

Jobs and Skills Australia

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Submissions via: <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/consultations/2025-core-skills-occupations-list-csol-consultations>

Re: Support for Australian Sports Turf Managers Association Submission – Inclusion of Unit Group 3425 Sports Turf Managers and Trades Workers on the Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL)

Attn: Jobs and Skills Australia,

On behalf of Golf Australia, we are pleased to express our strong support for the Australian Sports Turf Managers Association's (ASTMA) submission seeking the inclusion of **Unit Group 3425 – Sports Turf Managers and Trades Workers** (and all associated occupation titles) on the 2025 Core Skills Occupations List.

Sports Turf Managers and Trades Workers play a vital role in ensuring that Australia's sporting facilities — from elite stadiums to community playing fields — are safe, sustainable, and maintained to world-class standards. These highly skilled professionals underpin the delivery of major events, community sport and recreation, tourism activity, and regional economic development.

Our organisation has observed first-hand the growing and persistent workforce shortages in these occupations. Despite competitive wages and significant recruitment efforts, employers across both metropolitan and regional areas are struggling to source suitably qualified staff. This shortage directly threatens the quality and safety of sporting surfaces and limits Australia's capacity to host competitions at all levels.

We therefore endorse ASTMA's request for inclusion of these occupations on the CSOL. Enabling access to skilled migration pathways, alongside domestic training efforts, is essential to address the structural workforce gaps in this sector. We believe such action is in the national interest and will protect Australia's sporting reputation and infrastructure for years to come.

The Importance of Sports Turf Management to Golf

Golf Australia, the peak governing body for golf in Australia, are acutely aware of the current challenges faced by Sports Turf Managers (termed Superintendents in the golf industry) and their clubs, facilities and places to play with regards to attraction and retention of these industry professionals. In a Staff Attraction & Retention session led by Golf Australia at the 2023 ASTMA Conference, Superintendents voiced and echoed the existing challenges faced, including the high number of role vacancies and not having enough qualified Sports Turf Managers and Apprentices to fill these roles and service current workloads.

There are over 27,800 full time equivalent roles in golf, equating to a headcount of over 38,000 paid workers across the country every year. At green-grass golfing clubs and facilities, Superintendents play a critical role of overall maintenance and management of the golf course with a priority of ensuring the course in a condition to provide a great golfing experience for participants.

Golf in Australia is booming, with 3.8 million Australians playing golf in all its forms in 2023-2024, a 9% increase year-on-year. 19% of adult Australians hit a golf ball during the year and golf club membership increased by 5.6% to 459,143 members, marking a 19% total growth over five years. Of the 1,762 clubs, facilities and places to play across Australia, 1,439 are green-grass golf courses, with 111 of these being public, council owned facilities.

With participation continuing to soar, we need to have an increase in our workforce numbers to sustain this growth. We believe that it has been underestimated how much of an impact the role of Sports Turf Managers play in supporting participation growth in golf. Without an adequate number of Superintendents maintaining and managing golf courses, there could be a decline in the upkeep but also in the number of green-grass golfing facilities available to golfers. The work of Sports Turf Managers in golf directly impacts the ability for people to continue participating and playing the sport in our country.

Here are just some stories which shine light on how pivotal these professionals are to our sport:

- [#ThankASuperAUS: Tim Warren](#)
- [#ThankASuperAUS: Oliver Davis](#)
- [#ThankASuper: Tom Tristram on excellence in golf course management](#)
- [#ThankASuper: From the Murray River to Royal Melbourne](#)
- [#ThankASuper Day: Geraldine O'Callaghan at Sandy Links](#)
- [#ThankASuper Day: Jayden Zappelli at Kalgoorlie Golf Course](#)
- [Age no barrier for Launceston superintendent](#)

In conclusion, the inclusion of Sports Turf Management as a critical occupation in the Core Skills Occupations List is imperative to address the current and future labour market challenges in this industry. By prioritising an effective combination of training, recruitment and skilled migration initiatives for turf management professionals, we can ensure the continued growth and sustainability of Australia's sports industry.

We appreciate your consideration of this submission and that of the Australian Sports Turf Managers Association, and stand ready to provide any further information or assistance required.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]

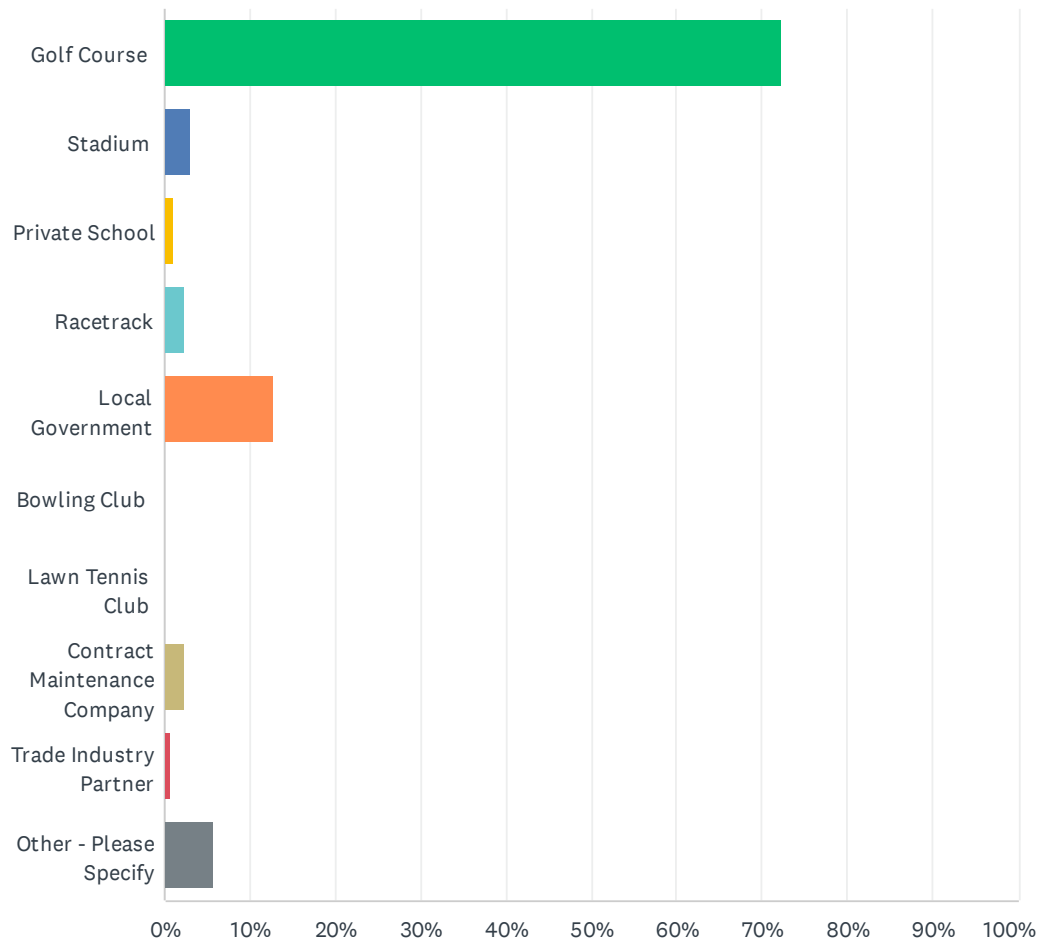
[Redacted contact information]

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted contact information]

Q1 Facility Type

Answered: 173 Skipped: 0

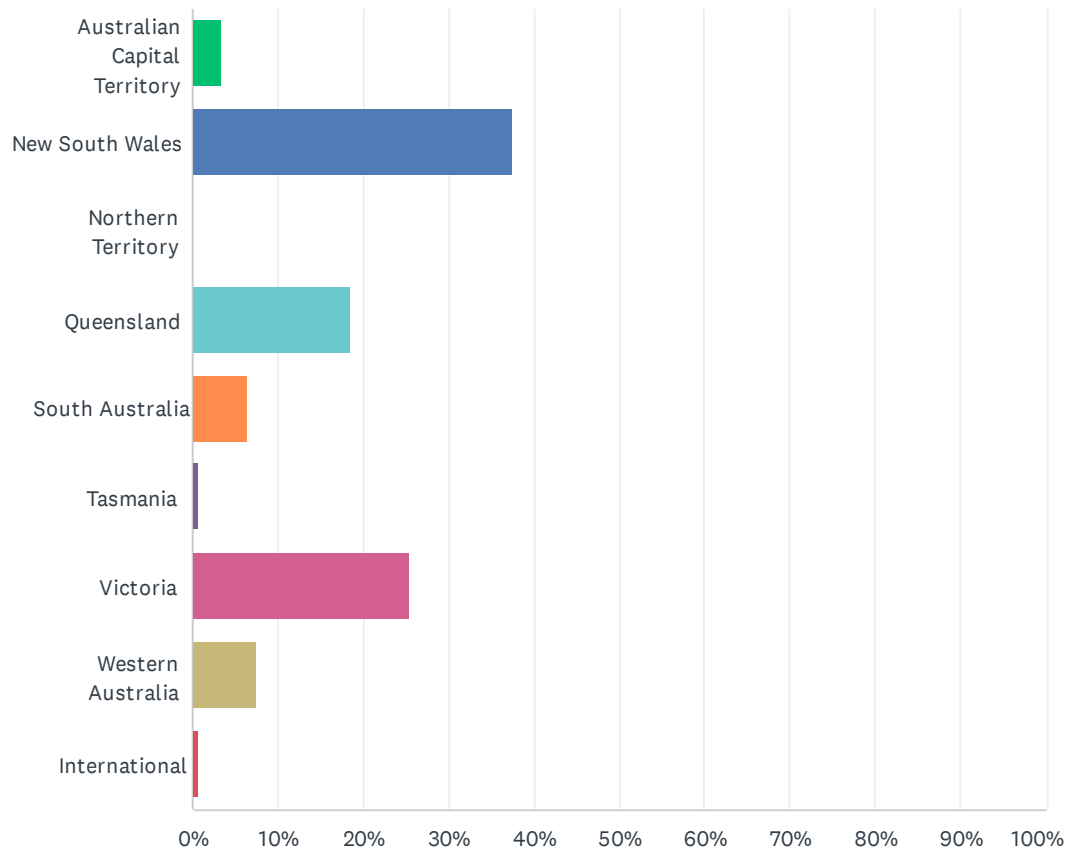


Sports Turf Management Industry Labour Assessment Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Golf Course	72.25%	125
Stadium	2.89%	5
Private School	1.16%	2
Racetrack	2.31%	4
Local Government	12.72%	22
Bowling Club	0.00%	0
Lawn Tennis Club	0.00%	0
Contract Maintenance Company	2.31%	4
Trade Industry Partner	0.58%	1
Other - Please Specify	5.78%	10
TOTAL		173

Q2 What state is your facility located in?

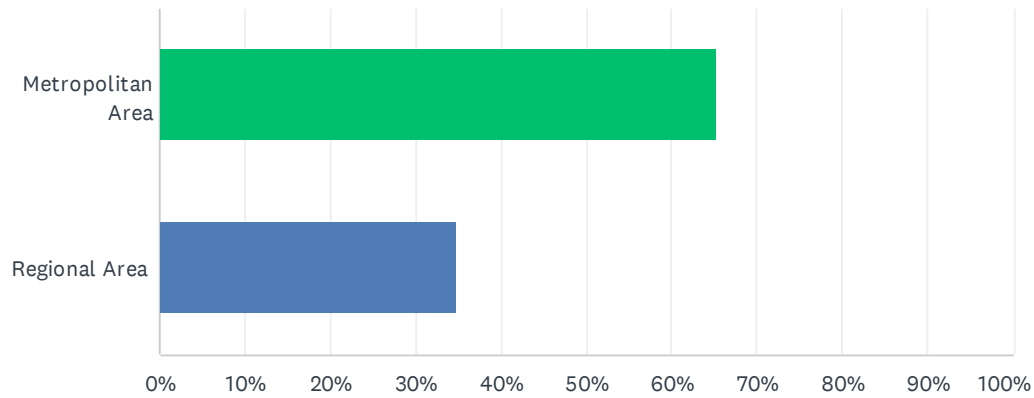
Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Australian Capital Territory	3.47%	6
New South Wales	37.57%	65
Northern Territory	0.00%	0
Queensland	18.50%	32
South Australia	6.36%	11
Tasmania	0.58%	1
Victoria	25.43%	44
Western Australia	7.51%	13
International	0.58%	1
TOTAL		173

Q3 What are Is your facility located in?

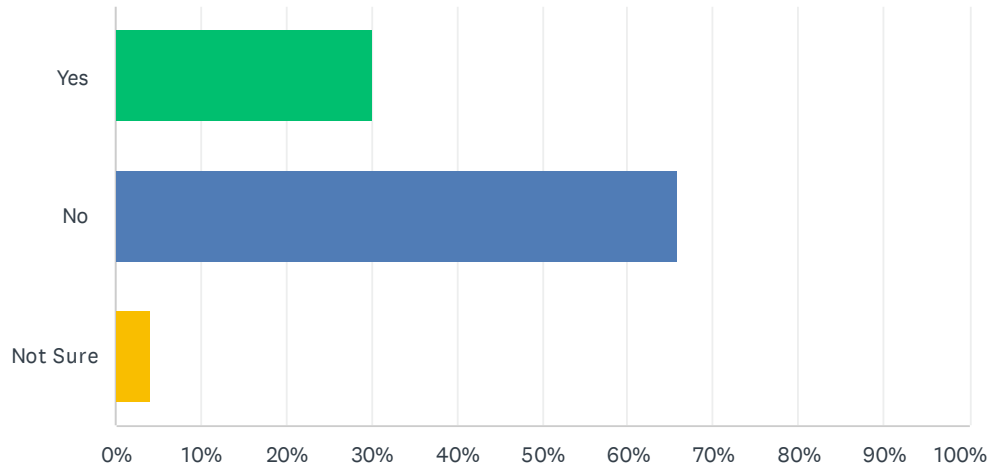
Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Metropolitan Area	65.32%	113
Regional Area	34.68%	60
TOTAL		173

Q4 Are you currently operating at full capacity (full to allocated headcount or to budget) of staff in turf management operations?

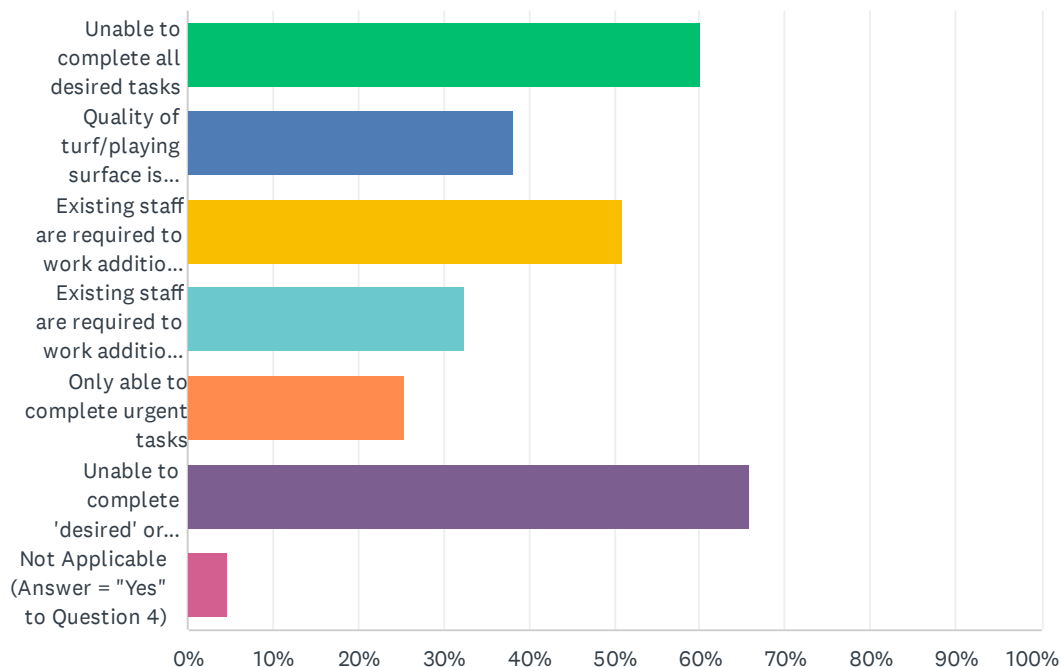
Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30.06%	52
No	65.90%	114
Not Sure	4.05%	7
TOTAL		173

Q5 If you answered "No" to the previous question, what impacts does this have on your turf management team and operations? (Select all that apply)

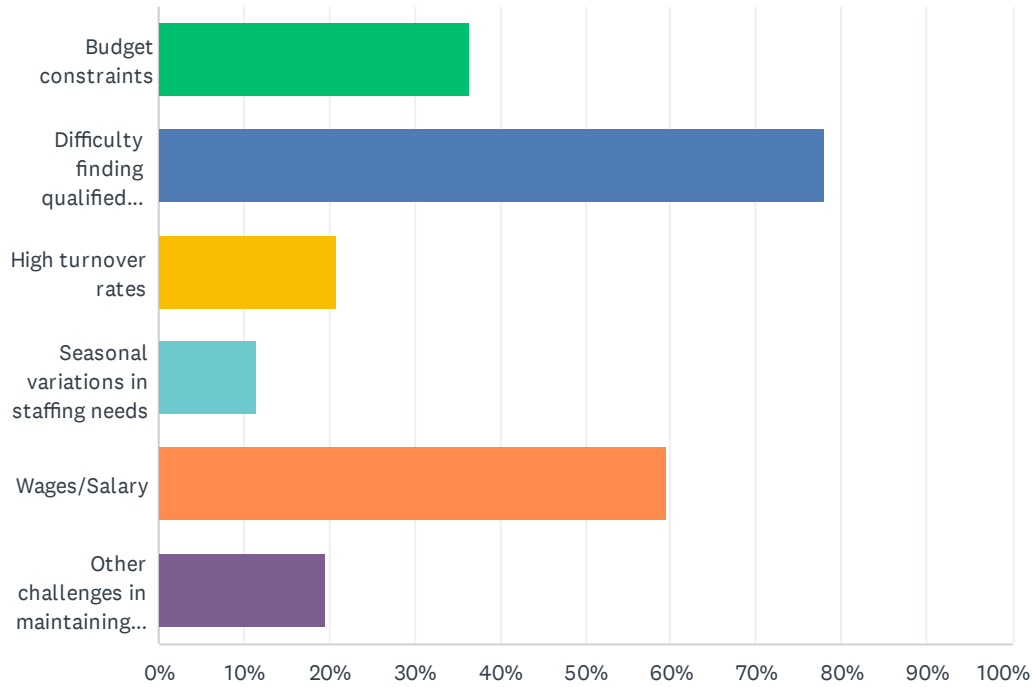
Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Unable to complete all desired tasks	60.12%	104
Quality of turf/playing surface is suffering	38.15%	66
Existing staff are required to work additional hours	50.87%	88
Existing staff are required to work additional days	32.37%	56
Only able to complete urgent tasks	25.43%	44
Unable to complete 'desired' or 'like to do activities' to improve the course/facility	65.90%	114
Not Applicable (Answer = "Yes" to Question 4)	4.62%	8
Total Respondents: 173		

Q6 What are the primary challenges your golf course/facility face in maintaining adequate staffing levels? (Select all that apply)

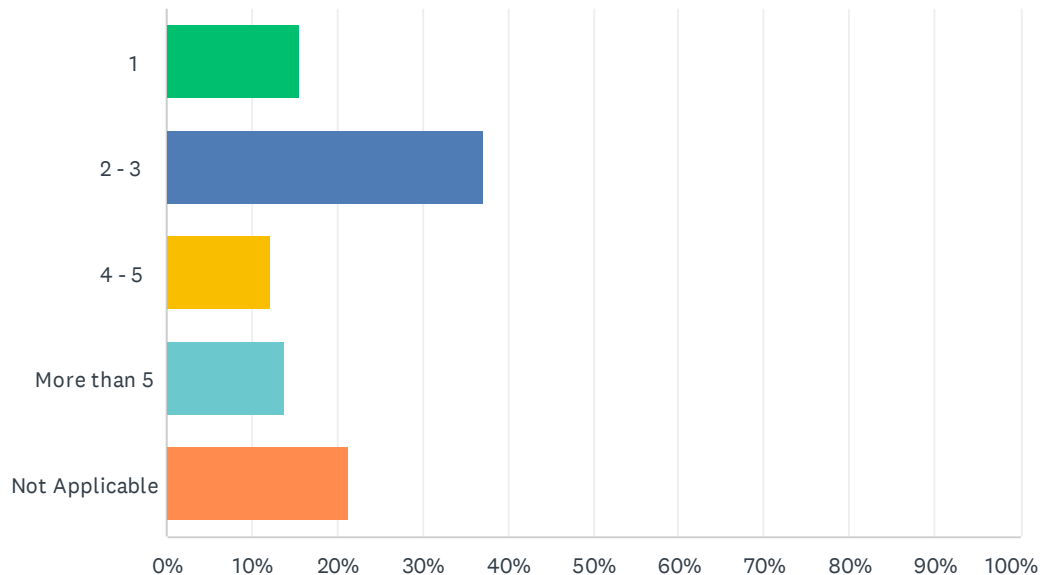
Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Budget constraints	36.42%	63
Difficulty finding qualified candidates	78.03%	135
High turnover rates	20.81%	36
Seasonal variations in staffing needs	11.56%	20
Wages/Salary	59.54%	103
Other challenges in maintaining staffing levels	19.65%	34
Total Respondents: 173		

Q7 If you answered “No” to the previous question, by how many staff members are you currently operating under budget/headcount?

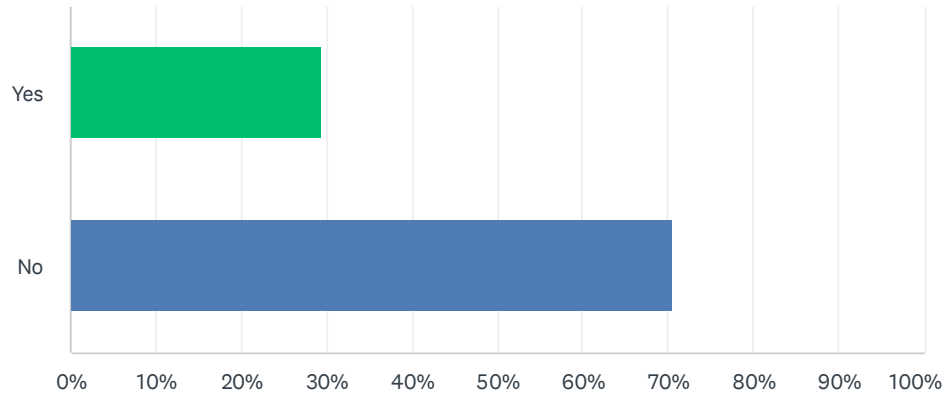
Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	15.61%	27
2 - 3	36.99%	64
4 - 5	12.14%	21
More than 5	13.87%	24
Not Applicable	21.39%	37
TOTAL		173

Q8 Do you feel your current staffing levels are adequate to maintain turf and surrounds at a suitable level?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.48%	51
No	70.52%	122
TOTAL		173