Australian Government | Jobs and Skills Australia

Employment Projections

Produced by Victoria University for Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)

Key points

JSA's employment projections are useful for understanding the impact of the current economic and labour market outlook on Australia's future workforce needs and are used by industry and governments to inform policy decisions and workforce planning activities.

The employment projections have been calibrated to the macroeconomic and labour market outlook provided by the Australian Treasury. It offers a 5-year outlook to highlight the shorter-term employment trends, and a 10-year horizon to show the impact of longer-term or structural trends.

Key insights from the 2026 Employment Projections data include:

- Total employment in Australia is projected to grow by around 1.3 million people over the next 5 years, and by nearly 2.4 million people over the next 10 years, reaching over 17.2 million employed persons by February 2036.
- The long-term structural shift in Australian employment towards services-related industries is projected to continue. The 3 largest industries (i.e. Health Care & Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, and Education & Training) will contribute half of all projected employment growth in Australia over the next decade.
- Over 93% of the employment growth over the next decade is projected for occupations that typically require post-secondary qualifications – with 52.6% of the projected growth being in occupations related to a bachelor degree or higher, and 41% in occupations related to VET as the primary pathway.

Industry outlook

Trends in the industry structure of the Australian labour market are projected to remain largely unchanged over the next decade. The most noticeable increase (by share of employment) is projected to occur in Health Care and Social Assistance (up by 2.0 percentage points)

- employment in the industry is projected to grow by 732,000 persons (or 30.4%) over the 10 years to February 2036, with its share of total employment increasing to 18.2%.

The top 3 largest employing industries in terms of share of total employment in Australia are the same over both the 5- and 10-year, although by the end of the projection we may see a change in the identity of the fourth-largest sector as Education and Training moves ahead of Retail Trade early next decade.

Manufacturing is continuing to fall in terms of share of total employment from 5.9% in 2026 to 5.5% in 2036, while the employment levels are growing: up by 21,200 person (or 2.4%) by 2031 and by 74,400 persons (or 8.5%) by 2036.

Occupational outlook

All occupation major groups are projected to increase in employment over the next decade with the largest – and fastest – growth among Professionals (increasing by over 1.03 million persons or 25.6% persons by February 2036)

- The top 3 occupations in this group, by projected share of employment in February 2036, are Registered Nurses (9.5% of Professionals), Software and Application Programmers and Accountants (both 5.1%).
- The occupations that are projected to have the strongest employment growth over the decade are mostly those in the health therapy area.

Other occupation groups to grow strongly over the next 10 years include

- Managers: the strongest employment growth projected for Health and Welfare Services Managers (35.4%) and ICT Managers (27.6%)
- Community and Personal Service Workers: the strongest employment growth is mostly in health and care fields, with top 3 being Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers (30.6%), Dental Assistants (29.6%) and Diversional Therapists (28.9%).

States and Territories outlook

Employment is projected to increase in all states and territories over the 10 years to February 2036.

The largest increase in employment by persons is projected for NSW (699,000 persons or an increase of 15.4%), closely followed by Victoria (a slightly smaller rise of 696,300 persons but a faster rate of 18.1% growth), Queensland (512,300 or 16.9%), and WA (287,700 or 17.2).

Further information

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