



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

# Jobs and Skills Australia 2026-27 Work Plan

Public Consultation Paper

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An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. The top portion of the image shows clear, turquoise water. Below the water is a wide, orange-sand beach. The land beyond the beach is a mix of orange sand and patches of low-lying, green and grey vegetation. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed coastal environment.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Jobs and Skills Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

The background image is an aerial view of the country of the Malgana people, showing Francois Peron National Park, Western Australia.

# An invitation from the JSA Commissioner - Professor Barney Glover

Engagement sits at the heart of Jobs and Skills Australia's work. Our close and ongoing collaboration with tripartite partners and stakeholders ensures our priorities are grounded in evidence, aligned with the Government's broader policy agenda, and responsive to the needs of the economy. Each year we build on this foundation, by recognising the central role the labour market and skills system play in lifting inclusive participation and productivity, we can support a more inclusive system that enables full participation and delivers a dynamic, resilient workforce for Australian businesses and industries.

Jobs and Skills Australia brings together high-quality data, analysis and insights to engage, advise and assist governments and stakeholders on current, emerging and future workforce needs across the economy, including in regional, rural and remote Australia and in new and evolving industries. Our legislated role is underpinned by deep engagement and collaboration, informing independent advice on the effectiveness of vocational education and training, higher education and migration settings.

Through our annual work programs we continue to provide concise, evidence-based research and advice to support skills development, productivity and inclusive participation - working alongside states and territories, industry, unions, education providers and other stakeholders to ensure all Australians can participate to their full preference and potential.

I invite you to participate in the annual development process to help establish the priorities for Jobs and Skills Australia's work plans. I encourage you to engage with the supporting documentation in this consultation paper and participate in developing our forward priorities by making a submission, via our online survey. Please [refer to our website](#) for more information about our role and our outcomes to inform your submission.



***Professor Barney Glover***

# Maximising our strategic impact

Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA) purpose is to activate the potential of all individuals to meet present and future skills needs within an inclusive labour market and productive economy. We are committed to delivering high-quality, evidence-based insights that strengthen Australia's labour market, skills system and long-term productivity.

In 2026-27, JSA will continue to operate as a standing national institution providing independent, unique and trusted advice on Australia's labour market and skills system in the spirit of tripartism (including collaboration between government, employers and workers) and reflecting broader engagement with peak bodies and the community. JSA's unique data assets, capability and analysis supports cross-cutting government agendas, in addition to supporting the work and priorities of partners such as state and territory governments, Jobs and Skills Councils, peak bodies, education and training organisations, and the general public.

To ensure our work drives meaningful change, JSA is consolidating its efforts around a set of enduring programs of work designed to generate cumulative insight, respond to emerging needs, and support government priorities across the jobs and skills system.

# Enduring Programs of Work

JSA will deliver our mandate through long-term strategic programs of work that each play a distinct role in shaping a stronger, more inclusive and more productive workforce.

These programs include:

- Understanding the Current Labour Market
- Shaping the Future Labour Market
- Optimising Skills System Performance and Design
- Supporting Productivity and Economic Growth
- Fostering Inclusive Participation and Opportunity
- Activating an Informed Dialogue

Australia's labour market and skills challenges do not sit neatly in silos. Decisions about jobs, training, migration, education, workforce participation and productivity interact in ways that can reinforce or undermine each other. JSA's enduring programs are designed to work together to provide a connected picture of how these parts of the system operate — and how change in one area affects outcomes in others.

The enduring programs collectively support the broader education, training, and employment systems. By balancing immediate policy needs with long-term system stewardship, JSA ensures government decision making is grounded in robust evidence and future focused analysis.

Importantly, this programmatic approach allows JSA to:

- Strengthen alignment with Government priorities.
- Maintain deep engagement with tripartite partners.
- Provide transparent, independent and anticipatory evidence.
- Compound insights across programs to better inform policy and investment.
- Support dynamic labour market and skills reform efforts.

This model provides a more strategic and impactful foundation for JSA's future work plans and supports stronger collaboration with stakeholders in shaping project priorities and analytical focus.

# Program 1: Understanding the current labour market

## Purpose

To expand the evidence-base to provide a clear understanding of Australia's workforce to better inform and address current and emerging labour market and skills needs. JSA will do this by providing authoritative, timely and trusted evidence on how Australia's labour market is functioning, so governments, system partners and stakeholders can respond effectively to current conditions, emerging pressures and structural change.

## Core functions

- Labour market monitoring and analysis, including unique insights into labour demand and shortages.
- Analysis of transitioning labour markets and industries, including the impact on skills needs and workers.

## Lines of enquiry

- How is the labour market functioning across regions, industries and occupations?
- Where are shortages emerging, persisting or easing, and why?
- How are employers recruiting and adjusting to labour constraints?
- How do workers move between jobs, occupations and industries over time?
- Where is job quality supporting or constraining capability?
- How effectively are skills being utilised within jobs, and where does job design limit or enable productivity?

## Current focus

This program will continue to provide comprehensive and cross-cutting labour market data and analysis to provide insights on how the labour market is performing.

Key areas of emphasis include:

- Skills needs in transitioning regions and industries.
- Skill needs in essential sectors linked to national priorities (for example the care sector).

## Impact - Contributions to decision making, programs and policy

The program informs Australian Government decisions on the migration framework, apprenticeships incentives, higher education settings and employment services; state and territory government decisions on VET and workforce planning; JSC workforce planning; student and job seeker work and study choices; and employer decisions about recruitment and job design.

## Program 2: Shaping the future labour market

### Purpose

To maintain an authoritative, forward-looking understanding of Australia's labour market conditions to deliver the skills to address workforce shortages. JSA will do this by considering how Australia's labour market will likely evolve in the coming years, and what workforce, skills and training responses are needed to prepare for emerging and future needs.

### Core functions

- Unique medium- and long-term workforce and skills modelling (including employment and jobs projections and labour market supply modelling).
- Identification of emerging roles and skills requirements across the labour market.
- Informing and supporting workforce planning for industries, departments and agencies.

### Lines of enquiry

- In plausible futures where technology, demographic change, policy choices and external shocks evolve in different ways, what are the potential workforce implications (structural, economic, social, environmental and technological transitions), and how can the workforce and skills system remain adaptable under this uncertainty?
- What are the skills needs in transitioning industries and essential and priority sectors?
- What emerging risks and opportunities require early attention?
- How can the system adapt before shocks materialise and remain adaptable under uncertainty?
- How can system actors make the best use of data and evidence for workforce planning?

### Current focus

This program will strengthen its focus on near- and medium-term workforce pressures affecting essential services and economic security, while continuing to provide longer-term foresight.

Key areas of emphasis include:

- Skills needs in transitioning industries and essential and priority sectors (e.g. care, construction, sovereign capability and digital and technology).
- Supporting regions to continue monitoring their workforce adaptability and growth, to inform long-term resilience.
- Providing support and advice around data and evidence for workforce planning for a range of system actors.

### Impact - Contributions to decision making, programs and policy

Understanding skills needs and labour demand for transitioning sectors to inform portfolio Ministers; provide unique holistic perspective on the combined labour market pressures across the jobs and skills system; support Jobs and Skills Councils and other system actors around workforce planning.

# Program 3: Optimising Skills System Performance and Design

## Purpose

To provide evidence on the performance and design of Australia's skills system, supporting better optimal outcomes for governments, employers and learners.

## Core functions

- Monitoring VET system performance against National Skills Agreement objectives.
- Providing insights on skills system dynamics, including analysing skills system pathways, efficiency, responsiveness and equity.
- Identifying reform opportunities and risks to support a more responsive and effective skills system.
- Enabling shared stewardship and accountability across governments and portfolios.

## Lines of enquiry

- How well is the skills system functioning for individuals and industry, including employment transitions, learner outcomes and pathways between HE and VET?
- How do funding, workforce, and other delivery settings across the skills system affect access to high-quality training and responsiveness to workforce needs?
- Where do learners and workers face friction when moving between training, work and further study, and what evidence would support more seamless recognition of skills and prior learning, including recognising skills gained through work and experience?
- What are the levels of adult foundation skills in Australia and how does this impact workforce participation, learning pathways, productivity and social inclusion?

## Current focus

This program will place stronger emphasis on system performance and design, including:

- Learner progression and outcomes, including for apprenticeships, employment services participants, and other pathways.
- Skills system responsiveness to workforce shortages and national priorities, including its ability to better recognise our existing skills base and provide seamless pathways between higher education and VET.
- Integrated evidence to support employment services reform, including how training, pathways and skills development interact with employment outcomes
- Improved understanding of the VET workforce to support VET Workforce Blueprint National Actions.
- Evidence to support more coordinated stewardship of the skills system across governments and portfolios.

## **Impact - Contributions to decision making, programs and policy**

This program will support improved government decision making about skills investments and system design. It will also influence the behaviours of system participants, such as the training choices made by students, workers and their employers, and the pathways offered by providers.

## **Program 4: Supporting productivity and economic growth**

### **Purpose**

To support the full utilisation of a skilled and adaptable workforce, which is a core driver of productivity. JSA will do this by providing evidence and advice on how jobs, skills and labour market settings contribute to productivity growth, supporting a more adaptable workforce, higher wages and sustained economic growth.

### **Core functions**

- Workforce pipeline analysis (training, reskilling, migration, participation, retention).
- Analysis of barriers to effective skills matching and worker mobility, and insights into successful productivity enhancing transitions.
- Mapping pathways to employment, including reskilling and transition into secure, fairly paid and quality jobs.
- Stress-testing workforce supply under different conditions.

### **Lines of enquiry**

- Where are labour market and skills settings constraining productivity growth, and where can change have the greatest impact?
- How efficiently does the labour market match people to jobs, and how does this affect productivity and wages?
- How do worker preferences and job quality influence mobility, retention and skills use?
- How do business dynamics shape workforce adaptability and economic resilience?

### **Current focus**

This program will prioritise workforce sustainability, with particular attention to:

- JSA's unique contribution to promoting productivity, focused on new data and insights on labour mobility, skills utilisation, and labour market efficiency. This will include analysis on understanding of how jobs are designed, how skills are used at work, and how these factors influence productivity and workforce sustainability.
- To support the government economic agenda and priority sectors.

## **Impact - Contributions to decision making, programs and policy**

The program supports the government's focus on productivity, including informing policy design on skills alignment, workforce mobility, job quality and business dynamics; advice to central agencies on labour market levers that support productivity growth; and informing how employers think about job design, skills use and workforce practices.

## Program 5: Fostering inclusive participation and opportunity

### Purpose

To ensure Australia's skills and workforce systems supports every person to participate fully in the workforce and create pathways to employment. JSA will contribute to this by considering the barriers that limit full participation in the labour market, education and training, and informing actions that broaden access to jobs and skills opportunities.

### Core functions

- Developing labour market and skills evidence and strength's-based research to inform and progress the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- Analysis of participation and completion gaps, particularly for groups of Australians who often face systemic and structural barriers.
- Examination of outcomes for groups with lower skills utilisation and higher underemployment.
- Generating data and integrating insights on inclusion and equity across a range of JSA analysis and products.
- Building the evidence-base on Australian adult foundation skills including within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### Lines of enquiry

- Who is currently excluded or limited in fully participating in the workforce (including what are the barriers and how does it impact their outcomes)?
- What system design features improve equity, participation and outcomes?
- How can we measure foundation skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a culturally appropriate way?
- How do information, pathways and job quality affect people's ability to build capability and progress over their working lives?

### Current focus

This program will focus on continuing to support broader government agendas to further inclusive participation, such as targeted research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, people with disability and other cohorts, building intersectional evidence to inform more inclusive labour market and skills policy.

Key areas of emphasis include:

- Cohorts experiencing persistent disadvantage, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability.
- People living in regional and remote Australia.
- Women's workforce and skills participation and outcomes.
- Strengthening the evidence-base on adult foundation skills (with a focus on priority cohorts).

## **Impact - Contributions to decision making, programs and policy**

Full inclusive economic and workforce participation for Australians, including contributing to The Australian Government's Closing the Gap targets, The Australian Government's Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality: March 2024 and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, Employment Services Reform – employment opportunities for job seekers.

## **Program 6: Activating an informed dialogue**

### **Purpose**

To strengthen understanding and informed decision making by bringing together workers, employers and government in the spirit of tripartism, along with peak bodies and the community, through the provision of quality, accessible, decision-relevant insights that are of benefit to those who use them.

### **Core functions**

- Tripartite and stakeholder engagement, including through the Ministerial Advisory Board and expert advisory panels.
- Translation of complex data and analysis into plain-language products and tools to inform our stakeholders and enable industry, workers and learners to engage with career development.
- Providing and promoting quality research that fills evidence gaps to inform system settings and policy solutions.
- Supporting, promoting and shaping shared national conversations on workforce and skills challenges to drive effective reform agendas.
- Providing connections between stakeholders and analytical priorities.

### **Lines of enquiry**

- How do we incorporate tripartite experience of the labour market and skills system into our programs and advice?
- How do we ensure the right evidence and advice is provided to inform policy and programs across industry, government, employers, education and training providers and workers?

### **Current focus**

This program will place greater emphasis on:

- Inclusive, effective, empowering, transparent and easy engagement and communication, including by improving the usability of skills intelligence for policy and service design.
- Ensuring engagement reflects worker, employer and government perspectives.
- Supporting social licence for skills, employment and workplace reform.

## **Impact - Contributions to decision making, programs and policy**

Bringing together employers, unions, governments and workers to increase inclusive participation and higher productivity. We do this through making JSAs data and insights widely available to inform research, policy, programs and initiatives; inform decision making of

government and industry; and providing targeted and effective tools to support career advice within secondary school settings. This program supports social licence for reform by making evidence accessible, comparable and usable across the system.

# How you can help us

Jobs and Skills Australia is supporting the Australian Government's commitment to a stronger economy by helping more Australians access the skills and training needed now and into the future, by providing data driven advice that contributes to productivity enhancing reforms and a more responsive labour market aligned with national priorities. Through a bold work agenda, JSA will deliver flexible, timely and interconnected research across skills, productivity and inclusive participation to support workforce participation, wages and equity, while remaining responsive to emerging national priorities.

Jobs and Skills Australia annual work plans focus on providing high-quality independent advice and each work plan sets out the key priorities and outcomes for the financial year. Once again, we are seeking your insights as we develop the 2026-27 annual work plan.

In addition to the public consultation process, we undertake a broad range of engagement activities with tripartite partners and key stakeholders. Informed and guided by consultation, we invite your unique perspectives on how we undertake the work to progress our enduring programs.

## Focus questions

We seek your perspectives on how we undertake the work to progress our enduring programs. In particular, we would value your views on:

- Which parts of our enduring programs most impact your work.
- Which stakeholders we should engage with to ensure our programs are reflective of tripartite expertise and national needs.
- Where evidence gaps most constrain good decisions across jobs, skills and workforce participation and where Jobs and Skills Australia has a unique ability to provide analysis or advice.
- Where persistent system barriers (e.g. transitions between learning and work, recognition of skills, job quality) limit productivity or inclusion.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your valuable feedback by completing [the survey](#).

# Additional resources to support your submission

## Criteria for considering work priorities within our work plan

Jobs and Skills Australia values your input to help shape our priorities and work. However, not every idea or proposal submitted through the work plan development process will be able to be taken forward. In shaping our priorities and determining our areas of focus, we consider the following factors or criteria:

**Alignment** - with Jobs and Skills Australia legislated functions and government priorities.

**Impact** - refers to the cross-cutting importance of the focus area in terms of the contribution to the economy and workforce, as well as the socioeconomic impact on industries, regions and cohorts, particularly disadvantaged cohorts. It also refers to the relevance across stakeholders and partners.

**Future focus** - whether it can be used to shed significant light on Australia's emerging and future skills and training needs and therefore help plan for our nation's future.

**Coverage** - including considering whether there are gaps where we can add value compared with other institutions or existing work across government and industry. It will be important to identify if there is a lack of existing evidence or where new evidence is required.

**Scope** - the envisaged scope of the topic / project / focus. Factors such as breadth and technical complexity of the work impact the resources that would be involved.

**Estimated time** - required to deliver outcomes against a focus topic is critical to consider to ensure we can inform and respond to Government priorities in a timely manner. We will also consider the estimated timeframes compared with the value and benefit considerations in undertaking any piece of work.

**Feasibility** - is the ability of existing data assets or data we could develop or acquire in the short-term, to undertake required analysis; and the capacity (including the resources available) and capability within Jobs and Skills Australia and other institutions that can be leveraged to undertake the study.

**Cost** - is the resourcing impacts of any proposed work and the resources available to us.

## Links to other resources

You can find JSA's legislative requirements at [Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022 - Federal Register of Legislation](#) and the current work plan at [2025-26 Work Plan | Jobs and Skills Australia](#).

The following products and documents may provide additional context that may assist you in preparing your submission:

### Major study reports

- [Gender Economic Equality Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Foundation Skills Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Our Gen AI Transition | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [International Students Pathways and Outcomes Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)

- [Food Supply Chain Capacity Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [VET Workforce Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Early Childhood Education and Care Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Clean Energy Capacity Study | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)

#### **Latest data, dashboards and publications**

- [Jobs and Skills Atlas - Insights into Australia's Labour Market | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [New JSA Insights series launches with fresh findings on disability inclusion in the workforce | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Monthly Labour Market Dashboards | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation \(NERO\) | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Internet Vacancy Index \(IVI\) | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Total New Vacancies | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Jobs and Skills Report 2025 | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [VET National Data Asset \(VNDA\) | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Regional Labour Market Indicator | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Higher Education Outcomes – Exploring Administrative Data | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Occupation Shortage | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Gender Segregation Intensity Scale Occupational Dashboard | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Occupational Gender Pay Gap Dashboard | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia - Phase 1 | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Shaping the future of regional jobs and skills | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Emerging Roles | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Migration Strategy | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)
- [Intersectional VET Outcomes Dashboards | Jobs and Skills Australia](#)