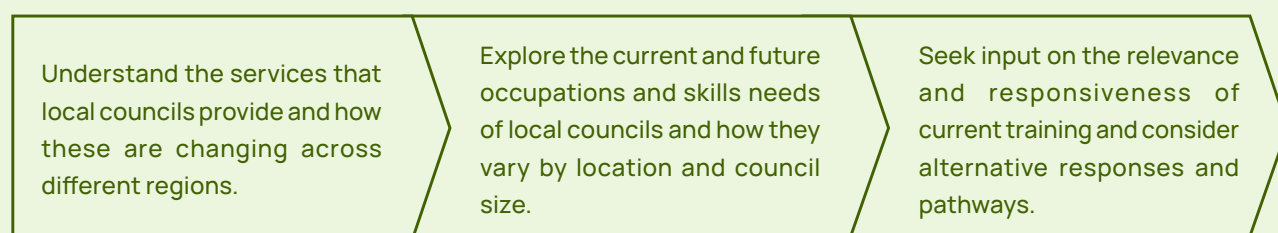
In support of the combined project, Public Skills Australia and ALGA collaborated on the *2025-26 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capacity Survey (the survey)*. The survey forms part of a longitudinal series, with previous iterations conducted in 2018 and 2022, and minor updates made over time.

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

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

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 Queensland Report 2025-2026

The Queensland Report (the report) is one of 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.

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 15 responding Queensland local councils
Section 2: Qualitative Results
› Based on in-person and online workshops › Based on consultations in these workshops with 33 Queensland local councils

1.8 Key Findings

Key findings taken from Queensland local councils are summarised below.

Section	Key Findings
Service Delivery Context	Local councils are facing greater pressure on service provision depending on geography and service mix, with remoteness, competition from mining and a lack of alternative providers intensifying workforce challenges. Local councils are also facing growing complexity across their service provision due to a range of factors including increased community expectations and the requirement to deliver essential services in areas where there are no non-government providers available (such as aged care, early childhood education, and water and waste management). There are also 17 First Nations Councils in Queensland, serving discrete First Nation communities. These local councils have even broader responsibilities, including managing housing, community enterprises and community policing.
	A unique challenge, particularly in South-East Queensland, is the staging of the 2032 Olympics in Queensland, which is driving up construction costs and straining the availability of construction employees.
Skills Audit and Assessment	Priority occupations and skills vary depending on the local council context and workforce needs. While trade and technical occupations and skills are consistently in demand, the specific mix of critical occupations and skills varies substantially based on local council type, geographic location and service delivery model. Occupational shortages are also influenced by structural factors such as remuneration, housing availability and remoteness in rural/remote/regional local councils.

Section	Key Findings
Training Needs and Challenges	Local councils use VET for compliance and technical occupations but are relying on non-accredited in-house programs and micro credentials to mitigate unmet training needs across leadership/management and supervisory capabilities and specialist software skills. This reflects how cost, time and delivery logistics mean local councils are increasingly using non-accredited training options as a practical and flexible way to build workforce capability. Since the review of the Local Government Training Package (LGATP), enrolments have increased. However, these enrolments are concentrated within one of the five LGATP qualifications and focused on three Unit of Competency (UoC).
Future Workforce Outlook	Skill gaps across local council are expected to become more acute as service delivery complexity increases and expectations shift from traditional occupation roles to dynamic and cross functional capabilities. Transferrable professional skills and interpersonal skills are expected to be increasingly vital as local councils adapt to more complex service delivery models and increasing community expectations.

Quantitative Data

2.1 Service Delivery Context

Key Findings:

- › Local councils are facing greater pressure on service provision depending on geography and service mix, with remoteness, competition from mining and a lack of alternative providers intensifying workforce challenges. Local councils are also facing growing complexity across their service provision due to a range of factors including increased community expectations and the requirement to deliver essential services in areas where there are no non-government providers available (such as aged care, early childhood education, and water and waste management). There are also 17 First Nations Councils in Queensland, serving discrete First Nation communities. These local councils have even broader responsibilities, including managing housing, community enterprises and community policing.
- › A unique challenge, particularly in South-East Queensland, is the staging of the 2032 Olympics in Queensland, which is driving up construction costs and straining the availability of construction employees.

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 Queensland Local Government industry-sector employed 48,800 people as of June 2025. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.9 per cent per year (2018 to 2025).

Key data

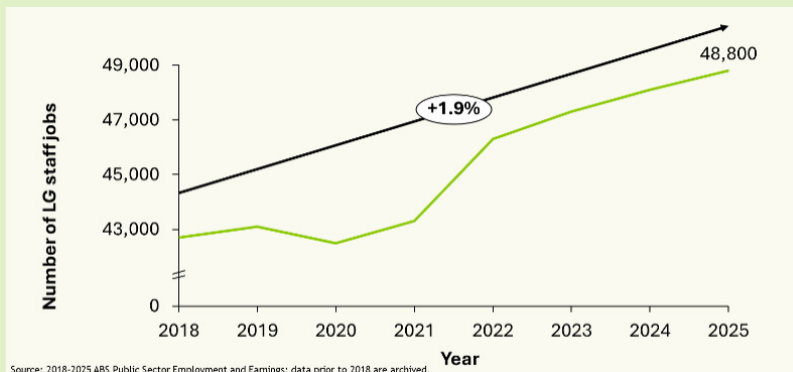


Figure 2:

Queensland Local Government employment data, 2018-2025

Based on the survey, 40 per cent (n=6) of responding local councils anticipated that by June 2026 the size of their workforce would increase, and 53.3 per cent (n=8) expected it to remain the same. No local councils anticipated employment size would decrease but one was unsure.

Most responding Queensland local councils were small to mid-sized organisations, with 67 per cent (n=10) of local councils employing between 100-500 employees.

Employment size varies significantly across responding Queensland local councils, ranging from 66 employees at the smallest local council (Quilpie Shire Council) to 2,336 employees at the largest (Moreton Bay Council).

Employment size also varied based on the Australian Classification of Local Governments (ACLG) categories³.

- › Rural/remote local councils are predominantly small, with 83 per cent employing 100-500 employees and the remainder employing fewer than 100; none employ more than 500 employees.
- › Regional local councils demonstrated greater size variation, with 56 per cent employing 100-500 employees, 22 per cent employing 500-1000 employees and 22 per cent employing more than 1000 employees.

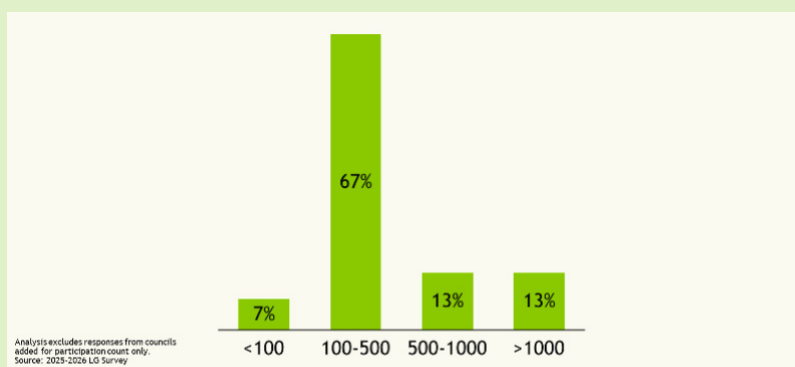


Figure 3:

Queensland responding local councils, distribution of employment size, 2025-2026 Survey

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. Please note that there were no survey responses from metropolitan local councils.

2.1.2 Employment categories

Key data

Queensland's Local Government employment profile in 2025 remains strongly full-time with limited structural change in workforce composition since 2018.

In 2025-26, responding Queensland local councils employed 219 apprentices and trainees (124 trainees, 95 apprentices), representing 2.6 per cent of the Queensland local council workforce, higher than the national average of 1.8 per cent.

Employment patterns varied by ACLG categorisation. Rural/remote local councils employ proportionally less full-time (77 per cent) and more casual (12 per cent) employees than the state average.

ACLG Categorisation	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	Apprentices and Trainees
Rural/remote	77%	9%	12%	2%
Regional	84%	8%	6%	2%
QLD	83%	8%	7%	2%

Queensland responding local councils, employment type by ACLG categorisation

Figure 4:

Queensland responding local councils, employment type by ACLG categorisation

2.1.3 Employment gender profile

Key data
Gender composition by employment type shows incremental rebalancing between 2017 and 2025. Full-time occupations have shifted modestly toward women, and part-time employment has seen a small increase in male participation.
Apprenticeships in 2025-26 show a strong male imbalance, with 88 per cent male and 12 per cent female representation. Traineeships show more balance, with 54 per cent male and 46 per cent female.

Key data

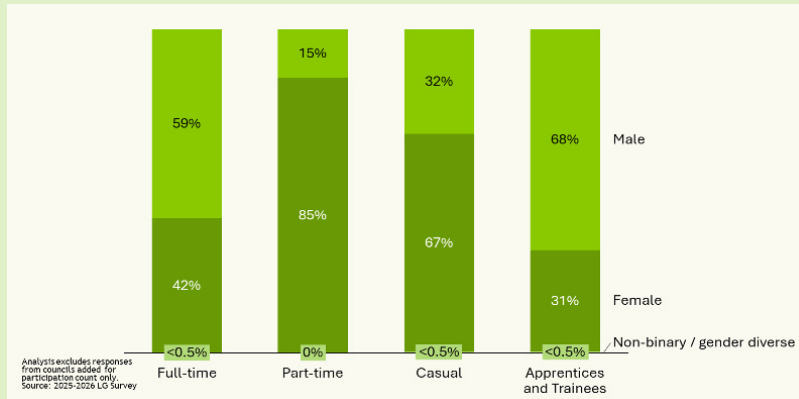


Figure 5:

Queensland responding local councils, employment category by gender, 2025-2026 Survey

2.1.4 Workplace diversity⁴

Key data

Five local councils (33.3 per cent) reported employing CALD employees. Among these five local councils, CALD employees represented an average of 7.5 per cent of the workforce.

Five local councils (33.3 per cent) reported employing people with disability. Among these five local councils, employees with a disability represented an average of 1.8 per cent of the workforce.

Eleven local councils (73.3 per cent) reported having First Nations employees, with Queensland representation averaging 1.6 per cent.

⁴ 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.

2.1.5 Workforce age profile

Key data

Since 2018, representation of employees aged under 30 has increased, as has the 65+ cohort, while the mid-career cohort aged 30-54 has declined slightly.

Rural/remote local councils face more acute ageing pressures than regional local councils, with a higher proportion of employees aged 65 and over nearing retirement.

Category	15-19 years	20-29 years	30-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years
Rural/remote	3%	14%	27%	24%	23%	10%
Regional	2%	14%	34%	25%	21%	4%
QLD	2%	14%	33%	25%	22%	5%

Figure 6:

Queensland responding local councils, age profile by ACLG categorisation

Analysis excludes responses from councils added for participation count only. No metropolitan local governments from this state/territory participated in the survey. Age profile derived from Professional & Administrative and Operational & Trade age distributions, representing the closest available proxy for a whole-of-workforce split.
Source: 2025-2026 LG Survey

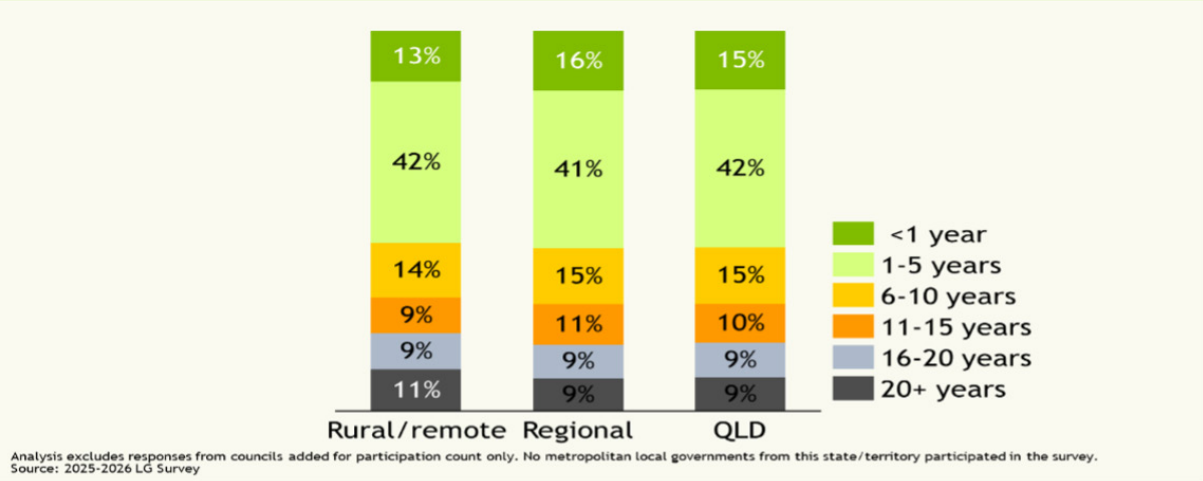
2.1.6 Employee length of service

Key data

The Queensland local council workforce is heavily concentrated in shorter-tenure cohorts, with 57 per cent of employees having tenure of less than five years.

Length of service patterns were similar across available ACLG classification.

Figure 7: Queensland responding local councils, employees' length of service by ACLG categorisation



2.1.7 Employment turnover

Key data

Average unplanned turnover in Queensland (excluding casual, limited tenure, redundant and retiring employees) rose to 12.0 per cent from 8.6 per cent in 2018. This matches the national average.

Occupations experiencing the highest turnover were predominantly operational and trade occupations including plant operators, water and wastewater operations and labourers.

2.2 Skills Audit and Assessment

Key Finding:

Priority occupations and skills vary depending on the local council context and workforce needs. While trade and technical occupations and skills are consistently in demand, the specific mix of critical occupations and skills varies substantially based on local council type, geographic location and service delivery model. Occupational shortages are also influenced by structural factors such as remuneration, housing availability and remoteness in rural/remote/regional local councils.

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 › Literacy and numeracy › Public Speaking › Media engagement	› Counselling/ managing difficult conversations › Collaboration › Teamwork › Stakeholder engagement, management and consultation
	Customer and community focus	› Customer service › Public engagement › Community advocacy	› Events management › Cultural awareness and competency
	Leadership, people management and mentoring	› People leadership and management › Supervision	› Mentoring and coaching
Transferable Professional Skills	Organisation and workflow	› Digital literacy › Time management	› Record keeping
	Project planning and time management	› Project management › Planning and scheduling	› Long term planning › Task management
	Problem Solving, critical thinking and analysis	› Strategic thinking › Problem solving	› Critical thinking › Research and data analysis

Tier	Skills Theme	Specific skill types	
Transferable Professional Skills	Conflict management and enforcement	› Crisis management › Conflict resolution › Negotiation › De-escalation	› Dispute resolution › Mediation › Investigation and reporting
	Change management and transformation	› Change management › Project management	› Knowledge management › Workforce planning
	Data, reporting and analytics	› Data collection › Data monitoring	› Data analysis › Data governance
Occupation Specific Skills	Environmental sustainability	› Environmental management › Climate adaptation	› Water quality testing
	Digital and technology systems	› Digital / IT systems & software competency › Artificial Intelligence › Automation	› Cybersecurity › GIS software › Diagnostics tools
	Risk and safety	› Risk management › Manual handling › Workplace health and safety	› Traffic control › Emergency and disaster management

Tier	Skills Theme	Specific skill types	
Occupation Specific Skills	Legislation, regulation and governance	> Legislation and regulation interpretation > Audit and compliance	> Policy development > Understand planning scheme > Corporate governance
	Finance and procurement	> Financial management > Contract management	> Infrastructure management > Grant writing > Accounting
	Technical skills	> Animal handling > First aid > Heavy rigid licence > Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) > Telemetry > Water industry operations > Excavation > Agricultural chemicals and distribution control > Plan operations > Working at heights	> Working in confined spaces > Asbestos and silica awareness > Machinery tickets > Small engine repairs > White card > Diesel mechanics > Electric vehicles > Before you dig (BYD) > Vehicle load > Chlorine gas/toxic gas from treatment process

2.2.2 Occupational shortages

Fourteen local councils (93 per cent) reported experiencing occupational shortages in 2024-25, indicating that occupational shortages represent a systematic local council workforce challenge in Queensland. Engineers remain the leading professional shortage, consistent with 2018, while plumbers have emerged as the most critical trade shortage.

Table 1: Queensland responding local councils, top occupational shortages, 2025-26 Survey (noting this data has a significant reliance on regional local councils)

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=15)
Professional and Technical	Engineers	8	53.3%
	WHS Professionals	6	40.0%
	Engineering Technicians	6	40.0%
	ICT Professionals	6	40.0%
	Project Managers	5	33.3%
	Urban/Town Planners	5	33.3%
	HR Professionals	4	26.7%
	Accountants	4	26.7%
	Asset/Facilities Managers	4	26.7%
	Community Engagement Officers	3	20.0%

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=15)
Operational and Trade	Trades - Plumber	11	66.7%
	Supervisors/Team Leaders	9	53.3%
	Trades - Mechanical	7	46.7%
	Water Treatment Operator	7	46.7%
	Labourers	7	40.0%
	Wastewater/Sewerage Operator	6	40.0%
	IT/ICT Technicians	5	33.3%
	Truck Drivers	5	26.7%
	Trades - Construction	5	26.7%
	Trades - Electrical	3	20.0%

Councils commonly accept less qualified applicants in engineering and water treatment operators. 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

Inability to compete with market remuneration is the primary driver of occupational shortages, reported by 53 per cent of responding local councils (n=8). Regional/rural/remote location, lack of housing or accommodation and competition from other sectors were the other most significantly cited drivers.⁵

Table 2: Queensland responding local councils, drivers of occupational shortages, 2025-26 Survey

Driver of skills shortages	% local governments responding (n=15)
Uncompetitive salaries/remuneration	53%
Regional/rural/remote location	47%
Lack of housing/accommodation	47%
Competition from other sectors/employers	33%
Insufficient qualifications/training/experience	13%
Industry-wide skill shortages	13%
Ageing workforce/population decline	13%
Insufficient qualified candidates/applicants	7%
Limited local talent pool	7%

2.2.4 Vacancies

Across the sector, 73 per cent (11 local councils) were understaffed, with average vacancy rates of 9.8 per cent among the local councils reporting vacancy numbers. High rates of understaffing were distributed across ACLG classification however, regional local councils were more likely to be understaffed while rural/remote local councils that were understaffed face more severe shortages.

⁵ This data is limited by a lack of metropolitan local council responses.

2.2.5 Strategies to address occupational shortages and skills gaps

Eighty per cent (n=12) of local councils reported experiencing critical skill gaps. Local councils noted the following as successful strategies to fill occupational shortages:

67 per cent (n=10) engaged external recruitment agencies
67 per cent (n=10) reskilled or upskilled existing employees
53 per cent (n=8) used advertising and social media platforms
40 per cent (n=6) reported employing nine employees on the Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) Visa
40 per cent (n=6) reported sharing services or resources with other local councils
27 per cent (n=4) sought candidates through graduate pathways
27 per cent (n=4) reported using contingent employees

To address skill gaps, local councils identified the following:

73 per cent (n=11) allowed employees to act up or across into other occupations to develop internal capability while filling immediate gaps
73 per cent (n=11) provided targeted training courses
60 per cent (n=9) offered coaching and mentoring
60 per cent (n=9) reported offering informal on-the-occupation training
27 per cent (n=4) facilitated secondments or exchanges to other workplaces

2.3 Training Needs and Challenges

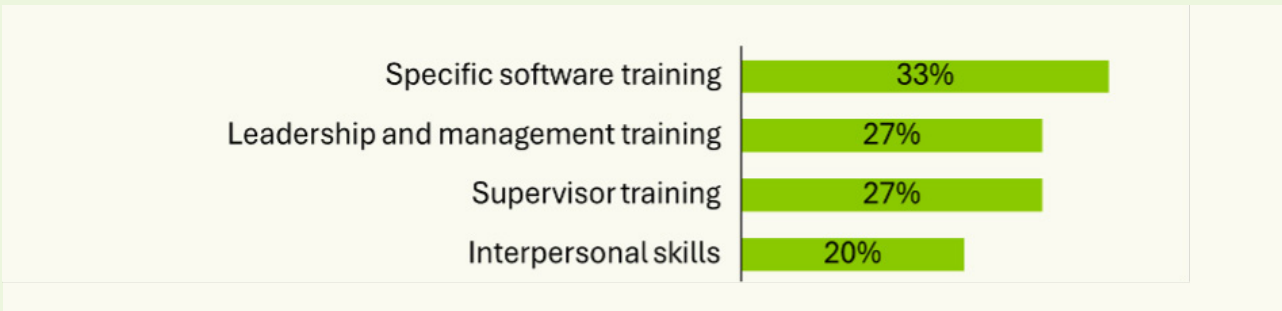
Key Finding:

Local councils use VET for compliance and technical occupations but are relying on non-accredited in-house programs and micro credentials to mitigate unmet training needs across leadership/management and supervisory capabilities and specialist software skills. This reflects how cost, time and delivery logistics mean local councils are increasingly using non-accredited training options as a practical and flexible way to build workforce capability. Since the review of the Local Government Training Package (LGATP), enrolments have increased. However, these enrolments are concentrated within one of the five LGATP qualifications and focused on three Unit of Competency (UoC).

2.3.1 Training needs

Sixty per cent of local councils (n=9) reported having unmet training needs, an increase from the 2018 baseline of 53 per cent. Specific software training and leadership and management training continue to feature among unmet needs identified since 2018, with supervisor training emerging as a more prominent gap in 2025.

Figure 8: Queensland responding local councils, unmet training needs, 2025-26 Survey



Queensland’s unmet training needs reflect how cost, time and delivery logistics prevent local councils from converting identified needs into completed training, as detailed in Table 3 below. Compared with 2018, the constraint has shifted away from isolated course availability issues toward more systemic delivery barriers.

Table 3: Queensland responding local councils, Drivers of unmet training needs, 2025-26 Survey

Driver of unmet training need	% local governments responding (n=15)
Council budget is insufficient for this training	33%
Unable to source quality training programs and/or trainers that can be delivered locally	27%
Employees have not had time to attend training	20%
Travel cost of sending staff away to attend training is too high	13%
Unable to source training programs with relevant content	13%
Lack of support from managers/supervisors to send staff on training courses	13%
Lack of time to organise training	12%

2.3.2 Training expenditure

Most local councils maintained or increased training investment despite fiscal pressures. Among local councils that increased expenditure, several reported ‘significant’ increases of up to 60 per cent. Some local councils provided further detail explaining changes in training expenditure. The most cited drivers of changes were:

Drivers
Rising delivery costs and mandatory training requirements from training providers and regulatory compliance demands
Strategic upskilling initiatives including targeted training programs for existing employees
Budget reductions in some local councils due to underspend in prior years and loss of funding grants

Drivers

Consumer Price Index (CPI) and staffing cost adjustments to reflect cost pressures and workforce growth.

Organisational restructuring including implementation of dedicated Learning and Development teams to coordinate training and identify skill gaps.

Table 4: Queensland responding local councils, change in training expenditure by ACLG

Change in training expenditure	Rural/ Remote	Regional	QLD
Decreased	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	1 (7%)
Increased	4 (67%)	3 (33%)	7 (47%)
Remained the same	2 (33%)	5 (56%)	7 (47%)
Total	6	9	15

2.3.3 Preferred delivery mode

Local councils generally preferred blended learning over in-person delivery with no local councils preferring virtual delivery.

Table 5: Queensland responding local councils, preferred training delivery mode by ACLG, 2025-26 Survey

Preferred training delivery mode	Rural/Remote	Regional	QLD
Blended learning (in person, self-paced and virtual)	3	7	10
In person, face-to-face delivery	3	2	5
Total	6	9	15

2.3.4 Training delivery challenges

Ninety-three per cent (n=14) local councils identified challenges in training delivery. Cost emerged as the most frequent theme, encompassing direct training costs, travel costs and accommodation expenses. Multiple local councils cite geographic and remote location challenges, noting that remote locations involve significant travel for either employees or facilitators. Small local council size creates challenges in reaching minimum numbers for courses. Virtual delivery presents technology adoption challenges for some employee groups and difficulty maintaining 100 per cent attention when employees continue business-as-usual tasks during training.

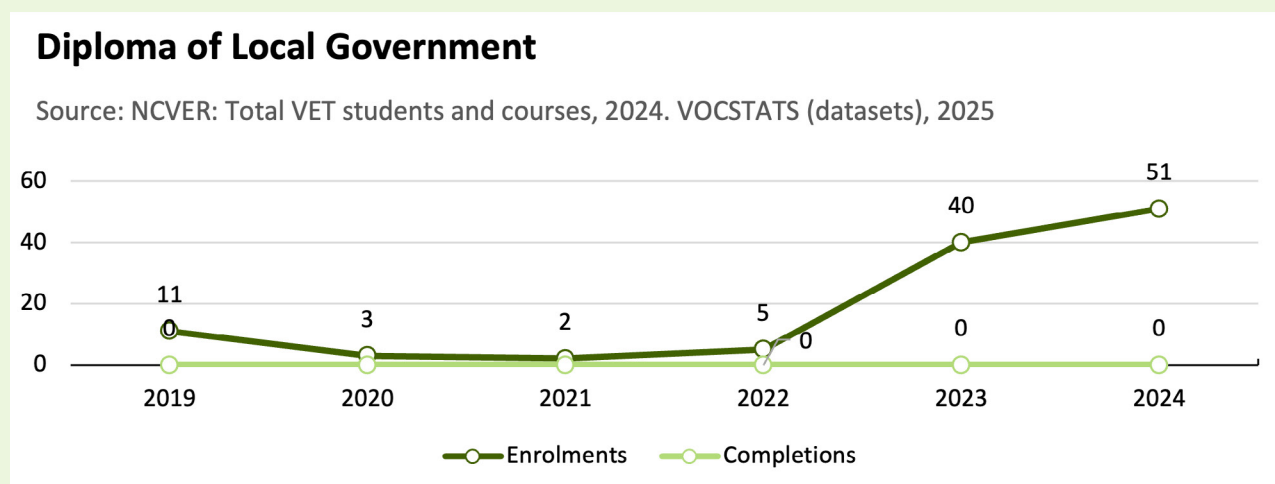
2.3.5 Uptake of Local Government Training Package

The Local Government Training Package (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, only the Diploma of Local Government is being used in Queensland.

Figure 9: LGATP Diploma of Local Government, Enrolments and Completions, 2019-2024



A further breakdown by Unit of Competency (UoC) is provided at Table 6. 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.

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

Units of Competency	Enrolments		
	2022	2023	2024
LGACOR001 - Work in local government	2	34	49
LGACOR008 - Provide advice to council	0	37	48
LGACOR007 - Conduct community consultations	12	38	47
LGAOPS001 - Prepare for operational works	10	8	21
LGAOPS003 - Develop works maintenance schedule	4	9	14
LGAREG001 - Implement parking controls	0	0	2
LGAREG003 - Manage conflict situations in a regulatory environment	0	0	2
LGAPLA005 - Protect heritage and cultural assets	9	2	0
TOTALS	37	128	183

Since the LGATP was reviewed enrolments across the UoC have increased considerably, although this is heavily concentrated in only a handful of UoCs.

2.3.6 Intake of apprentices/trainees

Sixty-seven per cent (n=10) reported that they do not believe they are taking on enough trainees to meet future skilling needs, while 53 per cent (n=8) reported their current apprentice intake is insufficient with local councils identifying the following constraints:

Insufficient funding was the most frequently cited barrier, including in relation to support of wages, training costs and associated on-the-occupation requirements. These constraints restrict intake even where demand and interest are strong.

Limited availability of qualified supervisors to oversee, mentor and formally sign off apprentices and trainees. In trade occupations, the shift to a 1:1 supervision requirement further constrains capacity, particularly where vacancies already exist among qualified employees.

Existing workforce vacancies reduce local councils' ability to take on apprentices and trainees, as limited staffing levels prioritise service delivery over training and development.

Limited access to local RTOs and relevant training providers restricts intake, particularly where programs are unavailable locally or resources are insufficient to support delivery.

2.3.7 Engagement with State and Federal initiatives

Eighty-seven per cent (n=13) of responding local councils accessed State or Federal workforce programs. Local councils most commonly cited First Start, alongside programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Construction Skills Queensland funding, User Choice, Priority Wage Subsidies, Rural and Remote Capacity Funding and a range of trainee, apprenticeship, school-based and graduate programs.

2.4 Future Workforce Outlook

Key Finding:

Skill gaps across local council are expected to become more acute as service delivery complexity increases and expectations shift from traditional occupation roles to dynamic and cross functional capabilities. Transferable professional skills and interpersonal skills are expected to be increasingly vital as local councils adapt to more complex service delivery models and increasing community expectations.

2.4.1 Emerging occupational shortages

Councils expect future critical shortages to closely mirror current pressures, indicating persistent structural workforce challenges. Plumbers (67 per cent) and Engineers (53 per cent) remain the most critical future shortages.

Compared with 2018, three occupations have been cited as potential emerging occupational shortages:

HR Professionals

Project Managers

**Urban/Town
Planners**

Table 7 below details the full range of critical future shortages.

Table 7: Queensland responding local councils, occupational shortages in the future, 2025-26 Survey

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=15)
Professional and Technical	Engineers	8	53.3%
	HR Professionals	6	40.0%
	WHS Professionals	5	33.3%
	Project Managers	5	33.3%
	Urban/Town Planners	5	33.3%
	Accountants	4	26.7%
	ICT Professionals	4	26.7%
	Engineering Technicians	4	26.7%
	Community Engagement Officers	3	20.0%
	Governance/Risk Managers	3	20.0%
Operational and Trade	Trades - Plumber	10	66.7%
	Supervisors/Team Leaders	8	53.3%
	Trades - Mechanical	7	46.7%
	Water Treatment Operator	7	46.7%
	Labourers	6	40.0%
	Wastewater/Sewerage Operator	6	40.0%
	Truck Drivers	5	33.3%

Category	Occupation	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=15)
Operational and Trade	IT/ICT Technicians	5	33.3%
	Trades - Construction	5	33.3%
	Trades - Electrical	3	20.0%

2.4.2 Factors impacting future skilling needs

Compared with 2018, the drivers of future skilling needs in 2025 have shifted from capability gaps driven by specific projects or technologies toward more persistent workforce sustainability challenges. Table 8 below provides the full breakdown of factors impacting future skilling needs.

Table 8: Queensland responding local councils, factors impacting future skilling needs, 2025-26 Survey

Factor	# Responding local governments	% Responding local governments (n=15)
Generational workforce changes	14	93%
Major council or external infrastructure projects	10	67%
Increasing community needs and expectations	9	60%
Growth in local government area	9	60%
Technological change including AI	9	60%
Changes in government funding levels	8	53%
Increasing levels of governance and compliance	8	53%
Climate change	3	20%

2.4.3 Future occupational analysis

In 2025-26, 20 per cent of responding local councils reported undertaking analysis of future occupation roles and requirements, increasing from 13 per cent in 2018. Despite some growth since 2018, low overall uptake suggests persistent capacity constraints in conducting formal workforce analysis, particularly given rising concerns about future occupational shortages and generational workforce change.

2.4.4 New occupations expected to emerge

Responding local councils identified new occupations expected to emerge encapsulated by the following themes:

The most prominent theme related to AI specialist occupations. This indicates an expectation that automation will increasingly shape local council operations, even where role definitions remain fluid.
Local councils also referenced digital engagement specialists, data governance occupations and digitally focused learning and development positions, suggesting a growing need to support technology adoption and workforce capability uplift rather than a focus on technical delivery occupations.
Climate adaptation and resilience occupations indicating early recognition of climate related capability needs.

2.4.5 External pressures on workforce attraction and retention

Local councils noted the following external pressures on workforce attraction and retention:

Housing pressures Aligning with qualitative findings where housing was repeatedly identified as a primary recruitment barrier	Natural disasters Reflecting Queensland's cyclone and flood exposure
Community expectations Reflecting increasing complexity of community engagement	Changing local economy Reflecting economic volatility and resource fluctuations impacting workforce stability

2.4.6 Addressing future skills needs and strategies

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

Increased funding for training, university cadetships and targeted programs including specific requests for funding university courses for cadets. Other funding needs included general training program funding, increased availability of training providers and the ability to compete for wages in skilled occupations.
Local councils identified housing as a critical infrastructure barrier, including the need for 'increased housing stock and daycare availability' as part of broader workforce support.
Local councils note the need for more targeted development programs for niche Local Government professions including partnerships with TAFE, local careers fairs to build talent pipelines and women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs to address gender imbalance.
The development of systemic workforce planning, training needs analysis, attraction and retention strategies, employer branding campaigns, leadership development programs and graduate programs.

To address these themes, local councils are prioritising direct capability building over collaborative approaches:

93 per cent (n=14)	93 per cent (n=14)	60 per cent (n=9)	33 per cent (n=5)
Flexible training and development approaches	Targeted training programs	Improving access to educational opportunities	Building industry partnerships

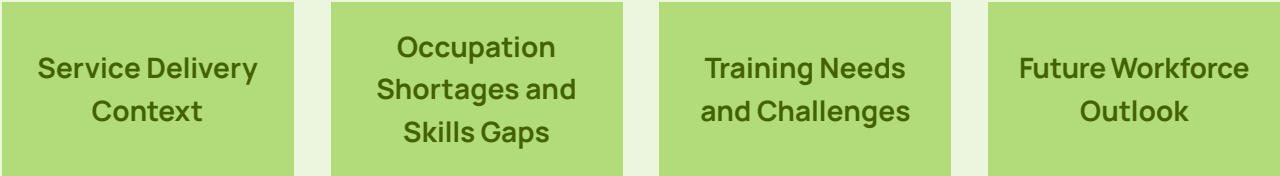
Qualitative Results

3.1 Workshop Introduction

Across November 2025, a series of Local Government Skills Audit Workshops were undertaken involving representatives from 34 of the 77 local councils in Queensland. 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 Queensland, workshops were held in:

Workshop Location	Date	Participating Local councils	
Brisbane	4 September 2025	1. Barcaldine	11. Paroo
		2. Boulia	12. Quilpie
		3. Brisbane City	13. Redlands
		4. Carpentaria	14. Scenic Rim
		5. Central Highlands	15. Southern Downs
		6. Gympie	16. Sunshine Coast
		7. Ipswich	17. Toowoomba
		8. Moreton Bay	18. Western Downs
		9. Noosa	19. Winton
		10. North Burnett	
Cairns	16 September 2025	20. Cairns	24. Lockhart
		21. Cassowary Coast	25. Pormpuraaw
		22. Doomadgee	26. Torres Strait Islands
		23. Flinders	27. Yarrabah
Rockhampton	13 October 2025	28. Banana	30. Livingstone
		29. Isaac	31. Rockhampton
Townsville	14 October 2025	32. Burdekin	34. Townsville
		33. Cassowary Coast	

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



A note on Queensland’s First Nations Councils

There are 17 First Nation Councils in Queensland, serving discrete First Nation communities across the state. These local councils have broader responsibilities than mainstream local councils, including managing housing, community enterprises and community policing. Additionally, most First Nations Councils do not collect general rates like typical local councils; instead, their revenue primarily comes from government grants and other funding sources.

Throughout this report, some of the unique occupations, skills and training needs of these local councils are captured.

3.2 Service Delivery Context

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

Local councils are experiencing shared challenges in delivering certain services

Participating local councils consistently identified six service areas as the most challenging to deliver due to occupations and skills gaps. These are:

Water and waste management: Local councils managing water and waste infrastructure encounter significant operational challenges, regardless of whether they provide this service directly or manage external providers.
Strategic and town planning: Regional local councils face planning challenges due to fluctuating populations, especially in mining towns that expand and contract with industry cycles. Other regional centres have experienced rapid population growth following the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by retirees and remote employees.

Disaster management and repairs: Local councils encounter numerous challenges in disaster management. Ambiguities regarding responsibility for different road types (State, Local) complicate planning and response efforts. Many local councils maintain a latent workforce that is redeployed from their regular positions during disasters. However, the ongoing training required to sustain this workforce can be challenging.

Infrastructure maintenance and services: Asset management is largely reactionary rather than proactive, due to funding and capability constraints. The increasing rate of natural disasters and the accompanying infrastructure maintenance is further exacerbating this issue.

Economic development: Economic development is viewed as both a core service and a challenge for local councils. Local councils are expected to stimulate local economic growth by supporting community and business development, enhancing tourism and fostering the establishment of local businesses. Additionally, local councils face increasing pressure to expand revenue streams to manage the additional services they are required to provide.

Community services (aged care and early childhood): The delivery of aged care and early childhood services is compromised by a lack of qualified carers.

While these challenges were common across local councils present in the workshop, the intensity and nature varied in:

The type and range of services. Most local councils deliver a set of core services, but the specific mix varies by locality.

Local councils in rural and remote areas noted the challenge of their emerging workforce leaving for study or employment, diminishing local labour availability. Conversely, other communities often face competition from government and non-government organisations, particularly from the mining sector in Queensland.

First Nations Councils experience unique constraints, with much of their trade's workforce dedicated to public housing maintenance (which is often prioritised as it offers a revenue stream), limiting their capacity to address other service areas.

Local councils are evolving their services to address gaps, respond to pressures and meet changing community needs.

Local councils across Queensland are modifying their service delivery models to address rising community expectations and fill gaps left by other providers. This adaptation is complicated by heightened compliance and regulatory demands, which add complexity to service provision. Key trends are reshaping service delivery and are explored in further detail below:

Local councils are stepping in to deliver essential services such as aged care, and early childhood education in areas where private or non-government providers are absent.

Local councils are facing growing complexity in frontline services, especially those involving direct community interaction like customer service. Staff are managing increasingly diverse needs and more frequent challenging behaviours.

In Queensland, particularly South-East Queensland, the upcoming 2032 Olympics is driving up construction costs and straining the availability of construction employees.

Automation and new technology are reshaping service delivery, especially in regional and rural areas, potentially reducing interpersonal connections. Local councils also identified the need for more efficient IT processes to manage workloads effectively, as outdated systems frequently complicate operations and create single points of failure.

Strategic direction is increasingly dictated by external pressures (e.g. state government, major events) rather than community needs. Similarly, local councils in recognised tourist destinations face tensions between economic development and resident expectations.

For regional, rural/remote local councils, there is a trend toward centralising corporate services in regional centres (e.g. Cairns) to enable access to a larger labour force, however, this can create political tensions when local communities expect local council occupations to remain local.

3.3 Skills Audit and Assessment

The second workshop session focused on identifying the occupations most critical for delivering local 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 local council types and regions.

There is local variation in what is considered a critical occupation across local councils.

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

However, while the specific occupations varied, a consistent pattern emerged in how these occupations were categorised. Across local councils, critical occupations consistently fell into two broad groups:

Officers:

These occupations involve office-based functions such as administration, planning, finance, HR, IT and governance.

Operations:

These occupations involve field-based work and operational tasks, such as waste management, parks and garden, water operations and infrastructure maintenance, requiring hands-on, location-specific skills.

Frequently cited critical occupations are captured in Table 9 below, set out across the two categories.³⁷

Occupation	Frequency
1. Town Planner	6
2. Engineer	6
3. Tradesperson (including Construction)	6
4. Water Operations Officer	6
5. IT Officer	4

Occupation	Frequency
6. Project Manager	4
7. Environmental Health Officer	3
8. Plant Operator / Truck Driver	3
9. Waste Management Worker (including Driver)	3
10. Mechanic	3

Priority occupations vary depending on the local council context and workforce needs.

Local councils across Queensland emphasised the differing priority occupations required to address local service needs and workforce challenges. While trade and technical occupations are consistently in demand, the specific mix of critical occupations varies substantially based on local council type, geographic location and service delivery model. Local councils also noted the evolving nature of occupations, reflecting increasing community expectations and the need for a more adaptable workforce. Key insights into current occupation priorities for First Nations and regional/remote local councils are outlined below:

Grant writers and advocacy officers are critical due to reliance on external funding (no rate collection).

Youth and community engagement officers are essential for public safety and long-term workforce development, particularly in supporting young people to remain engaged in education.

Childcare and aged care employees are in high demand, but recruitment is constrained by qualification.

Local councils in remote areas need skilled workers distributed across multiple locations, which presents logistical and training challenges.

Rural/Remote local councils are increasingly housing corporate services in regional centres to access broader talent pools.

This session also identified some emerging trends with occupation implications for the future:

Local councils report a shift in frontline service demands, with employees increasingly required to manage complex and challenging community interactions. This increased complexity is putting pressure on employees and reinforcing the necessity for improved support systems, targeted training and stronger safety measures.

Disaster management occupations are currently portfolio responsibilities, but their importance is gaining prominence, transitioning from reactive measures to proactive disaster mitigation, response, recovery and resilience.

One local council is actively multi-skilling its workforce, with employees initially employed as truck drivers now being trained to operate various plant equipment. This approach allows more flexible deployment of personnel across local council functions and service areas.

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.

A note on an emerging dichotomy of training needs: Pre- and post-employment.

Participants viewed accredited training access and completion through two distinct lenses:

1. Pre-employment: qualifications held as a prerequisite of applying for a role (e.g. engineering occupations requiring formal qualifications).
2. Post-employment: Progress towards and attainment of an accredited qualification or certification as an employee (e.g. offering a grace period to attain a required VET certification).

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 qualifications are foundational to local council workforce capability; however non-accredited training provides local councils with a practical and flexible alternative for workforce development.

Participants identified the following insights in relation to the different types of training available:

VET

VET qualifications are widely recognised as highly relevant and mandatory for building and sustaining technical and operational capability across local councils, particularly in regional, rural/remote areas. This was affirmed across workshop locations, with local councils from all workshops consistently agreeing on VET's significance for work-related training and alignment with specific occupations. This underscores VET's role as a vital mechanism for building occupation-specific skills rather than serving as a broad recruitment tool.

Non-Accredited Training

Participants highlighted the value of non-accredited training as a practical and flexible way to build workforce capability. Local councils emphasised its responsiveness and adaptability, particularly when delivered in-house to address evolving needs that formal qualifications may not cover. This type of training is often used to develop interpersonal and behavioural skills. Micro-credentials and internal programs were also appreciated for their efficiency and ability to target local council-specific skills, allowing rapid responses to emerging gaps with fewer resources than accredited pathways.

Opportunities exist within the VET system to better align with occupational requirements and expand training accessibility.

Participants identified the following themes in relation to the challenges and opportunities for VET:

High cost: The cost of qualifications and the requirement for hands-on, on-site training adds further financial pressure through travel and accommodation costs.

Logistical barriers: Local councils in remote areas often rely on Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) based in larger centres. While face-to-face training is valued, local councils continue to grapple with the associated logistical barriers.

Virtual learning perceived as less effective: Local council employees have indicated that virtual learning environments frequently fail to engage participants effectively. In these contexts, online learning is generally insufficient for practical skills acquisition.

Funding disparities: While the benefits of the state government's Construction Skills Queensland funding is acknowledged, it has inadvertently created an uneven training landscape.

Compliance-driven complexity: It is increasingly difficult for local councils to upskill their current workforce to comply with evolving compliance.

System improvement opportunities: Participants identified several areas for improvement in the VET system, including better alignment with occupational requirements, expanded availability of RTOs and improved time efficiency.

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 government areas. 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 local 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 Queensland.³⁸

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

Occupation-specific skills	Transferable Professional Skills	Interpersonal Skills
› Artificial intelligence › Industrial relations knowledge › Digital transformation › Climate adaptation and risk mitigation › Cyber and network security › Disaster management › ICT system support › Legislative compliance and interpretation › Water management › Workplace health and safety	› Change management › Data analytics › Digital literacy › Legislative knowledge › Literacy and numeracy › Problem solving › Project management › Workforce planning	› Communication › Community and public engagement › Conflict resolution › De-escalation techniques › Recovery leadership › Stakeholder engagement › Stakeholder management › Working with external agencies

Based on this analysis, the following themes were identified:

Recruiting and retaining occupation-specific skills, such as technical qualifications and certifications remains the most significant challenge for local councils, particularly in regional and remote areas where local talent pools are limited. This difficulty is exacerbated by several factors:

Attraction barriers:

Limited affordable housing and fewer lifestyle amenities make it hard to attract skilled workers to regional, rural/remote areas.

Salary competition:

Local councils often cannot compete with the higher salaries offered by industries like mining and construction.

Training access:

The high cost and logistical barriers of VET, including travel and accommodation, disproportionately affect rural/remote local councils.

Compliance complexity:

Increasing regulatory requirements demand higher qualifications, making it harder for local councils to upskill existing employees and maintain compliance.

Funding disparities:

Targeted funding (e.g. Construction Skills Queensland) of some sectors supports some occupations but creates inequities in workforce development.

Transferable professional skills and interpersonal skills are increasingly vital as local councils adapt to more complex service delivery models and increasing community expectations:

The evolution to dynamic, cross-functional capabilities is evident, especially as local councils outsource more work and require employees to manage contracts and stakeholders effectively.

The adoption of new technologies and automation is reshaping required skill sets, with digital literacy, data analytics and IT systems knowledge now essential across many roles.

Across all local councils, employees must work effectively with diverse communities requiring advanced communication, negotiation and cultural competency skills.

Behavioural Traits:

There was considerable discussion across the workshops on a fourth tier relating to personal qualities, aptitudes, mindsets and behavioural tendencies that influence how someone approaches work and interacts with others.

Amid rapid digital transformation, increasing service complexity and frequent regulatory changes, local councils are prioritising adaptability, resilience and a solutions-focused mindset. Rising public hostility and challenging community interactions have led local councils to invest in new skill sets, such as de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed care and mental health awareness.

Skill gaps are widening:

Workshop discussions highlighted that skill gaps in local council occupations are becoming more acute as service delivery becomes more complex and expectations shift from traditional occupation roles to dynamic and cross functional capabilities. The following four sub themes emerged:

Workshop participants identified several occupations where gaps between current capability and required skills are most pronounced. For example, trade occupations face notable gaps not only in technical expertise but also in project management, leadership, digital literacy and safety compliance. These gaps reflect the evolving expectations of local councils and the increasing complexity of service delivery.

Specialist positions such as planners, water operators and waste management employees are experiencing an evolution in skill requirements. Planners and strategic thinkers are now expected to balance analytical rigour with adaptability, digital skills and negotiation abilities. Water operators face growing expectations around technology use, disaster management and automation, while environmental health officers are also navigating new regulatory landscapes and community engagement demands, highlighting the broadening scope of professional expertise required across local councils.

The skills gap extends to interpersonal skills and behavioural traits such as adaptability, problem solving and the ability to engage with diverse communities. The increasing pace of technological change, regulatory updates and community expectations means that local council employees must be prepared to learn continuously and respond to new challenges. Participants consistently noted that resilience, communication and a solutions-focused mindset are becoming just as important as formal qualifications, signalling a shift in what local councils need from their workforce now and into the future.

Local councils highlighted the importance of maintaining disaster response capabilities, even though these responsibilities often take employees away from their core roles. These skills are not used in routine service delivery but are preserved to ensure local councils can respond quickly in the event of a disaster. To maintain readiness, local councils invest in regular training for a broad group of employees, many of whom do not apply these technical skills in their day-to-day work.

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.
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 occupations discussed in workshops with key stakeholders.

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

Skills gaps are highlighted in **bold**

Job	Skill	
Communications Officer	Advocacy training	<i>AI training</i>
	Media training	<i>Plain language training</i>
	Crisis management	<i>Media engagement</i>
	Community/public engagement (IPA2 certificate)	
Customer Support Officer	IT/systems	Communication
	Conflict resolution	Cash handling
	People skills	Counselling (emotional first aid)
	Working with children	
IT Officer	Verbal communication	<i>Automation</i>
	Customer service	<i>AI/prompt engineering</i>
	Technical/systems knowledge	<i>Business analysis</i>
	<i>Cyber and network security</i>	<i>Project management</i>
	Knowledge of council systems	<i>Microsoft skills</i>
	Contractor management	<i>Change management</i>
	Solution focus	<i>Consultation</i>
	Forward thinking	<i>People skills</i>

Job	Skill	
Business Analyst	Data governance	<i>Platform variety</i>
	Stakeholder consultation	Contract management
	Data analysis	Project management
	Problem solving	<i>Change management</i>
	Solutions focused	<i>IT qualifications</i>
	Stakeholder engagement	<i>Customer service</i>
Town Planner	Digital literacy	
	Legislative knowledge	Psycho-social mental health
	Compliance knowledge	Technical AI adoption
	Time management	Conflict resolution
	Understand planning scheme	<i>Project management</i>
	Collaboration and teamwork	<i>Digital literacy</i>
	Customer service	<i>Negotiation skills</i>
	Regional knowledge	<i>Analytical and problem solving</i>
	Relevant degree/diploma	Communicating both internally and externally
	Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and scheduling software competency	<i>Knowledge of best practice</i>
	Adaptability and resilience	<i>Strategic policy knowledge</i>
	Resilience	
Community Engagement Officer (Social / Pastoral Care)	Customer service	Digital literacy
	Mental health support	Self defence
	Occupational violence and aggression	Automation

Job	Skill	
	Community and public engagement	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
	Local cultural understanding	<i>Social media management</i>
	People skills	<i>Public relations</i>
	Consultation	<i>Public speaking</i>
	Stakeholder engagement	<i>Events management</i>
Environmental Health Officer	<i>Community and public engagement</i>	Legislative compliance and interpretation
	De-escalation techniques	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
	Analytical problem solving	<i>De-escalation techniques</i>
	Relevant scientific diploma/degree	<i>Mental health awareness</i>
	Industry experience	Conflict resolution
	Customer service and dealing with difficult customers	<i>Resilience</i>
	Data analysis/report writing	<i>Climate management</i>
	Digital literacy	Emerging environmental issues
	<i>ICT/systems</i>	
Project Manager	Planning	<i>Automation</i>
	Leadership/management	Change management
	Community/public engagement	<i>Communication</i>
	Conflict management	Stakeholder management
	Knowledge management	Digital literacy
	Process oriented	<i>Diploma/qualification</i>
	Forward thinking	<i>Report writing</i>
	Collaboration	<i>Customer service</i>

Job	Skill	
	<i>Changes to IT (advanced) systems</i>	
Grants Writer	Project scoping/management	Conflict resolution/negotiation
	Software training	Legislative knowledge (tax, GST)
	Diploma of procurement	Communication
Economic Development Officer	Stakeholder engagement	Community awareness
	Report/grant writing	<i>Project management</i>
	Influencing / negotiating	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
	Cultural awareness	<i>AI</i>
Engineer	Engineering degree	Systems
	Critical thinking	<i>Climate opportunity and risk management</i>
	Corporate awareness	<i>Diagnostic tools</i>
	Contract management	<i>Communication</i>
	Budgeting	<i>Interpersonal skills</i>
	Stakeholder engagement	<i>Consultation</i>
	Report writing	<i>Problem solving</i>
	Risk management	<i>Systems</i>
	Collaboration	<i>Working with elected members</i>
	Strategic thinking	<i>Project management</i>
Local Laws Compliance Officer	Customer service and dealing with difficult customers	Balancing enforcement and education
	Legislative knowledge	<i>Digital literacy</i>
	Resilience	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
	Negotiating skills	<i>AI</i>

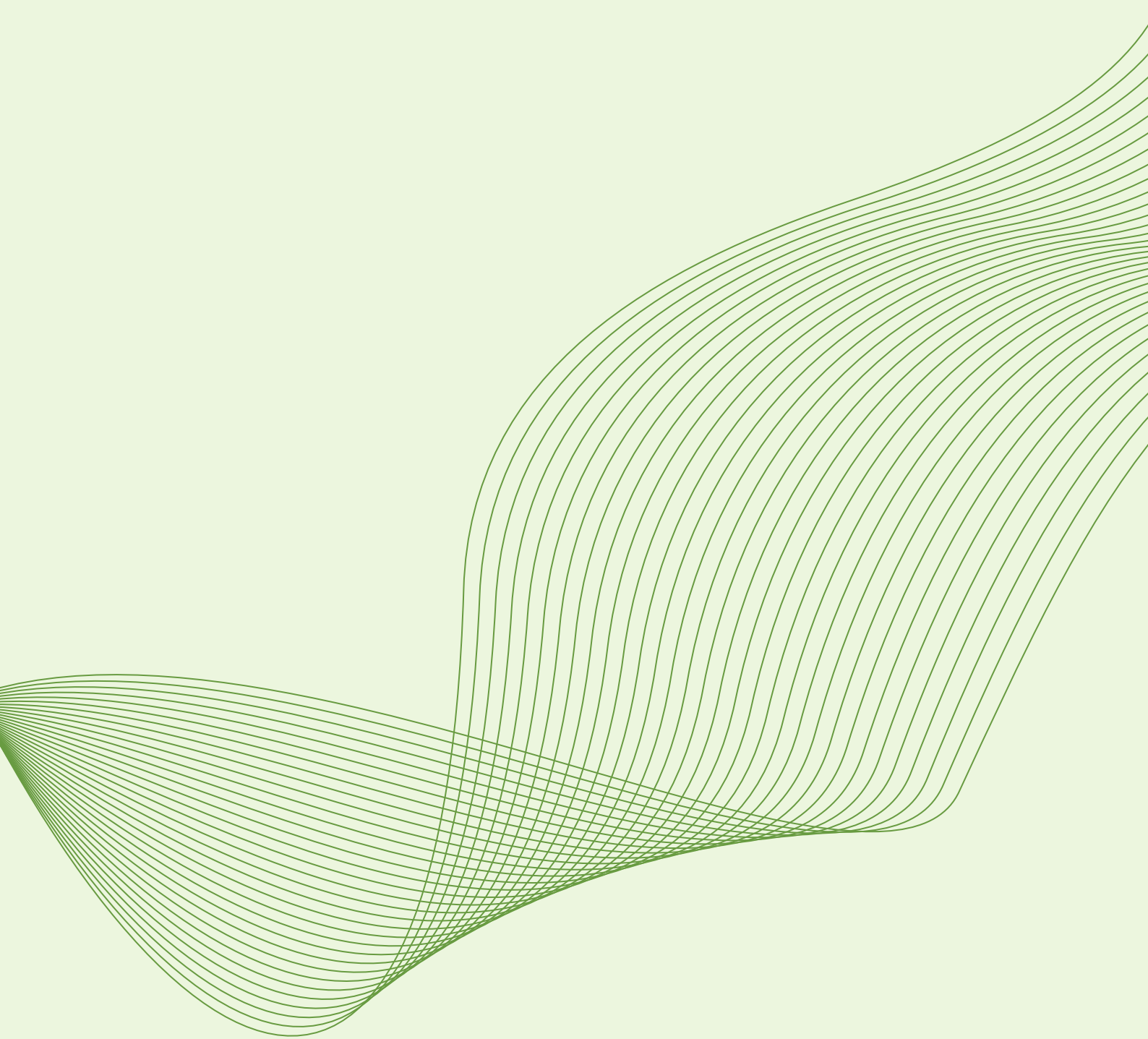
Job	Skill	
	Certificate IV Investigations	<i>Animal handling training</i>
Human Resources / Organisational Development Officers (including Learning & Development)	HR and industrial relations (IR) legislative knowledge	<i>Emotional intelligence</i>
	Dispute resolution and mediation	Digital literacy
	Communication	Workforce planning
	Customer service	<i>Administrative abilities</i>
	Learning and development	<i>Compliance</i>
	Data analysis	<i>Psycho-social skills</i>
	Stakeholder engagement	<i>Corporate Governance Act and local governance knowledge</i>
	Empathy	<i>Coaching</i>
	Cultural awareness	Data analytics
	Resilience	Business partnering
Building Certifier	Qualifications and licenses	Technical knowledge
	Stakeholder engagement	Analytical skills
	Ability to interpret plans	Communication
	Legislative knowledge	Changes to building codes and regulations
	Solutions focused	Changes to safety standards
Childcare and Aged Care Worker	Certificate II Aged Care	Food safety
	Manual handling	Dealing with difficult clients
	First Aid / CPR	Time management

Job	Skill	
Finance Officer	Relevant degree/qualification	<i>Communication</i>
	Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	Problem solving
	People skills	IT systems
	Conflict resolution	<i>AI</i>
	Negotiation skills	<i>Data analytics</i>
Operations		
Water Operations Officer	Legislative knowledge	Manual work
	Communication	Heavy rigid (HR) licence
	Mentor/coach	Water quality testing
	Problem solving/fault diagnosis	<i>IT skills/automation</i>
	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) telemetry	Digital literacy
	Record keeping, data monitoring and collecting	<i>Transferable skills</i>
	Procedural knowledge	Task management
	Water industry operations (WIO) Certificate III	Disaster management
	Safety	Problem solving
Plant Operator / Truck Driver	Plant (e.g. excavator)	ICT/Systems
	Teamwork	Conflict management
	Agricultural chemicals distribution control (ACDC)	<i>Communication</i>
	Time management	<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>
	Certificate III in Plant Operations	Chain of responsibility

Job	Skill	
Tradesperson (including Construction)	Working at heights	Customer service
	Elevated work platforms	Machinery tickets
	Working in confined spaced	Cultural awareness
	Asbestos and Silica awareness	Time management
	Conflict resolution	<i>People and leadership skills</i>
	Mentoring/coaching	<i>Communication</i>
	Supervision	Digital literacy
	Manual handling	Literacy and numeracy
	Machinery tickets	<i>Technical machinery training</i>
	Small engine repairs	<i>Navigating complexity</i>
	Workplace health and safety	<i>Safety and efficiency</i>
	Traffic control	<i>More diverse technical skills</i>
	White card (construction)	<i>Project management</i>
	Legislative compliance	<i>De-escalation training</i>
	Occupation specific skills	<i>Infrastructure management</i>
	Ability to follow instruction	
Underground Utilities Locator	Tools/equipment	Resources and infrastructure industry (RII) locator course
	Map reading	<i>Before you dig (BYD) course</i>
	Technical asset knowledge	

Job	Skill	
Mechanic	Diesel MEM qualification (diesel mechanics)	Understanding of vehicle load limits
	Refrigerant handling	Chain of responsibility
	Coaching/mentoring apprentices	Digital literacy
	Examiner qualifications	Dual trades
	Numeracy	Project management
	Qualifications	AI
	Analytical mindset	Electric vehicles
	Teamwork	Equipment types
	Compliance and safety	
Waste Management Worker (including Driver)	Experienced truck driver	<i>Communication</i>
	Clean driving record	Digital literacy
	Additional skills for specific trucks	De-escalation
	Time management	Multi-skilling across occupations
	Energex training	
Utility Worker (Gas)	Confined space and breathing apparatus	Safety management understanding
	Working at heights	<i>Contamination</i>
	Chlorine gas / toxic gas from treatment process	Technology
	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems knowledge	Automation

Job	Skill	
Disaster Management Officer	Formal disaster management training	<i>Recovery leadership</i>
	Communication	Community/public engagement
	Leadership	<i>Disaster preparedness</i>
	Working with external agencies	Climate adaption and risk mitigation
	People skills	<i>Stakeholder engagement</i>
	Local knowledge on external environmental factors	<i>People management</i>
	<i>Strategic planning</i>	<i>Ability to work under pressure</i>
	<i>Social/mental health training</i>	<i>Domestic violence / gender equality, disability, social including (GEDSI) training</i>
	<i>Consistent upskilling</i>	
General Labourer / Field Worker (including Horticulture, Infrastructure Maintenance)	Fitness/strength	De-escalation training
	Ability to follow directions	Plant tickets
	Workplace health and safety	Communication
	Customer service	Teamwork
	Digital literacy	Trauma informed care
	Time management	<i>Resilience</i>
	Maintenance skills	<i>Climate opportunity and risk management</i>



PUBLIC SKILLS
AUSTRALIA
PUBLIC SAFETY SKILLS AUSTRALIA LTD



publicskillsaustralia.org.au



au.linkedin.com/company/publicskillsaustralia



Level 5, 473 Bourke St Melbourne, Victoria 3000, AU