

AUSTRALIAN LIVESTOCK AND RURAL TRANSPORTERS ASSOCIATION (ALRTA)



SUBMISSION TO JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA

2025 CORE SKILLED OCCUPATION LIST CONSULTATION

Date: 26 September 2025

About ALRTA

The Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association (ALRTA) is the peak national body representing the interests of livestock and rural transport businesses across Australia. Through our six state member associations, we represent operators engaged in the essential freight tasks that support Australia's agricultural sector, including livestock transport, grain haulage, and bulk feed and water delivery across regional and remote areas.

Our member businesses operate in some of the most challenging transport environments in the country, including extensive use of road trains, and are subject to animal welfare, biosecurity, fatigue, and chain of responsibility regulations that require specific knowledge and experience.

Introduction and Summary

On 25 August 2025, Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) opened consultations on its advice to the Government on the 2025 Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL).

JSA has identified a group of occupations that are targeted for stakeholder consultation. The occupations relevant to this consultation include:

- Articulated Truck Driver (ANZSCO 733231)
- Tanker Truck Driver (ANZSCO 733232)
- Truck Driver (General) (ANZSCO 733111), with explicit recognition of the 'Livestock Haulier' and 'Road Train Driver' specialisations

Given the evidence set out in this submission, ALRTA considers that articulated truck drivers, tanker truck drivers, and truck driver (general) with livestock haulier and road train recognition should be added to the Core Skilled Occupation List. Listing these

occupations on the CSOL would enable nominations under the Skills in Demand (subclass 482) Core Skills stream, which is particularly important for regional operators.

1. Regional and Rural Workforce Gaps Are Acute and Growing

ALRTA draws attention to the persistent and worsening shortage of truck drivers in regional Australia, particularly in the livestock and rural bulk freight sectors. This is supported by recent findings from:

- Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA): Truck Driver – General (ANZSCO 733111) was listed as one of the five largest occupations in national shortage between 2022–2024.
- IRU 2024 Driver Shortage Survey: 13.3% of driver positions in Australia remain unfilled.
- Industry Skills Australia (ISA) 2025 Workforce Plan: Found regional freight businesses facing the most significant driver availability challenges, with 90% of surveyed stakeholders agreeing there is a national shortage of heavy vehicle drivers.

Despite significant investment in local driver training initiatives, including short-course programs and Certificate III pathways, the forecast shortfall of 78,000 drivers by 2029 cannot be met without the support of skilled migration.

2. Livestock and Road Train Drivers Are Distinct Roles

The ANZSCO 733111 category currently captures a wide range of driving roles. However, it does not differentiate the specialised skills and regulatory environment required of livestock hauliers and rural road train operators, which include:

- Animal welfare compliance (timing, temperature, feed/water access),
- Biosecurity risk management (vehicle cleanliness, contamination prevention),
- Safe loading and handling practices for live cargo,
- Extended-distance driving across remote and cross-jurisdictional routes,
- Use of multi-trailer configurations (including triple and quad road trains),
- Specialised scheduling around saleyards, abattoirs, and harvest cycles.

The ALRTA recommends that JSA recognise these distinct operational requirements within the ANZSCO 733111 classification, or as a supplementary descriptor, to enable more accurate occupation tracking and migration pathway design. We also recommend this distinct classification be listed on the CSOL under subclass 482.

3. Skilled Migration Is Critical – Link to 482 Visa Pathway

We urge JSA to ensure that occupations added to the CSOL remain eligible under the Subclass 482 Temporary Skills Shortage visa, as a key mechanism for regional operators to access qualified drivers where local labour is unavailable.

Without skilled migration access, rural businesses face:

- Idled fleets due to driver shortages, impacting cash flow and service reliability,
- Missed livestock delivery windows, increasing animal welfare and regulatory risks,
- Disrupted harvest, feed, and water logistics, affecting national food production,
- Higher compliance costs, as fewer skilled drivers are available to meet rising NHVR safety and chain-of-responsibility expectations.

For smaller operators, skilled migration via the Core Skilled List and 482 visa pathway may be the only viable tool to fill essential driving roles in the near-term.

4. ALRTA and Industry Are Investing in Local Solutions

ALRTA supports and actively contributes to local driver training solutions, including:

- The development of a national rural driver training academy model (in partnership with industry sponsors),
- Participation in the ALRTA Driver and Animal Welfare Committee to shape workforce pathways,
- Support for the TruckSafe Animal Welfare Accreditation, which sets national standards for operator and driver compliance in livestock freight.

ALRTA is also currently working with Industry Skills Australia to establish a dedicated Livestock Haulier Skills Project. This national initiative aims to define the unique skills profile required of livestock transport operators and will support the development of tailored training solutions for both current and future drivers. The project reflects our commitment to building a recognised and professional livestock transport workforce and complements broader industry efforts to improve safety, animal welfare, and operational consistency across regions.

However, we acknowledge that these initiatives alone cannot meet workforce needs without complementary skilled migration access, particularly for remote and high-risk freight tasks that require experience and maturity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The ALRTA urges Jobs and Skills Australia to:

1. Include ANZSCO 733111 (Truck Driver – General) on the Core Skilled Occupation List,
2. Explicitly recognise Livestock Hauliers and Road Train Drivers as part of that classification or as a noted specialisation,
3. Ensure inclusion on the CSOL provides eligibility for Subclass 482 visa access, and
4. Acknowledge the compounding risks to animal welfare, biosecurity, and perishable freight if regional freight driver shortages are not addressed.

We thank JSA for the opportunity to provide input into this consultation and welcome further engagement on this important issue.

Submitted by:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

www.alrta.org.au