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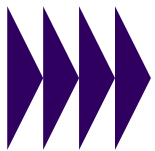


Jobs and Skills Australia

Pathways to Success

Jobs and Skills Report 2026

Careers and capability deepening – building skills expertise and economic agency



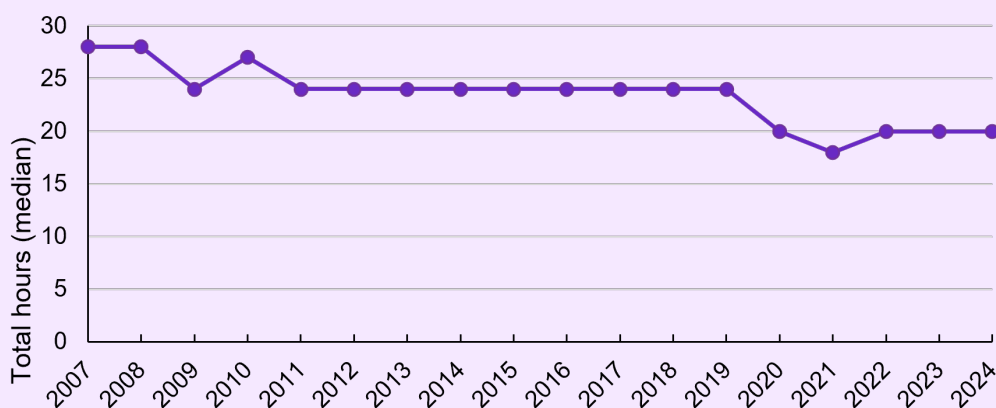
Lifelong learning enables workers to deepen capability across longer careers.

Australia will need stronger pathways for workers to move between occupations, deepen capability within work, and have skills recognised wherever they are developed. Career mobility is becoming more important as skill needs change, but mobility has declined over the past decade.

Informal and non-formal learning are likely to be important sources of workforce capability, but they remain poorly measured and inconsistently recognised. Most workers who undertake work-related training apply what they learn, suggesting it has practical value for productivity and adaptation. However, evidence from JSA research suggests that adults undertaking work-related training has declined slightly or stagnated over the last two decades.

Figure 1: Since 2004, adults are spending less time on work-related training

Median hours of work-related learning undertaken by adults in the previous 12 months, 2007 to 2024



Source: JSA, Systems at work: trends in adult learning and outcomes, 2026. JSA analysis of the HILDA Survey, General Release 24 (Waves 1-24). Note: Data is filtered to include only those who undertook some work-related training (i.e. excludes 0 hours).

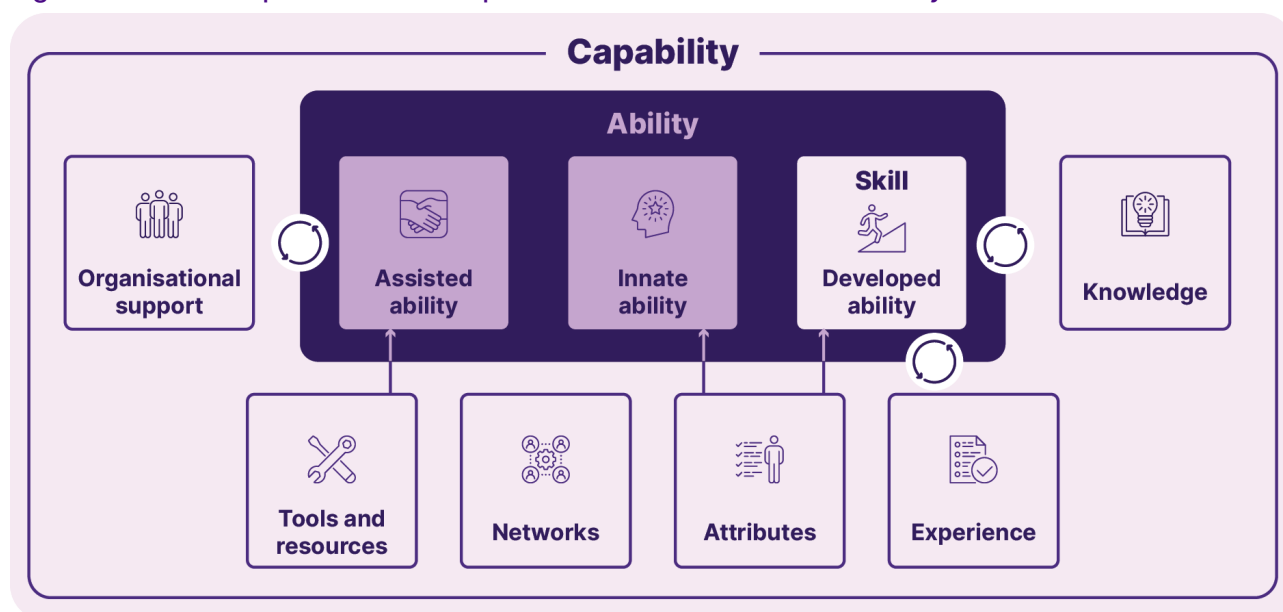


A skills-first approach supports mobility, lifelong learning, and better recognition.

As workers are required to become more mobile and engage in lifelong learning, there needs to be stronger recognition of skills that sit behind job titles, qualifications, credentials and experience. Many of the capabilities that enable workers to perform effectively are difficult to capture through qualifications or job titles alone. Skills-first is an international approach that shifts how skills are viewed in workforce development, moving beyond credential-based proxies to a more granular understanding of human capability.

A National Skills Taxonomy (NST) can make skills more visible, portable and transferable across learning and work. As workers increasingly develop capabilities through formal education, workplace experience and non-formal learning, a common language is needed to identify and recognise those skills consistently. The NST will be the foundation of a skills-first system that can help make capability more visible, portable and transferable across learning and work, strengthening productivity, participation and economic resilience in the decades ahead.

Figure 2: The conceptual model of capabilities and skills in a skills-first system



Source: JSA 2025



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