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## **SUBMISSION TO THE 2025 CORE SKILLS OCCUPATION LIST CONSULTATION**

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) is the peak body representing the municipalities of Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, and Wodonga – local government areas home to more than 800,000 Victorians.

Local governments across regional Victoria play an expanded role in job creation, housing delivery, planning and approvals, infrastructure development, and service provision compared to councils in metropolitan areas.

These responsibilities have become more critical following the Victorian Government's commitment to ambitious housing targets to be met by 2051.

### **Skills shortages in regional local government**

Demand for workers in regional Victoria is at an all-time high. Attracting and retaining skilled staff is a pressing challenge for councils and is being further exacerbated by shortages of worker accommodation which also impacts housing affordability.

Without greater resolve, these workforce shortages risk undermining all efforts to meet state and national housing and infrastructure objectives.

RCV member councils consistently report acute shortages in occupations central to planning, approving, and delivering housing and community infrastructure. Independent evidence from peak professional bodies confirms these shortages:

- Urban and regional planners – The Planning Institute of Australia reports that planning has shifted from no shortage in 2022 to a critical national shortage in 2024, with acute gaps in regional areas.<sup>1</sup> RCV strongly supports their inclusion on the Core Skills Occupation List.
- Engineers – Engineers Australia identifies engineering as facing the most severe workforce shortages in over a decade, with demand growing three times faster than the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.planning.org.au/pia/pia/news-resources/articles/latest-updates/2024/new-data-shows-shortage-of-urban-and-regional-planners-worsening.aspx> Planning Institute of Australia & <https://www.planning.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/PIA/Miscellaneous/National/Shortage%20of%20Planners%20Survey%20-%20Summary.pdf> Planning Institute of Australia



general workforce and high vacancy rates persisting nationally.<sup>2</sup> Engineers are essential for infrastructure and housing development across regional cities.

- Building/construction surveyors – The Australian Institute of Building Surveyors and Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group highlight a serious shortage of building surveyors, with council roles often unfilled for more than 12 months and, in some cases, up to five years.<sup>3</sup> They are pivotal to meeting building safety, compliance, and construction demand at scale.
- Civil engineering draftspersons and technicians – Jobs and Skills Australia's Occupation Shortage List confirms both occupations are in shortage nationally, with VETASSESS and Engineers Australia serving as skills assessors.<sup>4</sup> These roles are integral to drafting, testing, and site quality assurance for local government projects.

### Importance of the CSOL for regional Victoria

RCV welcomes the transition from ANZSCO to the new Occupation and Skills Classification of Australia (OSCA) framework. The updated 2025 CSOL, aligned with OSCA and refined methodology, provides a contemporary, skills-based approach that better reflects the competencies needed to meet Australia's evolving workforce demands.

For regional local governments, this shift is especially important. It ensures that critical occupations in planning, engineering, and surveying are properly recognised in national workforce planning, strengthening the evidence base to address shortages that directly affect housing delivery and infrastructure outcomes.

These shortages are not only a workforce challenge but also a housing supply issue because without the professional expertise to plan, survey, and engineer new housing stock, state housing targets cannot be met.

RCV therefore urges Jobs and Skills Australia to ensure the CSOL reflects the specific needs of regional Victoria<sup>5</sup> by:

- Maintaining and strengthening the inclusion of urban and regional planners, in recognition of acute shortages nationally and regionally.
- Confirming coverage of key engineering and surveying roles essential for housing, infrastructure, and growth delivery.
- Recognising the compounding barriers to attracting and retaining workers in regional areas, including limited housing availability and high living costs, which intensify the impact of these shortages.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/about-engineering/statistics>

<sup>3</sup> <https://plannedresources.com.au/media-release-councils-face-war-on-talent-new-survey-reveals-as-shortages-hit-building-depts/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.anzscosearch.com/312211>

<sup>5</sup> The occupations for which RCV seeks inclusion/retention on the CSOL are: Urban and Regional Planner (ANZSCO 232611; OSCA 241331), Civil Engineer (233211; 243231) and related civil specialisations (Geotechnical 233212→243232; Structural 233214→243234; Water 243236), Environmental Engineer (233915→243935), Quantity Surveyor (233213→241932), Building Surveyor (treated as 312113 under ANZSCO; now separately identified in OSCA as 241931), and civil para-professionals Civil Engineering Draftsperson (312211→313131) and Civil Engineering Technician (312212→313132).



RCV welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the 2025 CSOL consultation.

Addressing workforce shortages in urban planning, engineering, and surveying will be vital to delivering on housing targets, unlocking economic potential, and ensuring regional communities can continue to deliver the liveability for which we are renowned.

Should you require further information, please   






  
  


