



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

# Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL) – Stakeholder Engagement and Qualitative Analysis (Focus Groups)

CSOL legislative instrument to be finalised in November 2024 to coincide with legislation to introduce the new Skills in Demand (SID) visa

January 2024

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## 1. Background and Context

- The [Migration Strategy for Australia's Future](#) establishes a formal role for Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) in defining Australia's skill needs for migration, including advice from tripartite mechanisms.
- The [JSA Consultative Forum](#) Chair proposed a qualitative analysis approach to supplement the JSA Migration Model (i.e. labour market analysis) and traditional stakeholder engagement (e.g. surveys, submissions and meetings) to inform JSA advice on targeting migration.
- In identifying options for stakeholder engagement and qualitative analysis for the Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL) to be implemented in late 2024, consideration was given to:
  - Learnings from stakeholder engagement on previous skilled migration occupation lists (SMOL) – e.g. need for an evidence base to and consistency in treatment of input.
  - Learnings from Skills Priority List (SPL) and other NSC/JSA consultation processes.
  - The compressed timeframe for consultation on CSOL (**slide 4**) and the need to deliver on the Government's commitment to transparency – i.e. JSA analysis and advice will be published.
  - Managing survey and stakeholder fatigue – this is key to ensuring ongoing participation and stakeholder support for JSA consultation processes.
  - Advice from the Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Teams on good practice models.

## 2. Indicative Time Frame – CSOL Consultation

- **4 March 2024** – earliest release date for draft CSOL on JSA website.
- **4 or 11 March 2024** – start of formal consultations on draft CSOL, includes survey and submission on JSA website at [JSA Migration Strategy](#).
- **March 2024** – correspondence to Jobs and Skills Councils, inviting comment on draft CSOL.
- **March to May 2024** – bilateral meetings, focus group discussions (i.e. qualitative analysis), and SES IDC (Commonwealth Government) on draft CSOL.
- **May 2024** – State and Territory Labour Market Working Group to consider draft CSOL.
- **June to July 2024** – consolidate feedback on draft CSOL, and refresh JSA Migration Model analysis with 2023-24 Home Affairs and latest ABS data, and initial 2024 SPL findings (if available).
- **August 2024** – finalise advice from JSA Commissioner to Government on new CSOL and SOL.
- **September to December 2024** – JSA to work with Home Affairs on legislative instruments, and the format of labour market and analysis and advice on CSOL which will be released on JSA website

### 3. Comprehensive Tripartite Engagement – Preferred Approach

- **Employer Survey** – Qualtrics based with a focus on data not collected in other ABS and JSA surveys (including SPL) – for example data on labour market for experienced workers (per migration settings), retention of migrant workers recruited by businesses:
  - The 2024 survey will focus on ANZSCO Skill Level 1 to 3, as Migration Strategy excludes less-skilled occupations from CSOL.
  - For future CSOL updates, the migration survey could be a module within the SPL survey.
  - Survey to collect data which can be incorporated into the JSA Migration Model (i.e. limit free text response).
- **Submissions** – option for respondents to survey to provide an evidence base submission:
  - Submissions will be published per the commitment in the Migration Strategy to transparency in advice to Government.
  - Release a submission guidelines paper on JSA website.
- **Tripartite Stakeholder Engagement** – meetings for a defined period, with detailed records (slide 8)
- **Qualitative Analysis** – see slide 8 for detail, noting:
  - Purpose is to collect qualitative information to clarify data analysis findings, and identify factors driving a skill shortage, poor skilled migrant retention, under-utilisation of migrant skills etc.

## Option 1 – Benefits, Risks and Sensitivities

- **Benefits:**

- Approach is consistent with Migration Strategy commitment to CSOL being informed by JSA analysis and tripartite stakeholder engagement.
- Increased use of qualitative data to explore themes and provide clarity on labour market drivers.

- **Risks:**

- Increased level of logistical planning.
- Qualitative component (i.e. engaging consultant to facilitate focus groups) will increase cost and complexity.

- **Sensitivities:**

- Potential claim of bias in composition of focus groups .
- Reputational risk if engagement is not perceived as well managed and of benefit to stakeholders.
- Survey and stakeholder engagement fatigue.
- Release of details of “international obligations” may be a concern to some domestic stakeholders

## Other Stakeholder Engagement Options – Additional Risks and Sensitivities

- **Option 2 – Submissions Only**

- Would not meet Government's commitment to tripartite engagement and the expectation of qualitative analysis.

- **Option 3 – Target Stakeholder Engagement and Focus Groups, Using SPL submissions**

- Would require JSA to rely on SPL submissions and bilateral meetings as input to CSOL advice to Government. This may give rise to increased advocacy for migration outcomes in the SPL process.
- Not as transparent as other options.

- **Option 4 – Outsource Engagement to Academics / Researchers**

- Insufficient time to scope RFQ and engage suitably qualified academics / researchers with no conflict of interest.
- Additional cost to Government
- Data Access Agreements could preclude sharing details of JSA labour market analysis.
- Inconsistent with JSA role as a trusted source of expert advice on the labour market.

## 4. Qualitative Analysis – Stakeholder Engagement and Focus Groups

- **Tripartite Stakeholder Engagement** – targeted consultation (mainly bilateral meetings) with industry and business, professional associations, skill assessing bodies, registration authorities, workers and job seekers, and migrant support bodies etc:
  - Government – an SES IDC (federal); Labour Market Working Group and Skilled Migration Officials Group (state and territory).
  - Industry and business – includes invitations to peak industry bodies, and businesses (on request).
  - Professional associations, skill assessing bodies, registration authorities, migrant support bodies– CSOL mailing list and JSA website and social media. *Note – bilateral meetings will occur over a specified period.*
- **Focus Groups** – JSA will, in accordance with Department of Finance procurement processes, engage the following:
  - Professional facilitator to run focus groups – this approach is particularly relevant to obtaining the views of:
    - Businesses who do not directly sponsor skill visa holders and/or employ migrant worker. The aim is to ensure attendees are representative of all industries, states and territories, business size, and covering new and emerging technologies and occupations.
    - For workers and job seekers, the aim is to ensure attendees are genuinely representative of Australian and migrant workers (in terms of occupation/qualification, industry of employment, state/territory of employment, metropolitan/balance of state; full-time/part-time; and business size (small, medium, large) etc).
  - Attendance by invitation – JSA Stakeholder Engagement Team to advise on whether “common interest” theme (e.g. industry and business) or “cross interest” (e.g. employers, unions, regulatory bodies together) approach.
- **In Depth Interviews**
  - In-depth interviews – by invitation, including representatives of Australian and migrant workers and job seekers.

## 5. Stakeholder Groups (\* means may be common for CSOL and SPL consultations)

### Group 1 – Tripartite Engagement

**Industry Bodies\*** – need to ensure genuinely representative of small, medium and large businesses)

**Professional Bodies** – need to be aware of potential conflict of interest for bodies with a dual role as an Australian assessing body

**Businesses\*** – need to capture views of companies which employ, and which do not use employer-sponsored skill and other migrants.

**State and Territory Governments\*** – need to consult departments responsible for workforce planning (rather than agencies responsible for migration promotional activity)

**Commonwealth Government\*** – consultation through SES IDC with a strategic perspective, noting some departments have dedicated areas with workforce data (e.g. Department of Health)

**Unions and Employee Bodies\*** – may hold some workforce data not captured in ABS and other survey data (e.g. unemployed or under-employed members) as well as more qualitative workforce information.

**Employees and Jobseekers\*** – to obtain worker views (Australian and migrant) on reasons they are not obtaining employment in an occupation aligned to their qualifications and skills.

**Jobs and Skills Councils\*** – consultation by mail for 2024, with option to provide additional workforce intelligence.

### Group 2 – Migration Specific

**Skills Assessment Bodies** - may hold some data (e.g. the number of onshore applicants with overseas qualifications not equivalent to the Australian standard, as a potential domestic supply). Need to be aware of a potential conflict of interest as assessment role is a revenue source.

**Occupation Regulation Bodies** – may hold some data on the number of, and reasons applicants with Australian and/or overseas qualifications do not meet Australian registration or licensing requirements.

**Migration Agents and Migration Institute of Australia** – need to be aware of potential conflict of interest as businesses and visa applicants are a revenue source.

**Migrant Community Organisations** – may be a source of migrant workers and job seekers for focus groups, noting some organisations (such as FECCA) also have a research capacity

**Migration Related Research Bodies** – includes Grattan Institute, CEDA, Social Policy Group (includes Migration Council Australia)