



Industry Skills  
Australia

Jobs and  
Skills  
Councils

An Australian Government Initiative

# Transport and Logistics Industry



2025  
Draft  
Workforce  
Plan





# About ISA

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) has been established as the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for the Transport and Logistics industry sectors, which includes Aviation, Maritime, Rail, Transport and Logistics, and the emerging sectors of Omnichannel Logistics and Distribution, and Air and Space Transport and Logistics.

Owned and led by industry, our JSC is committed to building a world-class supply chain workforce to increase productivity, create better jobs and build opportunities for individuals.

We will do this through:

- leveraging our more than 30-year history with the transport and logistics industry,
- undertaking research and data analysis to inform workforce planning,
- advocating for a workforce development approach in tackling industry skills issues, and
- developing priority training package products.

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## Disclaimer

Whilst all care and diligence has been exercised in the preparation of this report, Industry Skills Australia Limited does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained within and accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may be suffered as a result of any reliance on this information.

## Acknowledgements

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# About the Workforce Plan

## Purpose

Workforce Planning is the strategic centrepiece for Jobs and Skills Councils to inform and establish each of their other functions. The Workforce Plan serves as a guide to identifying the contemporary drivers and challenges within Australia's Transport and Logistics industry and developing forward-thinking actions to address those challenges. Drawing upon a rich blend of data sources, including industry reports, stakeholder consultation and the direction from our Strategic Workforce Planning Committee, it outlines the current obstacles impeding the industry's progress and proposes practical actions to overcome these hurdles.

The Workforce Plan begins the groundwork for ongoing evaluation and strategy refinement. It aims not only to diagnose current challenges but also to anticipate future trends and opportunities. This proactive approach ensures that the Australian Transport and Logistics industry remains agile and responsive to changing conditions.

A crucial aspect of this document is its collaborative nature, emphasising the value of stakeholder input. By incorporating diverse perspectives from industry experts, policy makers, and practitioners, the strategies presented are both robust and attuned to the real-world dynamics of the Transport and Logistics industry.

The Workforce Plan will be used to further engage with stakeholders, with the feedback received incorporated into future iterations of the Plan. As the Workforce Plan is updated each year, it will seek to better understand current, emerging and future workforce challenges and opportunities, including skills gaps and shortages for all industries within Industry Skills Australia's remit, including small, niche and regional sectors and to develop appropriate strategies and advice for addressing diagnosed challenges. This also includes working with Jobs and Skills Australia to better understand the outlook for employment for each industry sector.

The Draft 2025 Workforce Plan is not just a snapshot of the present, but a roadmap for the future, guiding stakeholders in collectively navigating and shaping the evolving landscape of Australia's Transport and Logistics industry.



## JSC Obligations

In 2023, the Australian Government established ten (10) Jobs and Skills Councils to address the many workforce planning and skills development challenges facing Australia, and to ensure that our national skills system meets the rapidly evolving needs of industry, individual employers, and the workforce.

Jobs and Skills Councils have four formal roles:

1

Industry Stewardship which involves gathering industry intelligence to reliably represent the views and needs of industry back to the Vocational Education and Training system and its decision-makers

2

Workforce Planning which enables industry to identify its workforce development issues and design high-impact solutions, which are then captured in the national Workforce Plan for the industry

3

Training Product Development which focusses on improving the quality, speed to market and responsiveness of training products to employer and workforce needs

4

Implementation, promotion and monitoring which is a broad role that involves supporting training providers, promoting careers, and monitoring how well the system is meeting the needs of industry and learners



Jobs and Skills Councils are funded by the Australian Government (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) but work collaboratively with a wide range of bodies.

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DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



# Approach to Consultation

The Transport and Logistics industry is extremely diverse, comprising businesses ranging from complex national and global companies through to a wealth of small one and two person businesses. Over 99% of enterprises within our coverage are small business.

ISA recognises the difficulties in reaching such a diverse stakeholder base and continues to expand its sectoral and regional engagement footprint each year.

Not all stakeholder groups engage in the workforce planning process. As part of our user-centred approach, we will continue to evolve our approach to stakeholder groups determining the level and method of involvement that best suits their respective needs. If and when a stakeholder's focus shifts, we will adjust our engagement with them accordingly.

Consultation and engagement with different groups of stakeholders inform ongoing development of our Workforce Plans. This includes deepening our understanding of key workforce drivers and challenges, expanding our breadth and depth of data sources, filling evidence gaps, validating and providing context to workforce data, and developing effective actions/strategies to address workforce drivers and challenges.

The following key elements will form part of our consultation and engagement approach.

## Industry Skills Australia Committees

ISA uses a range of mechanisms and specialised committees and taskforces to provide input and advice into the Workforce Plans.

## Strategic Workforce Planning Committees

The Strategic Workforce Planning Committees (SWPCs) are responsible for setting the strategic development of the Workforce Plans, with a focus on identifying, forecasting and responding to workforce challenges, opportunities and emerging skills needs. They shape and prioritise actions through their advice. The SWPCs comprise of industry champions from each major industry to ensure coverage and leadership, and includes geographic, sub-sector and business scale.

Our Strategic Workforce Planning Committee, comprising representatives of industry and employee associations form a key structure for the collection and validation of industry intelligence and strategic guidance.

## Industry Advisory Council

ISA's Industry Advisory Council (IAC) provides advice on leading trends from adjacent industries/client industries

(for example, online retail and its transformation of logistics). The IAC is comprised of senior supply chain executives and industry leaders from a range of related sectors and organisations where supply chain effectiveness is core business or a key contributor to productivity.

It operates as a dynamic advisory mechanism to the Board and SWPCs by providing world-class business intelligence and strategic insights from across the economy.

## Technology Futures Taskforce

ISA's Technology Futures Taskforce (TFT) provides advice from experts in the innovation and technology sector specialising in supply chain technologies, with activities focusing on identification of technologies likely to automate skills and job roles and trigger structural change in the workforce.

The TFT is an advisory mechanism to the Board and SWPCs by providing intelligence and insights on technology impacts for our sectors.

## JSC Engagement

ISA continues to proactively engage and collaborate with the other Jobs and Skills Councils on shared workforce planning and skills development priorities. We also consult and advise when ISA-led workforce planning strategies will impact on another JSC's scope of work and stakeholders.

## Industry Engagement

ISA has broadened its stakeholder engagement activities significantly in the last 12 months to include specific focus on regional, sub-sector and executive leadership.

Our activities include regional, and metro engagement held right around Australia and engage with employers, key supply chain stakeholders, local chambers of commerce, Regional Development Australia and Local Jobs and Skills organisations.

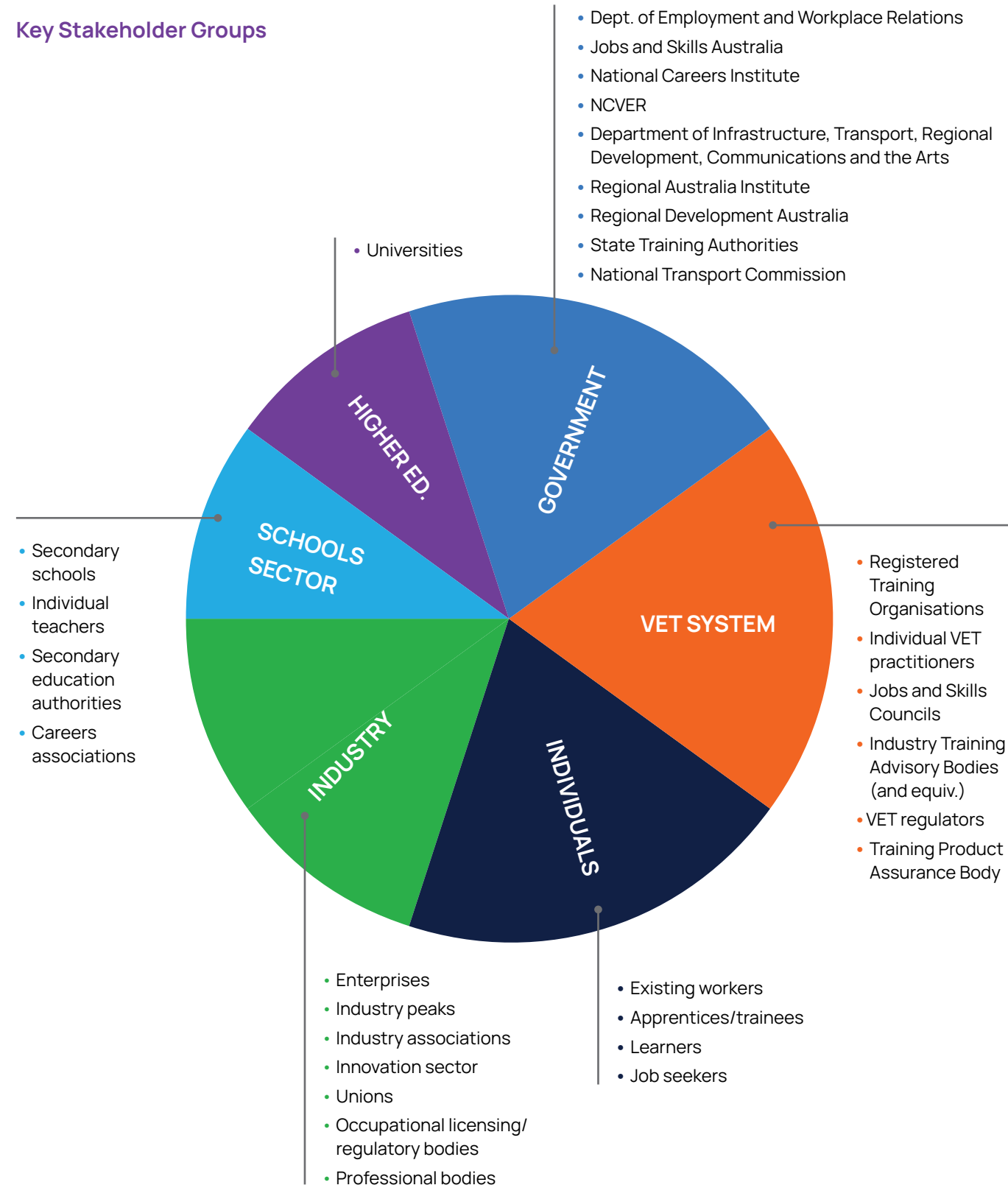
## Supply Chain Leader Summit

Our 2024 Supply Chain Leaders' Summit brought over 150 participants to Parliament House, including industry leaders, union representatives, parliamentarians and government officials, to explore the current and future workforce planning and development challenges facing Australia's supply chain sectors.

With many critical issues common across aviation, maritime, rail, transport and logistics, this event provides valuable input into our activities and workforce plans.



## Key Stakeholder Groups












## WORKFORCE PLAN CYCLE (2025)

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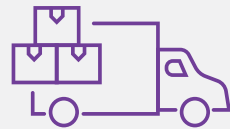
PROCESS & INDICATIVE TIMING	 <b>Intelligence Curation &amp; Drafting</b> October - December 2024	 <b>INITIAL CONSULTATION</b> February 2025	 <b>DRAFTING &amp; CONSULTATION</b> Feb 2025 - April 2025	 <b>SIGN OFF, SUBMISSION &amp; PUBLICATION</b> April - August 2025	 <b>IMPLEMENTATION &amp; MONITORING</b> April 2025 onwards
KEY STEPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic analysis of industry engagement activity</li> <li>• Undertake further research and targeted consultation where required</li> <li>• Refresh &amp; review baseline data, previous year's trends, and new qualitative reports</li> <li>• Consolidate input from SWPC, other ISA committees and key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare Summary Papers on Key Challenges and Drivers for initial stakeholder input</li> <li>• Confirm Key Challenges and Drivers with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Analyse and respond to survey feedback and industry representations</li> <li>• Undertake further research/ consultation as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare first draft of the Workforce Plan, including proposed actions</li> <li>• Release draft Workforce Plan on ISA website for public consultation</li> <li>• SWPC provides input and advice on proposed actions and priorities</li> <li>• Moderate, consolidate and analyse feedback with guidance from SWPC</li> <li>• Update Workforce Plan based on feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWPC recommends final Workforce Plan</li> <li>• Submit Workforce Plan to DEWR</li> <li>• Prepare and submit proposed actions</li> <li>• Publish and promote Workforce Plan and activities/projects on ISA website</li> <li>• Initiate comprehensive Communications Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake promotion, build collaboration across stakeholders to deliver Workforce Plan priorities</li> <li>• Implement approved actions</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate activity/ project progress/outcomes</li> <li>• Engage stakeholders to monitor the responsiveness of the national skills system</li> </ul>
WHO WE CONSULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Workforce Planning Committee</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• VET System</li> <li>• Schools Sector</li> <li>• Higher Education</li> <li>• Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Workforce Planning Committee</li> <li>• Governments</li> <li>• Industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Workforce Planning Committee</li> <li>• Governments</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• VET System</li> <li>• Schools Sector</li> <li>• Higher Education</li> <li>• Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Workforce Planning Committee</li> <li>• Governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• VET System</li> <li>• Schools Sector</li> <li>• Higher Education</li> <li>• Governments</li> </ul>
HOW WE CONSULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Metro Roundtables</li> <li>• Supply Chain Leader's Summit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal meetings and input from SWPC</li> <li>• Internal meetings</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISA website</li> <li>• Webinar</li> <li>• Email and social media</li> <li>• Regional Roundtable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISA website</li> <li>• Webinar</li> <li>• Email and social media</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Conference presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISA website</li> <li>• Webinar</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Conference presentations</li> <li>• Meetings</li> </ul>



# Industry Overview

The Transport and Logistics (T&L) industry is integral to the Australian economy and communities, enabling the distribution of goods and services throughout the country. In addition to supporting other industries, T&L contributes directly to the national economy, generating an estimated \$161.4 billion in revenue in 2023-24.<sup>1</sup>

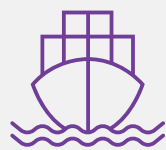
T&L industry activities can be categorised into three Occupational Areas



**Road Transport** - operating and coordinating road vehicles for the transportation of passengers or freight by road.



**Logistics** - planning, operating, and coordinating the flow of passengers or freight by any mode of transport. Includes warehousing, freight forwarding, mobile crane operations, inventory management, demand and supply planning.



**Stevedoring** - loading or unloading vessel cargo, stacking and storing on the wharf, and receiving and delivering cargo within the terminal or facility. Includes loading of trucks and trains that transport the cargo to the consignee.

Transport is one of Australia's critical infrastructure sectors, defined as an essential service for the country's social and economic wellbeing. One of the vital functions that the industry performs is the distribution of food to consumers and communities across the country. The critical contribution of the T&L industry to the food supply chain was highlighted in the final report of Jobs and Skills Australia's Food Supply Chain Workforce study.<sup>2</sup> The T&L industry transports produce, livestock and manufactured food and beverages to consumers from farms and fisheries over vast distances via distribution centres, saleyards, ports, retail outlets and other parts of the supply chain.

As a whole the T&L industry employed more than 581,000 people in 2024 across the major subsectors of road transport, logistics, and stevedoring, and the workforce is projected to grow by 4.2% to May 2029 and 9.1% to May 2034 (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

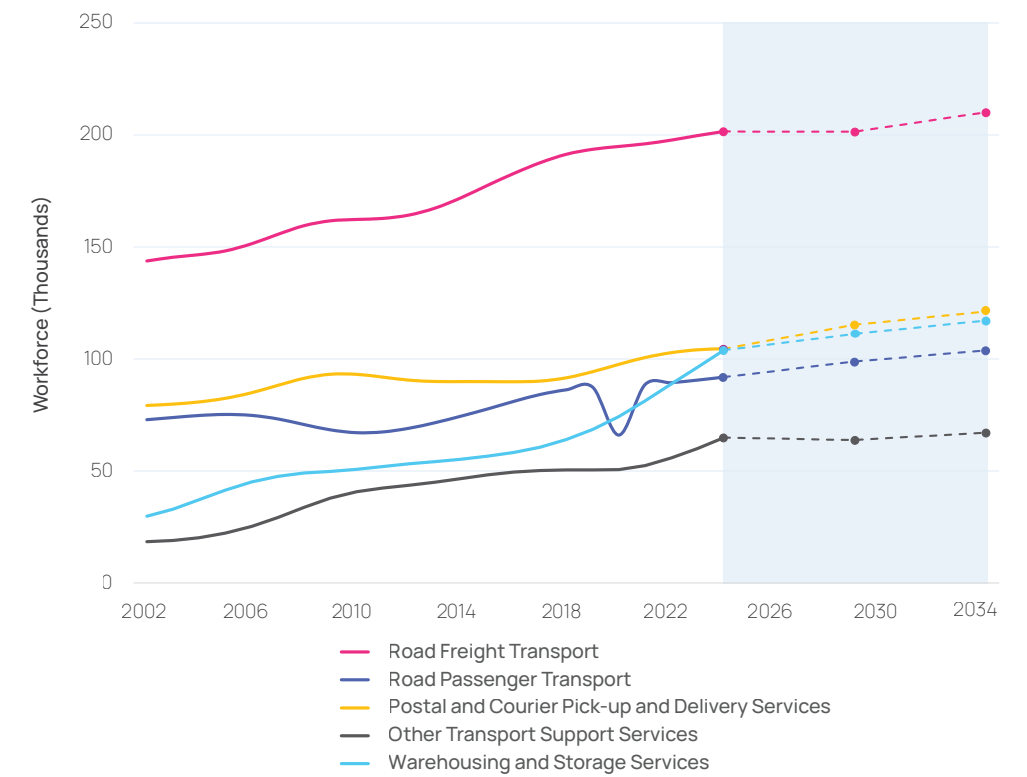
<sup>1</sup> IBISWorld Industry Wizard (November 2024)

<sup>2</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). [An essential ingredient – The food supply chain workforce](#)

<sup>3</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. [Employment projections produced May 2024 to May 2034](#)



Figure 1: Transport and Logistics Industry Workforce, 2002 - 2034



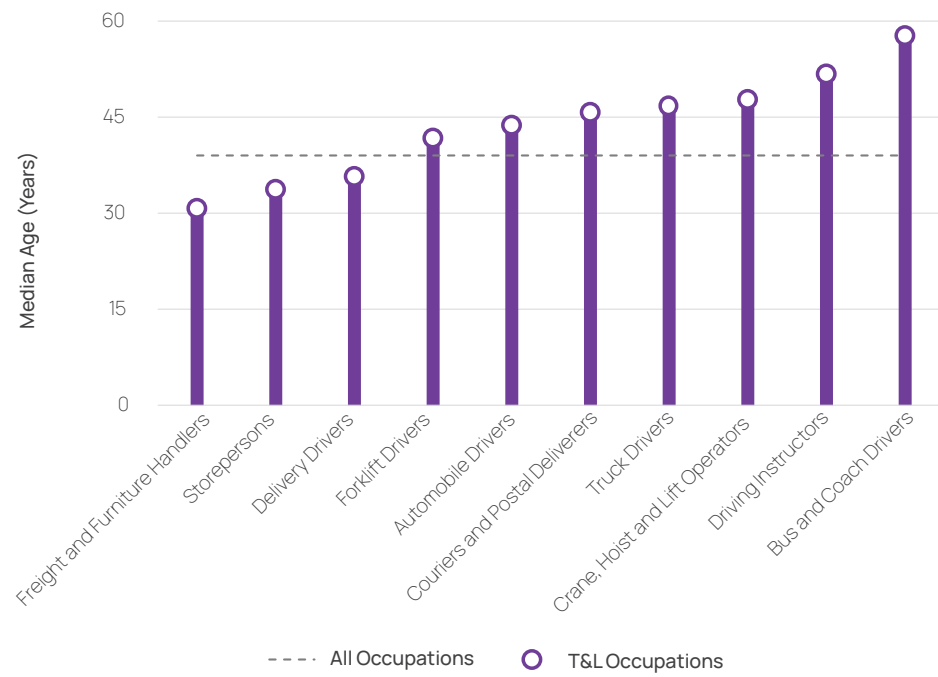
Source: JSA Labour Force Trending (Nov 2024), JSA Employment Projections (2024 to 2034)

we will see continued  
*employment growth*



Figure 2 shows that most T&L operational workers are older than the national median age. Truck Drivers were 8 years older, and Bus Drivers were 19 years older than the overall workforce median in 2023.

Figure 2: Median age of select T&L occupations vs median age for all occupations

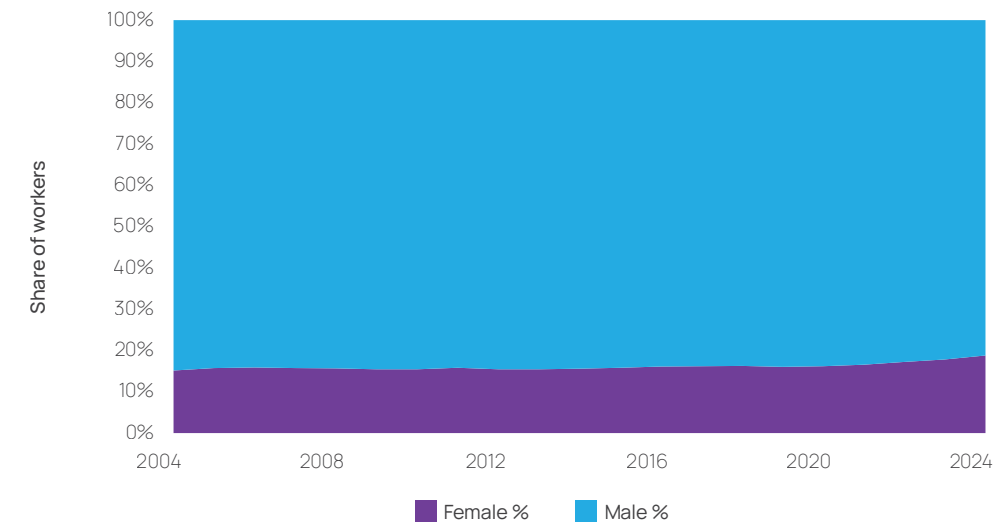


Source: JSA Occupation profiles data - November 2024, Tables 1 and 9

WE HAVE AN *older workforce*

Female participation in the T&L workforce has grown modestly over the past 20 years, rising from 15.1% of operational workers in 2004 to 18.9% in 2024 (Figure 3). Women are primarily concentrated in administrative roles, such as Logistics Clerks (45.4%) and Mail Sorters (39.2%), while their representation remains low in operational roles like Truck Drivers (5.5%) and Crane, Hoist, and Lift Operators (4.4%).<sup>4</sup>

Figure 3: Female Employment Share 2004 - 2024



Source: ABS, LFS, EQ08 2024, 4 - quarter average, 4 - year rolling average

WE HAVE  
*low female representation*



<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Detailed Labour Force Survey, EQ08 - Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job, November 2024 (annual average of original data)





TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS  
BUSINESS NO.

**207,532**

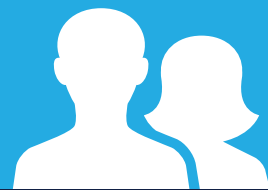
**178** with 200+ employees  
**1,840** with 20-199 employees  
**205,514** with 0-19 employees



**80%**  
AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS MAKING AN ONLINE PURCHASE IN 2023

COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ON AUSTRALIAN ROADS IN 2024

**4.7 MILLION**



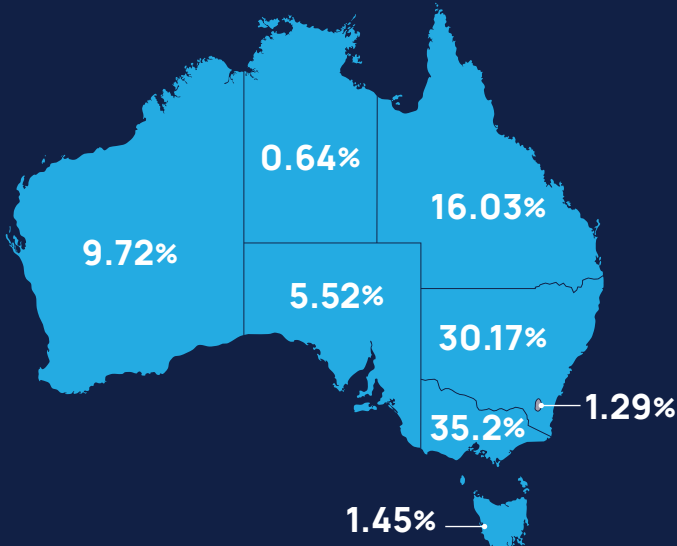
AVERAGE AGE  
**44.4**

T&L INDUSTRY ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE \$B 2024

**158.3**



BUSINESS DISTRIBUTION BY STATE %



TONNES OF ROAD FREIGHT MOVED 2024

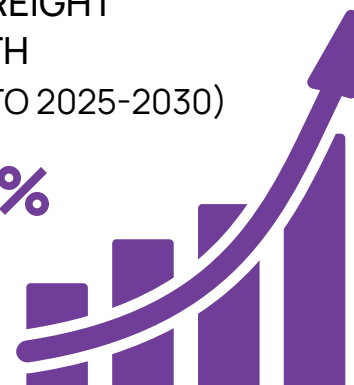
**244 BILLION**

GDP CONTRIBUTION \$B 2024

**61.56**

DOMESTIC FREIGHT TASK GROWTH (PROJECTED TO 2025-2030)

**11.30%**

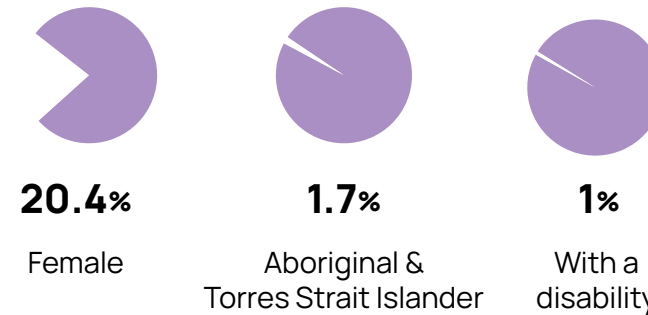


TRUCK DRIVERS **11<sup>th</sup>** MOST NUMEROUS OCCUPATION IN AUSTRALIA

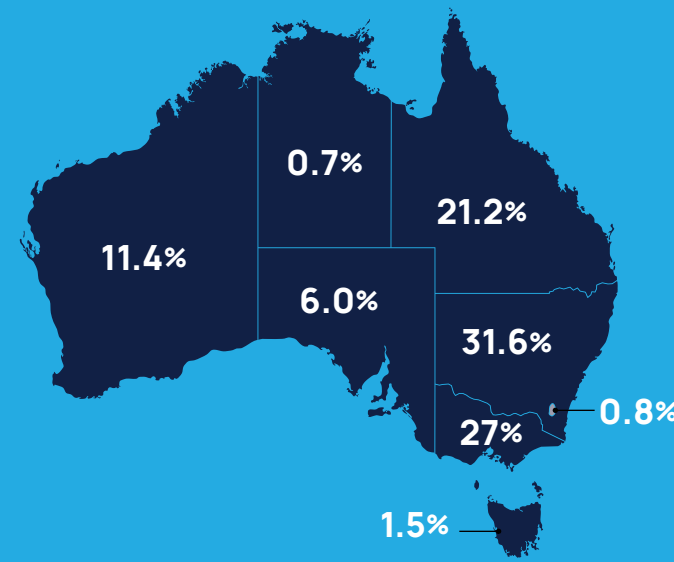


WORKFORCE<sup>†</sup>

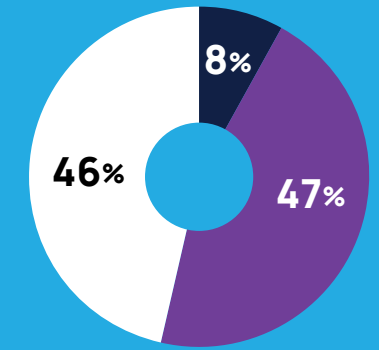
**581,377K**



WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION



RESIDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS



Major cities Regional Remote

TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS

1	Truck Driver		148,284
2	Storeperson		134,598
3	Delivery Driver		69,982
4	Forklift Driver		55,980
5	Bus Driver		34,190



WORKFORCE NEARING RETIREMENT (AGED 56-66)

**18.6%**

QUALIFICATION ENROLMENT 2023

**29,214**





# Key Challenges and Drivers

## A. Industry struggles to attract and retain workers

The ability to attract and retain workers continues to be one of the highest concerns for employers from all sectors of the T&L industry and has far-reaching implications for businesses, supply chains and the Australian economy. Workforce shortages not only impede industry's ability to meet current service demands, but also limits capacity to service freight tasks which are forecast to increase by 23.4% in the ten years to 2034<sup>5</sup>. Government priorities to shift more travel to public transport to support decarbonisation efforts, will increase future demand for passenger services. This is at a time when some transport operators are already struggling to meet contractual service requirements due to workforce shortages.<sup>6</sup>

Workforce attraction and retention issues in the T&L industry are compounded by negative community perceptions of careers in the industry and a general lack of awareness of the number and variety of career opportunities and pathways available. Industry stakeholders have suggested that more collaborative partnerships with schools are needed to promote career opportunities and support school to work pathways to encourage younger workers into the industry.

There have been efforts in the broader T&L industry to address workplace culture and support workforce health and wellbeing, including a heightened emphasis on managing psychosocial hazards and Respect at Work obligations.<sup>7</sup> Ensuring robust measures are incorporated into business procedures helps to demonstrate industry's commitment to creating a safe and professional working

environment and makes the industry a more attractive employment option for prospective workers from all backgrounds. Industry stakeholders have stated that increased use of existing resources, such as mental health and well-being programs tailored for the transport industry, would help businesses and their workers to access support services.

Some employers have identified changing or unrealistic work expectations, particularly among younger generations, as a barrier for recruitment. Changing societal expectations around work-life integration can be difficult for employers to accommodate when there are limited opportunities to offer more flexible working arrangements in some occupations. Long haul services, peak demand times and on-site work processes mean that hybrid and home-based work are not an option in many parts of the industry. Creative strategies may be necessary to offset this limitation and to highlight other benefits associated with roles in the T&L industry such as job security in an essential industry, transferable skills and opportunities for career progression.

Across the T&L industry, the struggle to attract and retain workers is underpinned by:

- shortages in critical industry occupations
- limited training incentives
- lack of workforce diversity
- lack of skilled migration pathways



### Shortages of heavy vehicle drivers, customs brokers and warehouse workers

Like many other industries, the T&L industry is impacted by widespread occupational shortages. T&L employers report high competition for workers with the Mining and Resources sector where employers can offer higher wages. The 2024 JSA Occupational Shortage List (**Table 1**) shows that while the number of occupations in national shortage has decreased over the past year, shortages persist in many states and territories.<sup>8</sup>

Table 1: Transport and logistics occupations in shortage by state/territory

Occupation title	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bus Driver	NT	AUST	AUST	ACT, NT, QLD, SA, TAS
Charter and Tour Bus Driver			VIC	NT
Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator		AUST	AUST	AUST
Despatching and Receiving Clerk				NT
Fleet Manager				NT
Forklift Driver	NT	NT	NT	NT
Furniture Removalist			VIC	NT
Import-Export Clerk				NSW
Order Clerk				NSW
Production Clerk	NSW		QLD	NSW
Purchasing Officer	NSW			NSW
Stock Clerk				NSW
Storeperson		NT	NT	NT
Supply and Distribution Manager	NSW		NT	NT
Taxi Driver			NT, VIC	NT
Truck Driver (General)	NT	AUST	AUST	AUST
Warehouse Administrator	NSW		NT	NSW, NT

Source: Occupational Shortage List (14 February 2025)  
AUST: All States and Territories

<sup>5</sup> BITRE Australian Aggregate Freight Forecasts, 2022 update

<sup>6</sup> New South Wales auditor general's report. (2025). [Bus contracts in metropolitan Sydney](#)

<sup>7</sup> SafeWork. (2024). [Guide to work health and safety in the road freight transport industry](#)

<sup>8</sup> JSA. (2024). [Occupation Shortage list](#)



Workforce shortages are having a significant financial impact on **road freight** enterprises. A shortage of heavy vehicle drivers, warehousing and support workers, and skilled maintenance technicians, limits businesses' ability to meet contractual requirements and leads to delays, increased freight costs and reduced productivity.

**Passenger transport** operators are similarly affected by the lack of experienced and suitably qualified drivers and support staff, impacting the delivery of passenger transport as an essential service. Recruitment and improved retention strategies are now critical to ensure the continuation of services.<sup>9</sup>

In the **warehousing** sector, the shortage of skilled workers has been exacerbated by consumer demand and the continuing rise of online shopping. Although the exceptional growth of 9.3% experienced by online retail through the COVID period has slowed, e-commerce is continuing to grow, with year-on-year growth in retail spend at 2.0% in 2023.<sup>10</sup> The sector has flexible workforce solutions to accommodate fluctuating demand, however this reliance on casual workers for cost-effective, scalable labour during peak periods can pose challenges to workforce training and retention.

Global and domestic disruptions have affected shipping capacity and availability, further adding to supply chain delays and increasing costs associated with cargo movement. During 2023–2024, port congestion contributed to a decline in vessel schedule reliability which in turn presents challenges for the stevedoring sector in workforce allocation.<sup>11</sup> Despite the recent disruptions,

**stevedores** handled a greater number of containers in 2023–24 than previous years, with total throughput increasing by 5.1% from 2022–23.<sup>12</sup>

To remain competitive, businesses in the **freight forwarding** sector are increasingly expanding their business offerings to incorporate warehousing and customs broking services.<sup>13</sup> Securing a future workforce of experienced and qualified customs brokers is a key challenge for the sector. More than half (54.3%) of customs brokers are over the age of 50<sup>14</sup> and replacing experienced staff takes time due to strict training and licensing requirements. Only licensed customs brokers can clear freight across borders and as an island nation, a sufficient customs broking workforce is critical to ensuring the efficient movement of goods.

Employers continue to express concerns that the inability to attract new entrants, the age profile of existing workers and the exiting of skilled labour from the workforce is placing ongoing pressure on meeting changing customer service requirements.

For some sectors, access to workers can be heavily impacted by regional events. Parts of the road network in Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland are regularly flooded or affected by severe weather events. Regionally based employers are also disproportionately affected by major infrastructure projects which create heightened competition for workers.



### Limited training incentives is a barrier to recruitment and skilling

T&L industry employers are experiencing increasing operational costs, driven by rising insurance premiums, vehicle registration, maintenance costs, high staff turnover and workers' compensation. This restricts their ability to invest in training for new and existing workers. At the same time, few T&L industry options are available under Fee-Free TAFE offerings across the country. Potential industry entrants may therefore be required to fund their own skills development, creating a significant barrier to industry entry. Employers and industry associations continue to advocate for additional government assistance to address training barriers for new workforce entrants and to support the upskilling of existing workers.

In addition, the removal of the Hiring Incentive for Non-priority Occupation Employers from the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System as of 1 July 2024, has had a detrimental impact on industry's ability to invest in the attraction and skilling of workers through traineeships or apprenticeships. Most T&L occupations are not included in the Apprenticeship Priority List and are therefore ineligible to attract the current federal incentives. Industry employers and training providers report severe declines in traineeship/apprenticeship enrolments due to the removal of the Hiring Incentive. This further exacerbates issues with increasing the overall workforce pool and the continuous poaching of skilled workers.

The Government is undertaking a Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System. The Review's Final Report<sup>15</sup> was released in January 2025, outlining a range of recommendations to reform the Apprenticeship Incentive System, which are currently under Government consideration.

Other factors that limit access to training and employment for potential workforce entrants include:

- The offshoring or digitisation of lower-level tasks in freight forwarding can limit opportunities for new entrants to gain the foundational skills required for career progression in the sector, and can create barriers for workers who need experience to gain licences
- Age restrictions for work-related licences, including inconsistencies across jurisdictions, create barriers for young people entering the industry
- Inadequate language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills prevent some potential workers from participating in employment or training
- Access to training and employment in regional and remote areas is affected by both access to transport and internet connectivity. Limited access to housing, transport and childcare can prevent potential workers from relocating to take up work in regional and remote locations.

### A lack of diversity is contributing to occupational shortages

ISA's recent workforce survey found that the majority (60%) of respondents recognise that increasing diversity could help address occupational shortages, with 40% agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing, while only 10% disagreed. This indicates a broad consensus on the issue from across our stakeholder groups, highlighting the need for targeted efforts to diversify the workforce and address the resulting shortages in the T&L industry.

ISA's Annual Jobs and Skills Report 2024, showed that occupations with a strong gender imbalance were more likely to be in shortage (Figure 4). This has been the experience in the T&L industry, where diversity is notably lacking. Female employment in the **freight transport** sector remains low at 16% of the workforce and their employment is concentrated in clerical and administrative roles. Women account for only 2% of the freight transport sector's truck drivers.<sup>16</sup>

Women are also underrepresented in senior leadership roles where just 4.5% of the workforce are female compared with a national average of 20%.<sup>17</sup> Industry stakeholders have suggested that leveraging existing initiatives such as National Women in Transport<sup>18</sup> and Wayfinder: Supply Chain Careers for Everyone,<sup>19</sup> and promoting the work of organisations such as Transport Women Australia Ltd<sup>20</sup> and Women in Transport Australia,<sup>21</sup> can help create more visibility around careers in T&L for females.



<sup>9</sup> Bus Industry Confederation (2024). [Riding on the same sub: Policy Manifesto](#)

<sup>10</sup> Australia Post. (2024). [Inside Australian Online Shopping: eCommerce Industry Report](#)

<sup>11</sup> Sinay. (2024). [Real-time port congestion updates for 2024-2025](#)

<sup>12</sup> Australian Competition & Consumer Commission. (2024). [Container stevedoring monitoring report 2023-24](#)

<sup>13</sup> HLB Mann Judd. (2022). [Freight forwarding & customs broking industry benchmark report](#)

<sup>14</sup> Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA). (2023). [Submission to the Australian Border Force \(ABF\) Customs Broker Licensing Conditions](#)

<sup>15</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. (2025). [Strategic review of the Australian apprenticeship incentive system – Final report 2024](#)

<sup>16</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). [An essential ingredient – The food supply chain workforce](#). Pg. 73

<sup>17</sup> National Women in Transport. (2024). [Strength in diversity: Empowering women in the transport sector](#)

<sup>18</sup> [National Women in Transport](#)

<sup>19</sup> Australian Logistics Council. [Wayfinder – Supply chain careers for everyone](#)

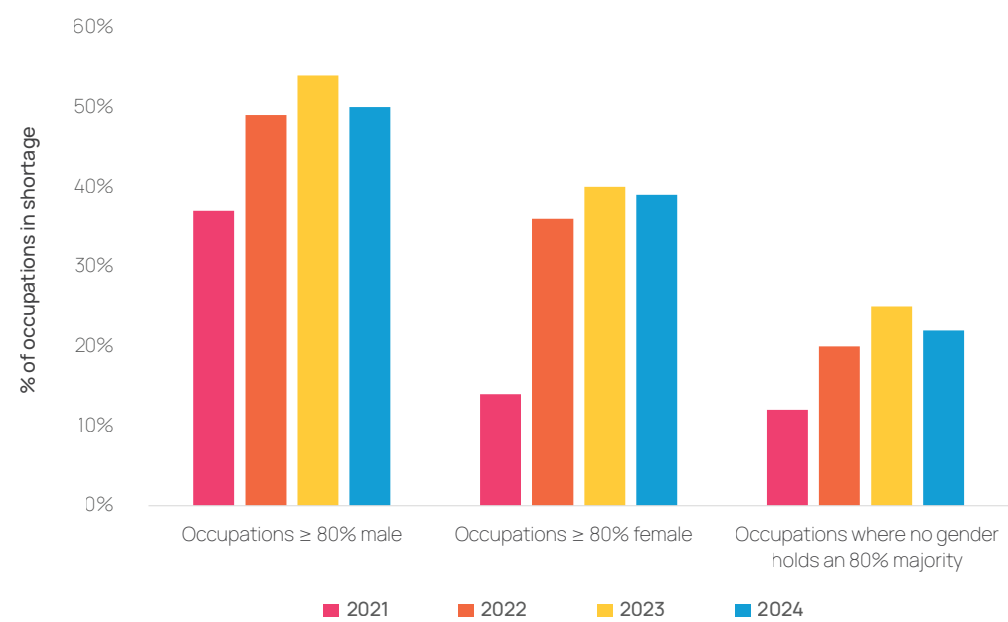
<sup>20</sup> [Transport Women Australia Ltd](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Women in Trucking Australia](#)





Figure 4: Occupational Shortages by Gender Balance



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2021-2024

OCCUPATIONS WITH A STRONG *gender imbalance* ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN SHORTAGE

Amidst the current severe labour shortage, increasing female participation in the transport workforce is not only a means to introduce diverse perspectives and skillsets, but is an economic necessity for the country.

To build a more diverse workforce in the T&L industry, it is important to understand and remove barriers to employment for underrepresented groups.<sup>22</sup> Industry can play a role by connecting with schools and employment support organisations, promoting positive aspects of roles in the industry and fostering safer workplaces to enhance workforce integration.

T&L industry leaders recognise that a key part of workforce planning is understanding what is important to different demographics. Further, research on the food supply chain workforce highlighted the need to focus on current and future workforce planning and target recruitment from broader workforce pools to safeguard Australian food security.<sup>23</sup>

Alternate strategies to consider when seeking to build the T&L workforce pool may require a change of industry recruitment practices or government intervention. These can include:

- Focus on transferable skills, rather than industry experience to enable recruitment from broader workforce pools.
- Look at industry sectors releasing workers and develop training and support strategies to integrate workers into the T&L sectors. This could include early identification of site closures in the mining and resources sector and

engagement with organisations supporting exiting Australian Defence Force members as they transition into civilian employment.

- Increase income thresholds for pensioners to allow them to earn more before their pension is affected and streamline reporting requirements. This could boost industry's ability to access experienced and skilled workers. Current income restrictions and the process to reconcile earnings act as a deterrent to workers who would still like to contribute to the workforce.
- Explore skilled migration opportunities for occupations in shortage in the T&L industry – further analysis of the industry's current use of skilled migration visas could identify alternate options under new visa categories in the Migration Strategy.<sup>24</sup>

**Proposed Actions:**

- [School to Work Pathway Pilot](#)
- [Addressing Heavy Vehicle Driver Shortages](#)

**Actions Underway:**

- [Improving T&L Career Information](#)

**Future Research and Consultation:**

- [Pre-vocational training program development](#)
- [Skilled migration](#)
- [Increasing industry diversity](#)

<sup>22</sup> iMove. (2022). [The barriers to women entering and progressing in transport roles](#)

<sup>23</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). [An essential ingredient – The food supply chain workforce](#). Pg. 73

<sup>24</sup> Department of home affairs. (2024). [A migration strategy for Australia](#)



Occupational shortages are being reported across all transport industries



## B. Heavy vehicle driver shortages persist

The **heavy vehicle driver shortage** in Australia has significant flow-on implications for the whole Australian economy. Disruptions and delays in the supply chain cause interruptions to just-in-time inventory systems used across many industries, while the need for higher driver wages contributes to increased costs for businesses. A lack of available drivers has significant implications for business profitability and viability. Industry employers have reported many cases of heavy vehicles parked up because no drivers were available to operate them.

Safety risks are also heightened when industry is forced to employ drivers who lack necessary skills and experience.<sup>25</sup> Driver shortages limit industry's ability to fulfil customer's service requirements and capitalise on opportunities for growth and profitability.<sup>26</sup> The wider community is also impacted by delays and cancellations caused by driver shortages in passenger transport.<sup>27</sup>

Employers and industry associations continue to raise the impacts of the driver shortage which fall disproportionately on regional areas that are heavily reliant on road transportation for access to goods and services.

Truck driving is one of the most common occupations in Australia, ranking 11th in terms of workers<sup>28</sup> and 18th in terms of job advertisements in 2024.<sup>29</sup> Over the next five years, road freight volumes are projected to rise by 11.5%, further increasing demand for truck drivers.

<sup>25</sup> Big Rigs. (2022). [Managing the risks of undertrained workers](#)

<sup>26</sup> National Roads Transport Association. (2024). [National leadership to address the truck driver shortage](#)

<sup>27</sup> NSW Bus Industry Taskforce. (2024). [The forgotten mode: A call to action for buses](#)

<sup>28</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2024, November). [Occupation profiles data \(Table 1\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia (2024). Internet Vacancy Index, three-month moving average

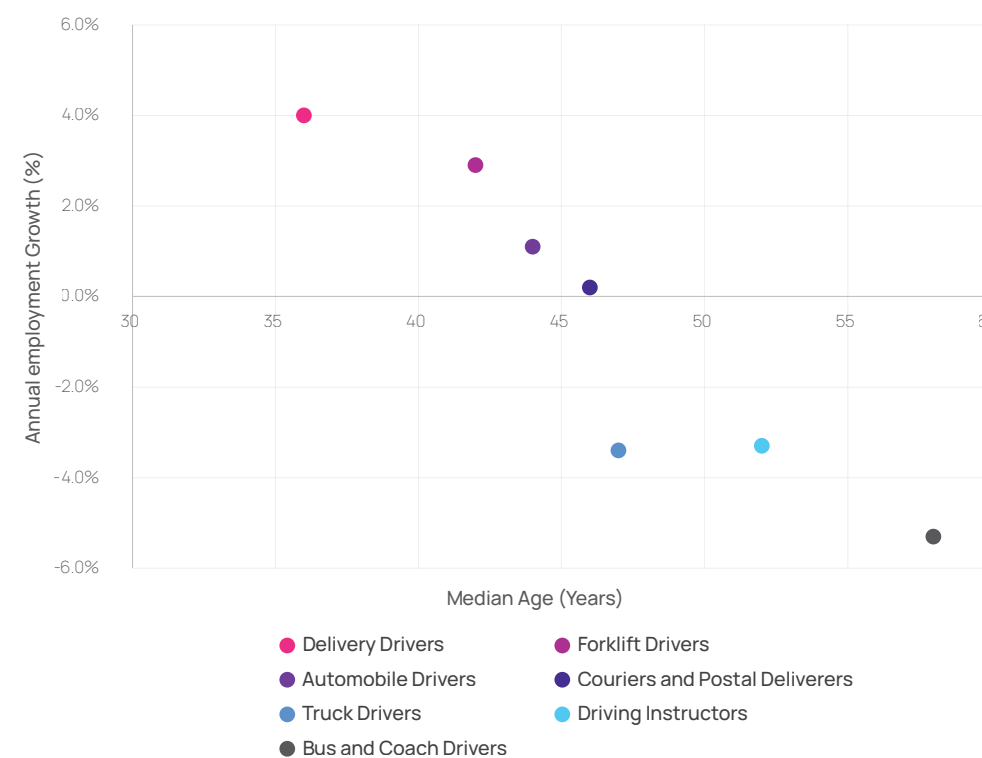
According to Jobs and Skills Australia's 2024 Occupation Shortage List, Truck Drivers have been in shortage for two consecutive years in every state and territory (except in Victoria in the 2024 list) and three consecutive years in the Northern Territory.<sup>30</sup> Bus Drivers had been assessed as being in shortage in every state and territory for 2022 and 2023. Although the 2024 list identifies shortages only in certain jurisdictions, employers are continuing to report shortages nationwide.

### Industry is struggling to replace retiring drivers

In the road transport sector, many experienced bus and truck drivers are nearing retirement age, and employers are reporting there are not enough young drivers entering the profession to fill the vacancies. As shown in **Figure 5**, the number of drivers in roles with higher median ages has declined over the past year, while occupations with younger workers have grown. At 58 years old, the median Bus and Coach Driver is 19 years older than the median worker in Australia, while Truck Drivers are 8 years older. In the last year, 5.3% of Bus Drivers have left the occupation, while 3.4% have left truck driving, an overall decline of about 8,100 workers.

Without an adequate pipeline of new recruits to replace retiring drivers, skill shortages will only continue to worsen.

Figure 5: Employment Growth vs. Median Age in Road Transport Occupations



Source: JSA Occupation profiles data - November 2024, Tables 1

In addition to the challenge of an ageing workforce, there is a significant gender imbalance in the heavy vehicle driver workforce. Women made up only 5.5% of truck drivers and 13.7% of bus and coach drivers in 2024.<sup>31</sup> However, the share of females undertaking heavy vehicle training has increased over recent years from 6.4% in 2020 to 10.8% in 2023 (Figure 6), being as high as 25.6% in South Australia in 2023. Despite this recent improvement, there is an ongoing need to attract more females into the driving role and support their retention by multifaceted strategies including providing supported training pathways and inclusive workplace environments.

<sup>30</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2024). [2024 Occupation Shortage List](#)

<sup>31</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Detailed Labour Force Survey, EQ08 - Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job, November 2023 (annual average of original data)

JOBS THAT HAVE HIGHER GROWTH IN ROAD TRANSPORT *have younger employees*



Figure 6: Female enrolment trends in heavy vehicle qualifications



Source: NCVET (2024) Total VET students and courses

WE HAVE  
*low and fluctuating female enrolments*

**Barriers for new drivers: industry image, age limits, insurance, and rest facilities**

Widespread misperceptions have given the heavy vehicle industry an unattractive public image that can deter potential workforce entrants. The public perception of heavy vehicle driving as a low-standing occupation has contributed to the workforce shortage, especially among candidates from wider and more diverse demographics.

Employers and industry associations suggest that more emphasis should be placed on the variety and significance of the driving role. Potential workforce entrants need to see that the industry offers more than linehaul operations, opportunities in urban and metro areas should also be highlighted.

Industry associations have suggested raising awareness of benefits and opportunities within the industry could help to redefine the industry's image and attract a broader range of candidates.<sup>32</sup> In some work environments there is also a need to improve work-life balance where possible and provide more health and wellbeing support for drivers.

A lack of suitable and safe rest facilities, particularly for long haul heavy vehicle drivers, works as a deterrent in attracting new workers to the driving role. This also raises concerns for existing drivers as they strive to meet their fatigue management requirements.<sup>33</sup> Addressing the availability and standards for adequate rest areas is a crucial element for attracting and retaining the driving workforce, especially as industry seeks to encourage greater female participation in the occupation.

<sup>32</sup> [Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds Foundation](#)

<sup>33</sup> NHVR. (2025). [Major NHVR operation reveals driver fatigue is still a serious concern following deadliest year on Australian roads in over a decade](#)



The Australian Government is working with state and territory governments and local government authorities to improve rest area facilities through the Heavy Vehicle Rest Area Initiative.<sup>34</sup>

Current licensing age restrictions are another barrier for employers looking to recruit young workers into heavy vehicle driving.<sup>35</sup> School leavers are often drawn to other industries that don't have similar age limitations for meaningful employment.

The higher insurance premiums associated with employing heavy vehicle drivers under the age of 25 also impedes industry's ability to attract and engage younger workers for driving roles in both the road freight and passenger transport sectors.<sup>36</sup> This is continuously raised by industry employers as a major obstacle, although some insurers are open to reducing higher premiums for younger drivers when they have undertaken recognised training for heavy vehicle drivers. This further supports the establishment of the heavy vehicle driver apprenticeship.

The substantial cost and rigorous training and testing requirements to obtain a heavy vehicle driver's licence can be another barrier for potential workforce entrants. However, there are numerous skills required of heavy vehicle drivers that are not addressed through current licence training and testing. These include knowledge and skills in load restraint, loading and unloading, completion of work diaries, compliance with regulations, road law, chain of responsibility, fatigue management, and skills for the specific vehicle type. Employers have identified that some licensed heavy vehicle drivers are not employed because there is not confidence that training and licensing processes have provided drivers with all the necessary skills to operate heavy vehicles safely and efficiently.

<sup>34</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional development, Communication and the Arts. (2024). [Safer local roads and infrastructure program](#)

<sup>35</sup> Austroads. (2023). [Decision Regulatory Impact Statement – National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework](#)

<sup>36</sup> Strata Insurance Online. (2023). [What factors affect your truck insurance premiums](#)



### Higher level skills are required for heavy vehicle drivers

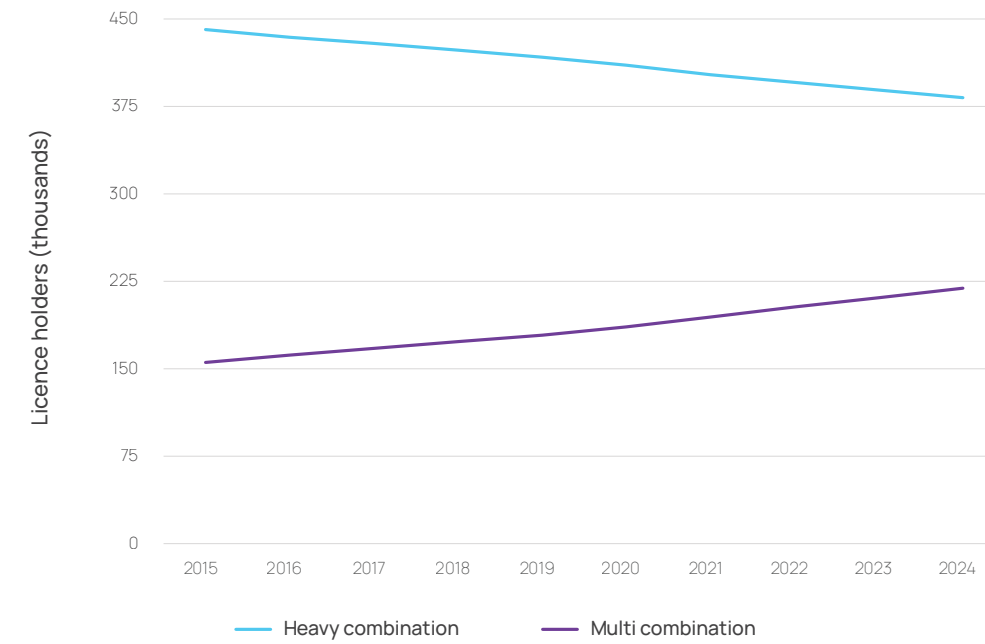
Industry has expressed concern over the lack of quality and national consistency they see in training and licensing for heavy vehicle drivers. The ability to license new heavy vehicle drivers can be impeded by limited licensing assessors, particularly in regional and remote areas. Limited funding or financial incentives available to support training and mentoring of new heavy vehicle drivers also affects the ability of employers to attract and skill new workers.

In response to industry feedback, a new Articulated Truck Driver occupation classification has been introduced at skill level 3<sup>37</sup> as part of the recently released Occupation Standard Classification Australia (OSCA). This draws

attention to the higher level of skill required by drivers of larger heavy vehicles. Industry working groups and ISA roundtables have highlighted the need for additional training for drivers operating larger multi-combination vehicles or road trains to improve safety outcomes.

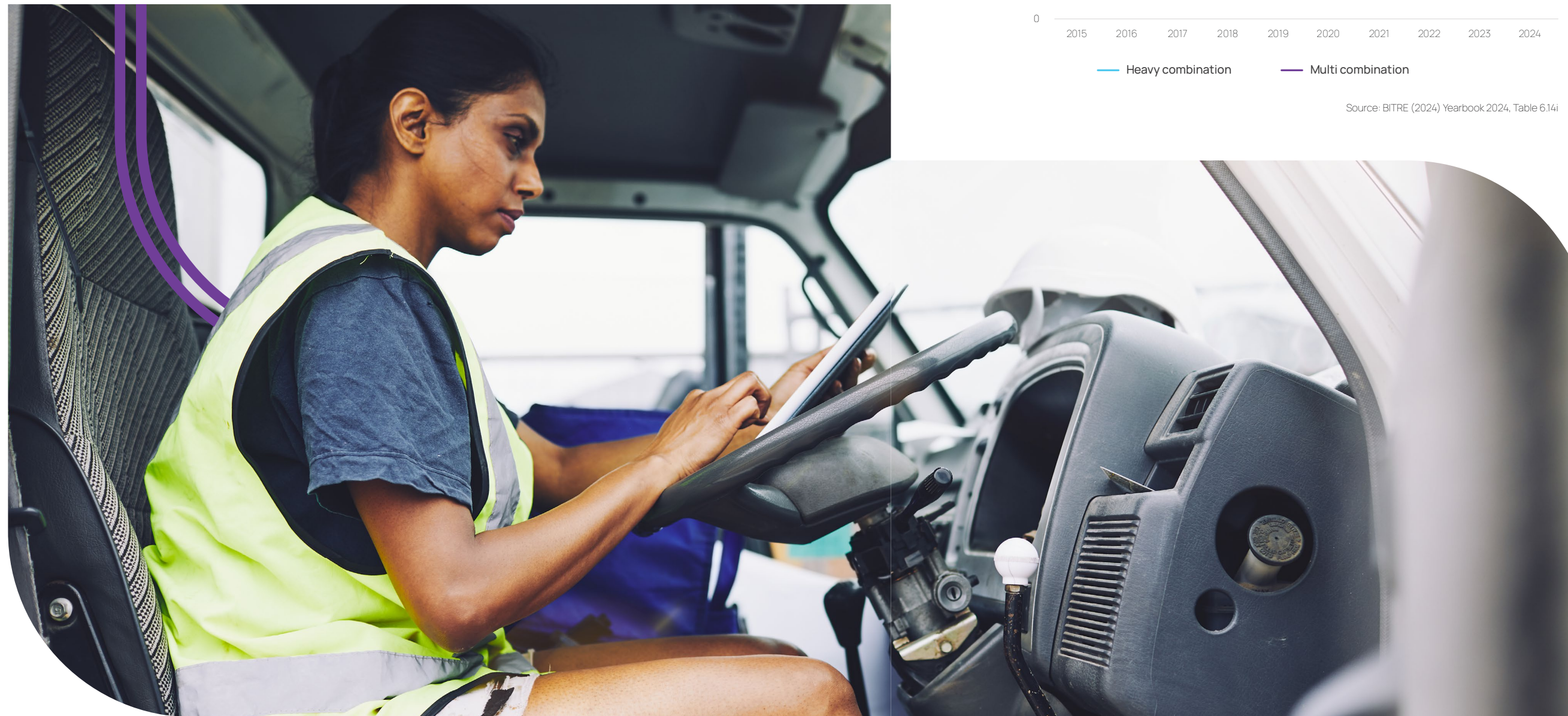
In some jurisdictions, drivers do not need to gain a heavy combination (HC) licence before progressing onto a multi-combination (MC) licence. Between 2015 and 2024, the number of truck drivers holding an HC licence declined by 13.2% (Figure 7), likely due to drivers opting for MC licences, which offer better job prospects and pay. Over the same period, the number of MC licences increased by 41.1%<sup>38</sup>, more than offsetting the decline in HC licences. This suggests the trend reflects licence upgrades rather than a drop in qualified drivers.

Figure 7: Trends in heavy and multi-combination licences (2015-2024)



MULTI-COMBINATION LICENCE HOLDERS *are increasing*

Source: BITRE (2024) Yearbook 2024, Table 6.14i



<sup>37</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024)

<sup>38</sup> Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics. (2024). [Australian infrastructure and transport statistics yearbook 2024](#)



To date, there has been no set industry standard to address the link between training, job-readiness and licensing progression. However, Austroads are progressing reforms approved by Transport Ministers as part of the Review of the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework.<sup>39</sup>

The reforms include:

- strengthening heavy vehicle driver skills and knowledge through redesigned learning and assessment requirements specific to each licence class
- requiring minimum course lengths and minimum behind-the-wheel time
- delivering some training and assessment online to allow licence applicants flexibility to undertake the training when and where it best suits them and reduce costs
- introducing new experience or supervision-based licence-progression pathways to allow drivers to gain higher licence classes more rapidly – for each licence upgrade, drivers would be able to choose a different pathway option: tenure, driving experience, or completion of a supervision program.

The reforms will be underpinned by minimum standards for training and practical experience to ensure drivers have the required skills and knowledge associated with the level of licence they obtain. This will help to build employers' confidence that candidates have been trained and assessed under a nationally consistent and robust process.

To align with the approved reforms, ISA will soon commence a project to update heavy vehicle licensing competency standards within vocational training products. Throughout the project, ISA will engage with key stakeholders including, industry employers, unions and peak bodies, training providers, state and territory regulators and training authorities, to develop a coordinated approach for the implementation of the reforms.

Ensuring there are sufficient and suitably qualified driving instructors available to deliver quality training is paramount for the provision of a pipeline of safe and skilled heavy vehicle drivers. Part of Austroads' program of work will include the development of resources to support best practice standards for heavy vehicle training and licensing assessment delivery to promote a harmonised approach across jurisdictions.

### Industry demand for an apprenticeship model

The shortage of heavy vehicle drivers is a complex issue that demands a co-ordinated and multifaceted approach to attract, develop and retain workers.<sup>40</sup> ISA have heard from industry that enhancing training programs, improving work conditions, countering negative perceptions of the industry, leveraging technology, and fostering collaboration are essential elements of a comprehensive strategy.

<sup>39</sup> Austroads. (2024). [Review of the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework](#)

<sup>40</sup> MHD. (2024). [Solving the truck driver shortage](#)



Collaborative effort will be required between industry, government and unions to address skill shortages and secure the industry's future success.

Employers recognise that establishing a Heavy Vehicle Driver apprenticeship around the country has the potential to address several workforce challenges by:

- raising the profile of the heavy vehicle driving profession and improving public perception of the role
- providing a valid career pathway and a structured training environment to assist in attracting workers to the industry
- recognising the skills required to become a driver of modern heavy vehicles
- enabling the provision of training in essential skills and on-the-job practical experience
- supporting changes proposed under the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework

- demonstrating industry's commitment to creating a safer driving environment for workers and the community.

While there is significant interest in the heavy vehicle driver apprenticeship as a way to provide employment-based training in a structured environment, at this stage the apprenticeship is only being delivered in Queensland. Employers in both road freight and passenger transport sectors would like to see the apprenticeship made available nationwide as a consistent pathway option with funding support. Further establishment of the apprenticeship in the remaining states and territories will require a collaborative approach between industry and government.

While it is too early to identify widespread outcomes from the Heavy Vehicle Driver apprenticeship, analysis by JSA in their Food Supply Chain Capacity Study,<sup>41</sup> found that students who undertook the Certificate III and IV in Driving Operations as apprentices and trainees, had a substantially higher median income than those who did not.

Although the Certificate III in Driving Operations qualification attracts partial training funding subsidies in most states and territories around the country, the traineeship/apprenticeship model of training is not eligible for the majority of incentives under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System.<sup>42</sup> Including the Certificate III in Driving Operations and its associated driving occupations in the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List would support employers with the financial costs involved in skilling new drivers. It would also incentivise workers to undertake a traineeship or apprenticeship in an occupation that is recognised and supported as a high priority for the country.

### Lack of skilled migration pathways to address workforce shortages

There is growing industry support for skilled migration as an option to address driver shortages in the road freight and passenger transport sectors. Bus driver and truck driver occupations are confirmed as being in shortage in most states and territories on the Occupation Shortage List.<sup>43</sup> However, they are not currently included on the Skilled Occupation List,<sup>44</sup> meaning overseas workers cannot be sourced to help meet the demand for heavy vehicle drivers. All the thirteen Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMA)<sup>45</sup> currently include heavy vehicle driver occupations for visa applications. However, these can be cost prohibitive and/or complicated to access for employers.

<sup>41</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). [An essential ingredient – The food supply chain workforce](#)

<sup>42</sup> Australian Apprenticeships. (2024). [Financial support for apprentices in priority occupations](#)

<sup>43</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2024). [Occupation shortage list](#)

<sup>44</sup> Department of Home Affairs. (2024). [Skilled occupation list](#)

<sup>45</sup> Department of Home Affairs. [Designated area migration agreements](#)

<sup>46</sup> Austroads. (2024). [Key findings on the management of overseas licensed heavy vehicle drivers](#)

<sup>47</sup> South Australian Government. (2025). [Reforms to the heavy vehicle licensing system](#)

<sup>48</sup> NSW Bus Industry Taskforce. (2024). [The forgotten mode – A call to action for buses](#)

<sup>49</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. (2022). [Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 \(Transport Standards\)](#)

Each state and territory sets requirements for the recognition of international heavy vehicle licences and requirements for drivers from overseas, leading to inconsistencies across the jurisdictions. There is increasing emphasis in ensuring that overseas drivers undertake the same training and meet the same licensing requirements to ensure they are appropriately skilled in the safe operation of heavy vehicles for the Australian road environment.<sup>46</sup>

In February 2025, the South Australian Government introduced reforms to the heavy vehicle licensing system<sup>47</sup> in the state. This includes a structured learning program as a pathway for drivers to gain their multi-combination (MC) licence and more stringent requirements around eligibility for overseas drivers to obtain their MC licence.

There is potential to develop resources or training for overseas drivers that will help build their skills and knowledge on Australian Heavy Vehicle National Law or other state/territory regulatory requirements, transport terminology, safety culture and how the industry operates in Australia. This could also include cultural competency resources for employers to support the integration of migrant workers into the workforce.

Collaboration between government and industry could be considered to explore migration pathways, however this should not detract from continuing efforts and commitments to safe and sustainable standards for the T&L industry, investments in the existing workforce and attraction and retention strategies.

### Bus driver training needs to be updated

In the passenger transport sector, increasing challenges associated with anti-social behaviour need attention to ensure that drivers are suitably equipped and supported to deal with difficult situations.<sup>48</sup> Employer feedback has recommended reviewing the Certificate III in Driving Operations qualification to ensure its relevance to the passenger transport sector. This would include incorporating elective units to train for skills in areas such as customer service and conflict management.

Training for the transport of passengers with disabilities will also need to align with proposed changes as part of the Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.<sup>49</sup>



## National consistency needed for Bus Driver's Authority

In the passenger transport sector, age restrictions apply to obtaining a Driver's Authority that vary across jurisdictions and typically mirror the unrestricted licence minimum age in those jurisdictions. The Driver's Authority is state-based and generally entails a police check, driving history check, working with children/vulnerable people approval and medical assessments.

Table 2: Public Passenger Vehicle Driver Authority Age by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Minimum age	Authorisation
ACT	20 years	Public Vehicle Driver Authority
NSW	20 years	Bus Driver Authority
NT	18 years, 6 months	Commercial Passenger Vehicle - H Endorsement
QLD	20 years	Passenger Transport Driver Authorisation
SA	20 years	Driver Accreditation
TAS	20 years	Public Passenger Vehicle Ancillary Certificate
VIC	22 years	Driver Accreditation
WA	20 years	Passenger Transport Driver Authorisation

Employers have raised concerns that obtaining the various checks and approvals needed for a Driver's Authority can be a costly and time-consuming process that can delay employers access to suitably certified drivers. Although there is some mutual recognition of a Driver's Authority across borders, it does not apply to all states and territories and does not apply to other required background checks and approvals. Industry have stressed the importance of national consistency in recognition and requirements for the Driver's Authority to facilitate greater workforce mobility across the states and territories.

### Proposed Actions:

- [Skilling Heavy Vehicle Drivers and Licensing Update](#)
- [Addressing Heavy Vehicle Driver Shortages](#)

### Actions Underway:

- [Improving T&L Career Information](#)

### Future Research and Consultation:

- [Passenger transport driver training](#)
- [Training to support international heavy vehicle drivers](#)



## MEGATREND

Training barriers are restricting workforce supply across all transport industries

## C. Limited access to industry relevant training hinders skills development

The T&L industry faces some significant challenges in accessing quality vocational education options. While many of these challenges are not unique to T&L, they are compounded by key industry characteristics. These characteristics include:

- a significant industry presence in regional and remote areas
- limited access to government-funded training and Fee-Free TAFE
- no tradition (or availability) of apprenticeship models
- a high proportion of small businesses with limited capacity to invest in training
- industry relevant training predominantly delivered by private training providers

Jobs and Skills Australia's report Better Together<sup>50</sup> predicts that more than 90% of future employment growth will require post-secondary qualifications, with 42.6% relying on VET pathways. This forecast highlights the importance

of the VET system for developing skills needed for employment.

As part of VET Qualifications Reform, Skills Ministers have agreed to a new, purpose-built approach to qualification design aimed at improving quality, simplifying course design and reducing complexity.<sup>51</sup> The new model was informed by demonstration projects undertaken by Jobs and Skills Councils and will come into effect from 1 July 2025 for all new projects with a phased implementation approach.

ISA's Qualification Reform project included developing a demonstration qualification<sup>52</sup> to support worker mobility and transferability of skills across different transport occupations in road transport, logistics, ports, aviation, maritime, and rail.

### Shortage of trainers and assessors, particularly in rural areas

While shortages of 'Vocational Education Teachers' have been reported in all States and Territories for the last three years (Table 3)<sup>53</sup>, rural, regional, and remote areas face significant challenges in finding qualified trainers, which impacts the delivery of VET. Employers confirm there is a particular difficulty in finding trainers with specialised skills or experience, such as those capable of delivering training to First Nations communities.<sup>54</sup>

Table 3: Vocational Education Teacher Shortages by State/Territory

State/Territory	2021	2022	2023	2024
Australian Capital Territory	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
New South Wales	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
Northern Territory	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
Queensland	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
South Australia	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
Tasmania	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
Victoria	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage
Western Australia	No Shortage	Shortage	Shortage	Shortage

Source: Occupational Shortage List (14 February 2025)

<sup>50</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2024). [Better together](#)

<sup>51</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. (2024). [VET qualification reform](#)

<sup>52</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. (2024). [Industry Skills Australia - QR - Demonstration Project Final Report](#)

<sup>53</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2024). 2024 Occupation Shortage List (OSL)

<sup>54</sup> Tabatha, G. & Andrahannadi, U. (2023). [VET delivery in regional, rural and remote Australia: barriers and facilitators](#). NCVET



Employers have found that it is difficult to encourage their workers to move into training roles due to the requirement to undertake the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualification, along with the associated drop in income when becoming a trainer. Employers have expressed interest in using experienced workers in the delivery of training and mentoring, without the requirement to complete complex formal training.

In July 2025, revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) will allow industry experts to train under direction of an accredited trainer or assessor.<sup>55</sup> The change may provide the T&L industry with flexibility to use their own workers for training delivery. It also provides a mechanism for transferring knowledge from experienced workers and easing the current shortage of VET trainers and assessors.

The change presents an opportunity to improve access to industry-relevant training, especially in rural, regional, and remote areas, that also aligns with employer preferences for using industry experts rather than teachers with no industry experience.

The National Skills Agreement reflects a commitment by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments by investing \$12.6 billion to support the VET sector with capacity to deliver skills for critical and emerging industries.<sup>56</sup> Creating greater flexibility within the VET system can yield better results by attracting more learners and leading to improved learner outcomes.<sup>57</sup> Supporting this approach, the Australian Universities Accord Final Report<sup>58</sup> outlines the importance of VET and higher education to meet the nation's skill demands and ensuring fair access to high-quality education.

### **Lack of quality training resources and skilled trainers impacting rural workforce development**

The national shortage of trainers and assessors is seriously affecting rural, regional, and remote areas of Australia, exacerbating existing educational disparities.<sup>59</sup> These areas face unique challenges due to their geographical isolation and limited access to resources, and the scarcity of qualified vocational practitioners compound these issues. This is particularly relevant to the T&L industry where 54.6% of workers are employed in regional or remote locations.

The shortage of VET practitioners contributes to a brain drain from rural areas, as potential trainers and assessors are drawn to urban centres where more opportunities and amenities are available. This perpetuates a cycle of limited local expertise, impacting the capacity for skill development and economic growth in rural communities.

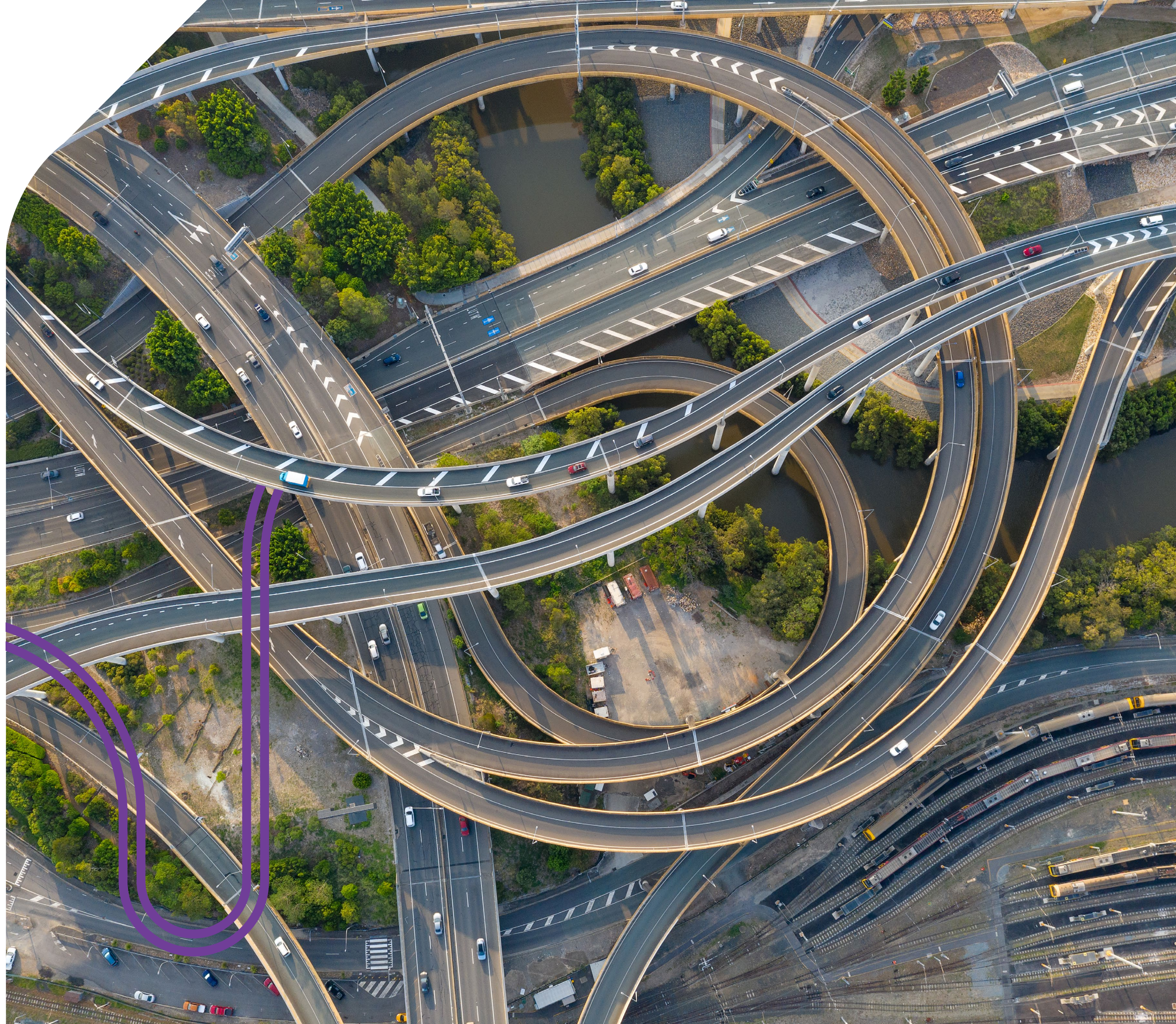
<sup>55</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. (2024). [Revisions to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations](#)

<sup>56</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. (2023). [National skills agreement – Reforming the national VET system](#)

<sup>57</sup> The Regional Australia Institute. (2023). [2023-2024 Federal Government Pre-Budget Submission](#)

<sup>58</sup> Australian Government. (2024). [Australian universities accord final report](#)

<sup>59</sup> Tabatha, G. & Andrahannadi, U. (2023). [VET delivery in regional, rural and remote Australia: barriers and facilitators](#), NCVET



DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION





The delivery of VET in rural, regional and remote Australia faces several barriers<sup>60</sup> including:

- a lack of high-quality training facilities and up-to-date training equipment
- increased costs of training delivery due to thin markets resulting in viability challenges that deter RTOs from entering the market
- a shortage of appropriately qualified trainers/assessors
- significant need for numeracy and digital literacy support
- the need for cultural competency in working with First Nations communities.

Additionally, one of the biggest challenges to achieving successful outcomes with disadvantaged groups is the high rate of attrition due to other factors such as health, housing, transport and family issues.<sup>61</sup> The costs associated with regional training delivery can be prohibitive for both a training provider and employer. Regional employers often report that they have to send workers to metropolitan centres to access training which again increases operational costs.

Strategies to address this could include identifying opportunities for regional employers to combine resources and engage training providers for localised training delivery. This would make training in the regions more financially viable for the training provider when there is a verified group of student enrolments, resulting in lower training fees for workers and/or employers.

The adoption of new training technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, simulators and online training systems can also support regional and remote delivery and help to reduce the amount of face-to-face teaching time.<sup>62</sup> Considerations will need to include access to internet and ensuring safety aspects aren't compromised where practical demonstration of skills is required.

Support for training providers to deliver sector specific training is required to improve access to industry-relevant training, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas. Opportunities need to be identified for leveraging industry expertise that will support this process.

### Industry struggles with inconsistent funding opportunities across jurisdictions

Navigating training and funding availability across different jurisdictions continues to be raised as a challenge by industry. Employers continue to express there is limited knowledge of where to go to advocate for change or support at a state or territory level. This is a particular

<sup>60</sup> Tabatha, G. & Andrahannadi, U. (2023). [VET delivery in regional, rural and remote Australia: barriers and facilitators](#). NCVER

<sup>61</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). [Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System](#)

<sup>62</sup> OECD. (2023). [Building future-ready vocational education and training systems](#)

issue for national companies with workforce training requirements in various locations.

Employers have reported that insufficient funding or financial support and a lack of confidence in the quality and consistency of training deters industry investment in training the T&L workforce. Feedback also indicates that training often does not provide realistic work expectations for application in industry, and that practical and workplace training is valued more highly than classroom-based delivery.

In addition to investment in training, there is also industry demand for better recognition of prior learning processes to enable existing industry workers to gain accreditation. A greater emphasis on gap training could broaden the pool of workers available to employers by recognising and valuing the transferable skills of potential workers, rather than requiring industry experience. Clearer training pathways and articulation between VET and higher education would also assist career progression in the industry.

Focus on the provision of, and funding for, foundational skills is becoming more important as additional support is often required to improve language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills prior to the commencement of training. The Australian Government has increased expectations for RTOs to conduct pre-training assessments of LLND for all learners to determine their support needs.

### Digital divide worsened by poor connectivity in remote areas

Employers continue to report the lack of mobile phone or internet coverage in remote locations creates barriers in accessing training and employment services for many communities, further widening the digital divide between metro and regional areas.<sup>63</sup>

The merits of expanding the Regional University Study Hubs program to also support VET learners studying remotely in regional areas has been highlighted in a recent report by JSA.<sup>64</sup> These hubs provide essential infrastructure, including study spaces, internet access and support services for students to complete their tertiary studies without needing to travel or relocate from their regional location. Increasing access to these hubs for regional VET students would assist in enabling localised workforce training.

#### Actions Underway:

- [VET Workforce Project](#)
- [Qualification Reform - Purpose Categorisation](#)

#### Future Research and Consultation:

- [VET Reforms](#)
- [Improving regional training delivery](#)

<sup>63</sup> ABC News. (2024). [Digital divide report shows thousands of Australians in remote communities still don't have internet access](#)

<sup>64</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). [An essential ingredient - The food supply chain workforce](#)





Training needs to be realigned with current industry demands in both the Aviation and Transport & Logistics industries

## D. Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors

Skills gaps in training for the highly regulated T&L industry need to be addressed, focusing on safety practices and regulatory changes.

### Training needs to be updated for workers in transport compliance roles, livestock, dangerous goods transport, and crane operations

Developing nationally consistent training for skills required in specific roles or industry sectors has been highlighted as a key priority by employers and industry associations. This includes ensuring training products align with updated regulations and standards to maintain currency and relevancy to industry.

Industry have identified the following areas of expertise where there may be existing skills gaps and the need for training product development:

- **Specialist compliance training** – The T&L industry is highly regulated. Compliance personnel play a critical role in ensuring that companies operate within legal and regulatory frameworks. In road transport enterprises, compliance personnel are responsible for managing and implementing often complex systems and programs to ensure the business complies with legal and regulatory requirements and is operating safely and efficiently. Training to upskill T&L workers in compliance requirements, safety practices, and regulatory changes is required as an increasing number of occupations operate in high-risk environments.
- **Livestock transport training** – There is opportunity to develop a national approach and improve access to training in animal handling techniques and safe vehicle operation for the transport of livestock. This would need to consider obligations under the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Land Transport of Livestock<sup>65</sup> and NHVR's Regulatory Advice – Livestock.<sup>66</sup> This would provide a consistent pathway for skilling heavy vehicle drivers in the livestock transport sector. Training development will need to consider the remote locations livestock transporters operate from, and how training can be delivered to maximise the benefits of this pathway.

<sup>65</sup> Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. [The Australian animal welfare standards and guidelines for land transport of livestock](#)

<sup>66</sup> NHVR. [Regulatory Advice – Livestock](#)



FIRST COMPREHENSIVE  
REVIEW IN  
**15 YEARS**  
OF AUSTRALIAN DANGEROUS  
GOODS CODE

- **Dangerous goods driver training** – The National Transport Commission is undertaking a review of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code.<sup>67</sup> ISA has been asked by the Competent Authorities Panel to update current dangerous goods training products to ensure they provide the appropriate skills and knowledge requirements for dangerous goods drivers and will meet the requirements of the new Code.
- **Crane licensing reforms** – Safe Work Australia is reviewing the high-risk work (HRW) licence framework for cranes<sup>68</sup> to improve safety and relevance to work practices and technology. Recommended changes to the framework will require training product review to ensure they align with the updated crane licensing system.

<sup>67</sup> National Transport Commission. (2024). [Comprehensive review of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code](#)

<sup>68</sup> Safe Work Australia. (2024). [Improving crane licensing under the model work health and safety laws](#)

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## Training gaps must be addressed in leadership, waste transport, container transport, electric vehicle recovery, and oversize/overmass (OSOM) loads

Existing gaps in the available training products have been identified by industry as important for addressing changing industry requirements.

- **Transport management training** – Consistent training and progression pathways are needed for transport leadership and management roles. An analysis of existing training products is needed to determine relevancy for the provision of skill development in T&L leadership roles. This could include a review of the Diploma of Logistics and aligning the qualification with associated lower-level qualifications to support progression pathways.
- **Waste operations driver training** – Training for heavy vehicle drivers in the waste and recycling sector needs to be reviewed to ensure it reflects current skills and knowledge requirements. This would include aligning training with the new Waste and Recycling Industry Code of Practice<sup>69</sup> and other relevant state/territory requirements.
- **Container transport** – Specialised skills are required for drivers to operate side loading vehicles in the container transport sector. Employers are reporting an increasing demand to verify competence of drivers via the completion of the Unit of Competency TLID0017 Operate a Side Lifter. There is scope to review this unit to ensure relevance and provide guidance to increase RTO capacity in the delivery of this unit.
- **Training for electric vehicle towing and recovery** – With the increasing adoption of electric vehicles nationwide, there is a recognised need to develop consistent guidance and training for towing providers to ensure safe practice when responding to towing and recovery requests for electric vehicles and managing zero emission vehicle breakdowns.
- **Oversize/Overmass (OSOM) transport** – Currently there is limited training available for heavy vehicle drivers transporting OSOM loads. Movement of these loads is highly regulated and there is scope for improved training product development or guidance to support drivers in this space.
- **Transport Scheduler** – The Certificate IV in Supply Chain Operations currently includes a group of units of competency that provide training for transport scheduling roles. However, the current units are freight focused and not relevant to other industry sectors. A review is needed to ensure the training products can be used to skill workers for scheduling and fleet allocation roles in multiple transport sectors.

<sup>69</sup> NHVR. (2024). [Waste and Recycling Industry Codes of Practice](#)



- **Space Transport & Logistics** – ISA has been undertaking a project to determine the skills needed for specialised T&L roles supporting the Space Industry. This project will inform future development of training products to align with the sector's workforce needs.

## Training must be consistent and accessible

Developing consistent training for specific roles or industry sectors is highlighted as a key priority by industry associations and employers, ensuring alignment with updated regulations and standards.

Future activities will require targeted stakeholder engagement to determine skills needs and to identify where training product review or development is needed. New projects may also be undertaken in response to regulatory updates to ensure training products align with these changes.

In addition to training product development, the creation of resources for training providers and employers can be explored to provide guidance on specialised training delivery and industry best practice.

### Proposed Actions:

- [Livestock Transport Training Development](#)
- [Review of Dangerous Goods Driver Training](#)

### Actions Underway:

- [Furniture Removal](#)
- [Motor Vehicle Driver Training](#)

### Future Research and Consultation:

- [Specialist compliance training development](#)
- [Crane licensing reforms](#)
- [Transport management training](#)
- [Waste operations driver training](#)
- [Container transport](#)
- [Electric vehicle towing and recovery](#)
- [Oversize/Overmass \(OSOM\) transport](#)
- [Transport scheduler training](#)



## E. New skills needed for emerging technologies

Emerging technologies and decarbonisation efforts are reshaping skill requirements in the T&L industry.<sup>70</sup> Advances in artificial intelligence (AI), digital technologies, cyber security, low-carbon liquid fuels and zero emission vehicles demand updated training to ensure workforce readiness, safety and sustainability.<sup>71</sup>

### Digital literacy, AI, and cyber security are essential skills for the T&L workforce

Automation and other digital technologies are transforming industries and business operations by streamlining processes, improving efficiency, and reducing costs. These advancements are driving innovation, enabling real-time data analysis, and improving decision-making capabilities. T&L enterprises are leveraging these technologies to optimise supply chains, enhance customer experiences, and create new opportunities for growth.

AI can play a crucial role and provide real benefits to the T&L industry, particularly around improved traffic management and route optimisation capability, inventory management and demand predictions, safety enhancements, and more transparent access to information for businesses, customers and public transport users.<sup>72</sup>

To stay competitive, warehouses are adopting automation and technology, enhancing last-mile logistics, and addressing sustainability concerns.<sup>73</sup> The adoption of advanced technologies such as automation, robotics and warehouse management systems will assist in enabling improved efficiencies, reduced delivery times, decreased operating costs and minimising instances of manual error. Implementation of new technologies will also help alleviate skilled labour shortages, while at the same time, changing the skill requirements for new and existing workers, including the need for increased digital capabilities.<sup>74</sup> It will also see an increasing demand for appropriately trained technicians to maintain and service these new systems in warehousing operations.



Skills needs for the port environment will change with the adoption of automation, the move towards decarbonisation and the emerging offshore wind industry which are transforming port operations worldwide<sup>75</sup>, however this is likely to be a gradual adjustment.<sup>76</sup> Achieving optimal efficiency and productivity is crucial for the stevedoring sector, as delays in cargo handling and vessel turnaround times can impact the competitiveness of Australian ports. Industry has suggested that accredited training for stevedoring operations needs updating to reflect current industry practices.

While technological advancements are improving efficiencies, they will require a higher level of digital literacy for the T&L workforce which can cause worker anxiety if there is insufficient training in the operation and use of these technologies.<sup>77</sup> This can be particularly challenging for certain cohorts and will need targeted and supported development to improve digital capabilities of T&L workers to ensure safe and efficient operations and secure employment.

The integration of new technologies can also open up job roles and opportunities for a broader range of workers by reducing labour intensive tasks and creating different skill requirements that enable greater workforce participation. Industry will continue to explore the use of AI to automate repetitive or non-customer facing tasks.

Demand is growing for workers in cyber security and data analytic roles in the T&L industry.<sup>78</sup> With the integration of digital technologies, cyber security measures are becoming increasingly crucial for T&L enterprises.<sup>79</sup> Recent breaches have highlighted the widespread consequences of compromised data incidents, on industry and the economy as a whole and have emphasised the need for cyber security expertise in the workforce.<sup>80</sup>

Omnichannel Logistics and Distribution seeks to synchronise and optimise product distribution across multiple retail channels, including online and offline, to provide customers with a seamless shopping experience. It involves efficient inventory management, order fulfilment, and technology integration to ensure products are available and delivered promptly, meeting the expectations of customers who seek convenience and flexibility in their shopping journeys. An increasing number of businesses are incorporating omnichannel strategies into their operations to enhance the overall customer experience.

ISA has been undertaking a project to analyse the specific skills and competencies essential for successful omnichannel logistics operations within the T&L industries, to identify gaps between existing and new skill requirements and where new training product review or development may be required.

<sup>70</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. (2024). [Review of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy - Review Report](#)

<sup>71</sup> Department of Industry, Science and Resources. (2024). [National Robotics Strategy](#)

<sup>72</sup> Apptunix. (2025). [AI in Transportation: How artificial intelligence is changing the transportation Industry? Top Use Cases](#)

<sup>73</sup> Real Time Networks. (2024). [2025 Warehouse Operations Trends: Agility, Automation & Sustainability](#)

<sup>74</sup> DHL. [Future of work in logistics - Trend report](#)

<sup>75</sup> Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. [Offshore wind facts](#)

<sup>76</sup> Productivity Commission. (2022). [Lifting productivity at Australia's container ports: between water, wharf and warehouse - Inquiry report](#)

<sup>77</sup> iMove. (2023). [Creating our future transport and mobility workforce](#)

<sup>78</sup> MHD. (2025). [Ports Australia calls for action on cybersecurity in supply chain](#)

<sup>79</sup> Australian Signals Directorate. (2023). [Annual cyber threat report 2023-2024](#)

<sup>80</sup> World Economic Forum. (2025). [Global cybersecurity outlook](#)

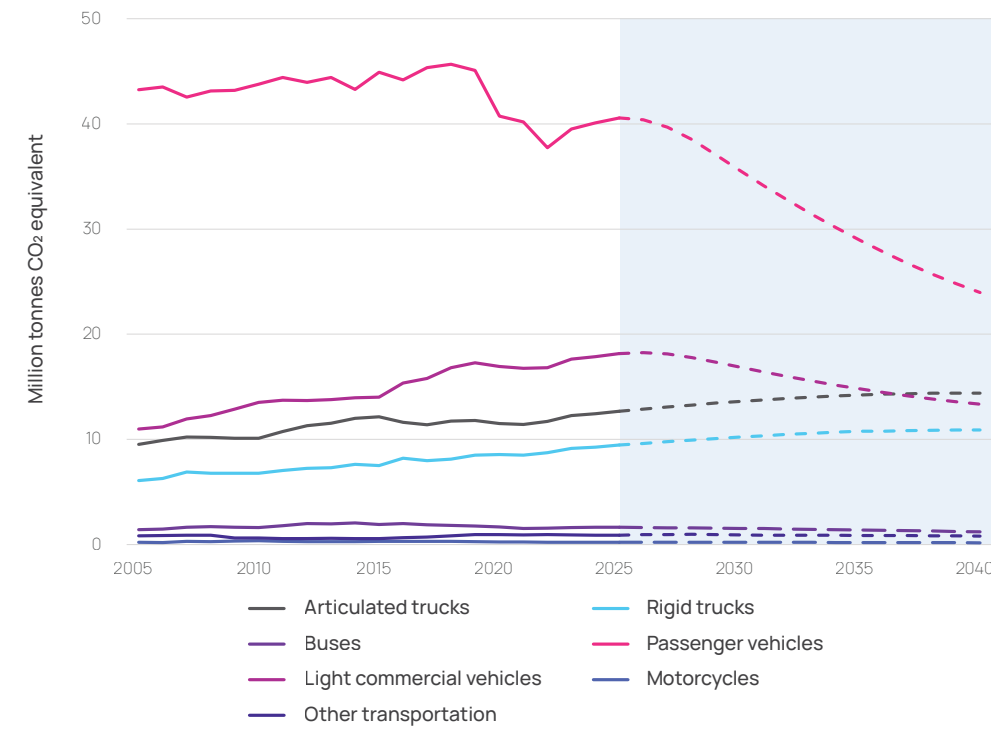


## Decarbonisation and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance are driving demand for new industry skills

In the 2024-2025 budget,<sup>81</sup> the Australian Government allocated significant funds towards clean energy and decarbonisation efforts. \$65 billion is being unlocked for investment in renewable energy capacity, \$1.5 billion is committed to manufacturing clean energy technologies and \$1.7 billion Future Made in Australia Innovation Fund, which supports the growth of new industries and extends funding through Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).<sup>82</sup>

Emissions from road transport vehicles are expected to decline by 22.5% in the fifteen years to 2040 (Figure 8), lead primarily by declines in passenger (-40.9%) and light commercial vehicles (-26.6%). Over the same period, emissions from articulated (+13.6) and rigid trucks (+15.2%) are forecast to continue increasing, against the overall trend.<sup>83</sup>

Figure 8: Road transport emissions in the baseline scenario, 2005 to 2040



Source: DCCCEW (2024) Australia's emissions projections 2024

OUR OVERALL EMISSIONS  
*are forecast to decline*

Trials of zero-emissions hydrogen fuel-cell battery trucks and battery electric trucks are already underway for long range applications in Australia.<sup>84</sup> The passenger transport sector's transition to zero emission vehicles is also well underway with battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell buses already introduced into fleets across the country.<sup>85</sup> The majority of states and territories have established policy commitments to transition their public transport fleets to zero emission vehicles with set target dates.

<sup>81</sup> Australian Government. (2024). [Budget 2024-25](#)

<sup>82</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. [Media release - Low-carbon liquid fuels of the Future Made In Australia](#) released on March 2025

<sup>83</sup> Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. (2024). [Australia's emissions projections 2024](#)

<sup>84</sup> iMove. (2023). [Prospects for decarbonising freight transport in Australia](#)

<sup>85</sup> National Transport Commission. (2023). [Electric bus evaluation](#)



The increased use of high-productivity vehicles in the road transport sector is seen as an important component of a decarbonisation strategy.<sup>86</sup> Replacing high frequency trips of smaller vehicles with less trips using larger combination vehicles can make valuable contributions to carbon emission reductions. A growing number of enterprises have integrated zero emission vehicles into their operations, particularly in the passenger transport and last mile delivery sectors. The use of these vehicles will continue to expand as technology evolves, supporting infrastructure is built and confidence in the suitability of zero emission vehicles and alternative fuels for longer transport applications grows.

Employers have told ISA the continued development and transition to zero emission and alternative fuel-driven vehicles will necessitate new training needs within the industry and adjacent sectors (engineering and mechanical trades). Further analysis can seek to determine the new or changing skills required in the operation and maintenance of these vehicles to better prepare now for the skills the workforce will need. Employers want this preparation now to support the proper maintenance of existing transport modes through this transition.

There will also be opportunities for collaboration with other Jobs and Skills Councils such as the Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance and Powering Skills Organisation, to ascertain areas where training development may be relevant across the sectors and to assist in the development of suitably qualified maintenance and first responder staff to support industry's transition to zero emission vehicles.

The growing importance of and regulatory requirements for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting is becoming a key focus for enterprises operating in the Supply Chain.<sup>87</sup> The requirement to measure and disclose ESG metrics to remain competitive and transparent, can prove a challenge for particularly small to medium enterprises who may not have the resources, skills or systems to enable this. Clear guidance and supports will be required to enable enterprises to incorporate consistent ESG reporting into their operations.

### Proposed Actions:

- Digital skills

### Actions Underway:

- Omnichannel Logistics Skills Gap Analysis

### Future Research and Consultation:

- Transition to net zero
- Automated technologies
- Digital transformation
- Port operations

<sup>86</sup> NatRoad. (2024). [Submission to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water - Inquiry into the transition to electric vehicles](#)

<sup>87</sup> Australian Government Business. [Use environmental, social and governance \(ESG\) practices in your business](#)



## Proposed Actions

The 2025 Workforce Plan identifies the following proposed actions developed in consultation with industry to address the sector-specific and cross-sector issues.

Table 4: Proposed Actions to Address Challenges and Drivers

School to Work Pathway Pilot		
Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Action/Strategy	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> A. Industry struggles to attract and retain workers</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Under attractive occupations</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> Pilot an attraction and training program for secondary schools to create a sustainable pathway to the T&amp;L industry</p> <p><b>Components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with secondary schools and industry employers to provide support in setting up T&amp;L pathways in schools.</li> <li>consult with employers to identify appropriate qualifications for entry to industry</li> <li>develop supporting training materials for VET in Schools delivery</li> <li>develop career pathway resources for the schools to use</li> <li>cultivate connection between schools and industry employers for work experience, site visits, guest speaking opportunities and work placements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact:</b> Increase in students studying T&amp;L qualifications in a secondary school environment and subsequently taking up careers in T&amp;L. Evidence for a sustainable model that can be rolled out nationally</p> <p><b>Anticipated Timing:</b> May 2025 to Feb 2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary schools</li> <li>Registered Training Organisations</li> <li>Industry enterprises</li> <li>Industry peak bodies/associations</li> <li>Industry unions</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> </ul>



## Skilling Heavy Vehicle Drivers and Licensing Update

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Action/Strategy	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> B. Heavy vehicle driver shortages persist</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Occupational shortage</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> Review and update the current heavy vehicle licensing and vocational units to align with training components provided by Austroads as part of reforms approved under the Review of the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework. It will also focus on the "Key Skills" identified by industry to bridge the gap for new heavy vehicle drivers and those who drive larger multi-combination vehicles.</p> <p><b>Components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Technical Committee (TC) will be formed comprising stakeholders with relevant heavy vehicle driver training expertise, expressions of interest will be communicated to invite interested stakeholders.</li> <li>This project will update relevant heavy vehicle driver licensing and vocational training products to support nationally consistent training across jurisdictions.</li> <li>Review existing and develop new training products to provide essential skills required by new heavy vehicle drivers and drivers of larger multi-combination vehicles in addition to a licence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact:</b> Nationally accredited training products that align with the approved reforms to the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework for a nationally harmonised approach to heavy vehicle licensing and training. Training to bridge the gaps between licensing and employment for new drivers and to support upskilling of drivers operating larger multi-combination vehicles.</p> <p><b>Anticipated Timing:</b> May 2025 to Jun 2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Austroads</li> <li>State/Territory licensing regulators</li> <li>Industry peak bodies/associations</li> <li>Industry road transport enterprises from both passenger and freight sectors</li> <li>Industry unions</li> <li>Registered Training Organisations</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>Department of Defence</li> <li>Other relevant Jobs and Skills Councils</li> </ul>

## Addressing Heavy Vehicle Driver Shortages

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Action/Strategy	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> B. Heavy vehicle driver shortages persist</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Occupational shortage</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> This project will develop a National Heavy Vehicle Driver Action Plan in consultation with industry, to clearly articulate actions and responsibilities required to address critical heavy vehicle driver shortages.</p> <p><b>Components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form a Steering Committee comprised of key industry stakeholders to inform resource development.</li> <li>Development of a National Heavy Vehicle Driver Action Plan in consultation with industry.</li> <li>Provide details of ISA's program of work, existing industry initiatives, recommendations for future activity and required Government intervention.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact:</b> A clear direction for a collaborative and coordinated approach for strategies to address heavy vehicle driver shortages.</p> <p><b>Anticipated Timing:</b> Apr 2025 to Nov 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry peak bodies and associations</li> <li>State/territory licensing regulators</li> <li>Industry enterprises</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>Workforce support organisations</li> <li>Industry unions</li> <li>Registered training organisations</li> </ul>



## Livestock Transport Training Development

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Action/Strategy	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> D. Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> This project will determine the skills and knowledge required by livestock transport drivers to provide a benchmark for nationally consistent training and industry best practice through developing a new skill set</p> <p><b>Components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a skill set to provide the skills and knowledge required by livestock transport drivers including units of competency identified as relevant by industry experts.</li> <li>• Broad consultation through webinars, face to face workshops and stakeholder surveys.</li> <li>• Research and analysis of industry reports, standards, codes of practice, regulation; as well as current and aspirational industry practices.</li> <li>• Recommendations for phase two of the project which will support training implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact:</b> A nationally consistent training pathway for livestock transport heavy vehicle drivers.</p> <p><b>Anticipated Timing:</b> May 2025 to Apr 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association</li> <li>• State/territory based livestock associations</li> <li>• Livestock transport enterprises</li> <li>• Industry unions</li> <li>• National Heavy Vehicle Regulator</li> <li>• Registered training organisations</li> <li>• State/territory training authorities</li> <li>• State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>• Other relevant Jobs and Skills Councils</li> </ul>

## Review of Dangerous Goods Driver Training

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Action/Strategy	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> D. Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> To improve training for better alignment with the actions and behaviours required to ensure the safety of a dangerous goods (DG) driver and that relevant training is developed to allow an easy transition to the new Australian Dangerous Goods (ADG) code when it comes into force.</p> <p><b>Components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update the unit of competency - TLILIC0001 - Licence to transport dangerous goods by road.</li> <li>• It will also review associated DG training products to ensure relevancy is maintained in line with the update to the licensing unit.</li> <li>• The Mandatory Assessment Instrument (MAI) Working Group has been approved by the Competent Authorities Panel (CAP) to develop a revised MAI for DG driver training, to ensure it includes all the behaviours and tasks DG drivers should be able to demonstrate. This will inform updates to the licensing unit and other training products.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact:</b> A nationally consistent training pathway for DG drivers that will facilitate a smooth transition to the new ADG code ensuring compliance and reducing the risk of accidents.</p> <p><b>Anticipated Timing:</b> May 2025 to Sep 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competent Authorities Panel (CAP) / MAI Working Group</li> <li>• National Transport Commission</li> <li>• Dangerous Goods transport enterprises</li> <li>• Industry peak bodies and associations</li> <li>• Industry unions</li> <li>• Registered training organisations</li> <li>• State/territory training authorities</li> <li>• State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>• Other relevant Jobs and Skills Councils</li> <li>• Department of Defence</li> <li>• Other relevant Jobs and Skills Councils</li> </ul>





## Digital skills

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Action/Strategy	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key challenge/driver</b> E. <u>New skills needed for emerging technologies</u></p> <p><b>Symptom:</b> Skills Shortage</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> Analyse and review DigComp for use in Australian VET sector. Develop tools for use and undertake a review of occupations in using tools.</p> <p><b>Components:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse and review DigComp for use in Australian VET sector</li> <li>Develop tools like the Australian Digital Capability Framework's Digital Occupational Profile which can inform Training Product Design, training delivery and support a systematic approach to the analysis of skills supply and demand.</li> <li>Undertake a review of occupations in using tools/templates</li> <li>Undertake further DOP work on more occupations in our industries.</li> <li>Coordinate a strategic review across our training packages with respect to the impact of digital transformation using the ESCO to compare to Australian Digital Skills from the completed DOPs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training qualifications and units that facilitate improved training and assessment of transferrable digital skills that match industry requirements.</li> <li>Impact of training product development/maintenance work provides maximum benefit for industry, whilst minimising the impact of training product churn for RTOs</li> </ul> <p><b>Anticipated Timing:</b> 2025 - 2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry leaders</li> <li>Industry peaks</li> <li>JSCs</li> </ul>

## Actions Underway

The following provides an update on ongoing actions aimed at addressing the challenges identified in the 2024 Workforce Plan, many of which remain relevant in 2025.

VET Workforce Project		
Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> C. <u>Limited access to industry relevant training hinders skills development</u></p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Occupational shortage</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b> The VET Workforce Project is a Commonwealth funded initiative being led by the ten Job and Skills Councils with the aim to build and support a secure and sustainable VET workforce.</p> <p>The Australian Government, in collaboration with Jobs and Skills Australia has developed a VET Workforce Blueprint (<a href="#">the Blueprint</a>) to support a high quality and sustainable workforce. The VET Workforce Blueprint has been developed in collaboration with states and territories to provide a roadmap to grow, support and sustain the VET workforce.</p> <p>To continue and further support the work VET Workforce Blueprint, Industry Skills Australia is undertaking a project that will concentrate on vocational education providers in the transport sectors (Aviation, Maritime, Rail and Transport and Logistics) to complement and contribute to the opportunities and actions included in the Blueprint.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b> ISA will deliver a workforce study comprising the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the VET Workforce</li> <li>VET workforce roles and needs</li> <li>VET workforce pathways and pipelines</li> <li>Future and emerging VET Workforce Issues</li> </ul> <p>For further details visit the <a href="#">ISA Website</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered training organisations</li> <li>Training regulators</li> <li>Australian Education Union</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>Industry enterprises</li> <li>Industry peak bodies/associations</li> <li>Jobs and Skills Australia</li> <li>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</li> </ul>

Furniture Removal		
Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> D. <u>Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors</u></p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b> This project is reviewing the training for furniture removalists to ensure relevance to current industry practices.</p> <p><b>Impact</b> This project will enable greater access to training and a learning pathway for furniture removal workers to gain accredited qualifications with skills that are highly transferable to a range of vocations across Supply Chain sectors.</p> <p>For further details visit the <a href="#">ISA Website</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry Association: Australian Furniture Removers Association</li> <li>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</li> <li>Industry unions</li> <li>Furniture removal enterprises</li> <li>Registered training organisations</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> </ul>



Improving T&L Career Information		
Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b>  <u>A. Industry struggles to attract and retain workers</u>  <u>B. Heavy vehicle driver shortages persist</u></p> <p><b>Symptom</b>                      Under attractive occupations</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b>                      The Career Information project will develop information about T&amp;L careers and learning pathways to attract new workers to the industry and improve worker retention.</p> <p><b>Impact</b>                      It will achieve a range of benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raising awareness of careers in the T&amp;L industry</li> <li>supplying simplified details on pathways, training, skills and knowledge requirements for employment</li> <li>showcasing industry's potential for innovation and progression</li> <li>providing guidance on career development and growth</li> <li>attracting a broader and more diverse talent pool to the T&amp;L sector</li> <li>combating negative industry perceptions and misconceptions about available roles.</li> </ul> <p>For further details visit the <a href="#">ISA Website</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>T&amp;L Strategic Workforce Planning Committee</li> <li>State and territory licensing authorities</li> <li>National Careers Institute</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>Registered training organisations</li> <li>Industry Enterprises</li> <li>Industry peak bodies/ associations</li> <li>Industry Unions</li> <li>Schools</li> <li>First Nations groups</li> <li>Disability advocacy groups</li> <li>Employment service providers</li> </ul>

Motor Vehicle Driver Training		
Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b>  <u>D. Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors</u></p> <p><b>Symptom</b>                      Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b>                      The role of the professional driver trainer is to educate learner drivers on the knowledge, attitude, and skills for the efficient and safe operation of a motor vehicle on our public roads. The project is updating the Qualification used by the professional driver trainers.</p> <p><b>Impact</b>                      This role is already in high demand especially with the proposed licensing reforms being developed under the Review of the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework. Driver trainers will be able to use an updated qualification that includes the minimum training requirements for driver training and a focus on training and assessment standards.</p> <p>For further details visit the <a href="#">ISA Website</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</li> <li>Industry Association – Australian Driver Trainers Association</li> <li>State and territory licensing authorities</li> <li>Industry enterprises</li> <li>Industry unions</li> <li>Registered training organisations</li> <li>State/territory training authorities</li> <li>State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> </ul>

Qualification Reform - Purpose Categorisation		
Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b>  <u>C. Limited access to industry relevant training hinders skills development</u></p> <p><b>Symptom</b>                      Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b>                      The purpose of this project was to explore opportunities and implications for the industry arising from the Qualification Reform agenda.</p> <p>Using first principles and existing Training Package Organising Templates, ISA developed a demonstration qualification that would cover employers' minimum requirements for a person to commence work in the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forklift driver (T&amp;L)</li> <li>Baggage Handler (Aviation)</li> <li>Track Worker (Rail)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Deliverables:</b>                      The project deliverables were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>two qualifications, a sample of core and specialist elective units and four sample Skill Sets, aligned to the proposed concept,</li> <li>a companion volume that expands on what is currently commonplace to facilitate implementation of products across multiple occupational contexts and better support the quality of training and assessment design, delivery, and outcomes.</li> <li>a project report that details:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the process undertaken, options considered, and justification for decisions taken</li> <li>implications for different stakeholder groups and the broader TLI Training Package</li> <li>possible barriers and/or risks for implementation, and recommendations for mitigation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps:</b>                      Along with other Jobs and Skills Councils, ISA's Demonstration Project informed advice provided by the Qualification Reform Design Group for consideration by the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council. On 6 December 2024, Skills Ministers agreed to a new, purpose-based approach to VET qualifications design that is guided by design principles and will improve quality, simplify course designs and reduce complexity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry enterprises from the sectors to be included in the qualification</li> <li>Private, Public and Enterprise Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)</li> <li>Industry organisations, peak bodies and regulators</li> <li>Unions</li> <li>Qualification Reform Design Group</li> <li>State Training Authorities (STAs)</li> </ul>



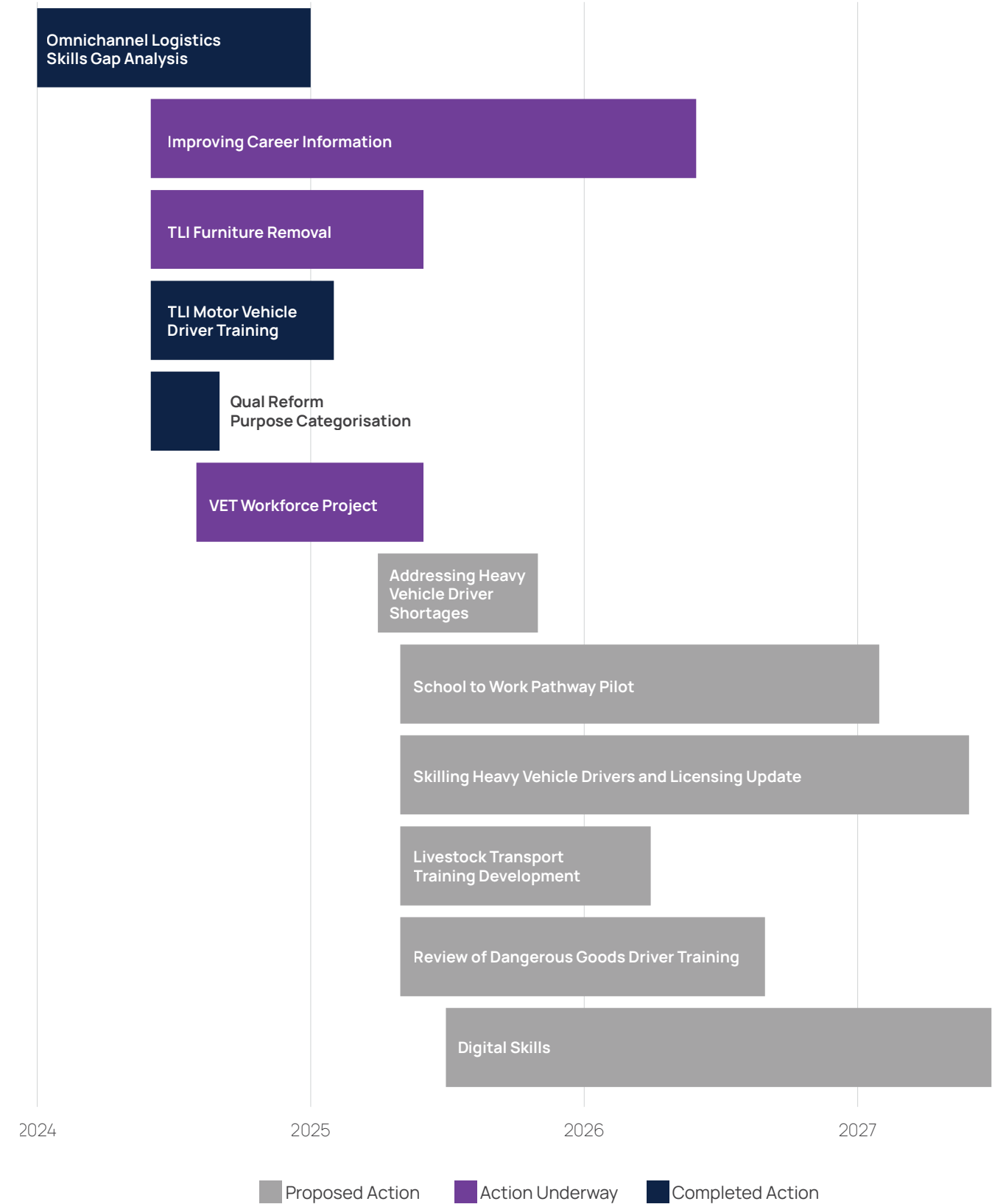
## Omnichannel Logistics Skills Gap Analysis

Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> E. New skills needed for emerging technologies</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b> The project was to identify potential changes to nationally endorsed training products related to the skills and knowledge required for omnichannel logistics.</p> <p>The project involved Australia-wide consultation and engagement and reviewed all parts of the supply chain from point of manufacturing or importation through to delivery to customer.</p> <p><b>Impact</b> Recommendations from the project are now being reviewed to consider the skill requirements for key existing roles within the T&amp;L industries impacted by omnichannel logistics. This includes exploring the need for developing new skill sets to support omnichannel logistics.</p> <p>For further details visit the <a href="#">ISA Website</a>.</p>	<p>Approximately 70 organisations were approached for interview including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry enterprises</li> <li>• Advocacy bodies</li> <li>• Registered training organisations</li> <li>• Industry unions</li> <li>• Researchers</li> </ul>

## Chain of Responsibility Training Updates

Labour Market Dynamics	Project Details	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>Key Challenge/Driver</b> D. Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors</p> <p><b>Symptom</b> Skills shortage</p>	<p><b>Summary:</b> This project updated two chain of responsibility units of competency and 11 qualifications to ensure they align with current regulatory requirements.</p> <p><b>Impact</b> The updated Units of Competency cover the skills and knowledge required by industry to ensure the safety of transport activities. This includes identifying and applying Chain of Responsibility obligations to operate legally in compliance with the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), impacting multiple job roles across the transport industry.</p> <p>For further details visit the <a href="#">ISA Website</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR)</li> <li>• Industry peak bodies/associations</li> <li>• Industry enterprises</li> <li>• Industry unions</li> <li>• Registered training organisations</li> <li>• State/territory training authorities</li> <li>• State/territory industry advisory bodies</li> <li>• Safe Work Australia</li> </ul>

## Timeline of Activities



DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



# Future Research and Consultation

Additional engagement, research and consultation activity has been identified to assist in the development of future strategies or initiatives to inform the 2026 Workforce Plan. These focus areas cover the key themes associated with our challenges and drivers and are not an exhaustive list as industry may raise additional issues as we work with them in 2025:

## A. Industry struggles to attract and retain workers

### Pre-vocational training program development

Consult with industry to determine essential skills required for employment in the road transport and warehousing sectors. Develop a pre-vocational training program with skill sets delivering training in these core skills for direct entry in the T&L industry.

### Skilled migration

Advocate for the inclusion of T&L occupations experiencing shortages in the Skilled Occupation List. Identify options for industry to utilise skilled migration opportunities to address workforce shortages, including Labour Agreements, Designated Area Migration Agreements and other temporary or permanent skilled work visas options under the Migration Strategy.

### Increasing industry diversity

Identify barriers to T&L workforce participation for under-represented cohorts. Engage with industry and relevant support organisations to determine potential strategies to assist in connection to employment.

## B. Heavy vehicle driver shortages persist

### Passenger transport driver training

Review the Certificate III in Driving Operations qualification to create a training pathway that is relevant for drivers of passenger transport vehicles and aligns with reforms to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards).

### Training to support international heavy vehicle drivers

Develop resources to support international heavy vehicle drivers into industry and which will help build their skills and knowledge on Australian Heavy Vehicle National Law or other state/territory regulatory requirements, transport terminology, safety culture and how the industry operates in Australia. This could also include cultural competency resources for employers to support the integration of migrant workers into the workforce.

## C. Limited access to industry relevant training hinders skills development

### VET Reforms

Ongoing engagement and support will be required to progress and implement priorities set out as part of the National Skills Reform agenda.

### Improving regional training delivery

Engage with regional stakeholders to explore and develop strategies to address the limited access to T&L training in regional areas.

## D. Skills gaps in specialised roles/sectors

### Specialist compliance training development

Consult with industry and regulators to verify the skills and knowledge required for specific compliance tasks and develop specialist training to provide a nationally consistent learning pathway for compliance personnel engaged in T&L enterprises.

### Crane licensing reforms

Update relevant crane licensing and operational training products to align with changes the crane licensing system as determined by Safe Work Australia's review of the high-risk work licence framework.

### Transport management training

Consult with industry to identify key skills required for transport leadership and management roles. Analyse existing available training products to determine if training product development is required for the provision of consistent pathways.

### Waste operations driver training

Review training for heavy vehicle drivers in the waste and recycling sector to assess relevance to current industry practice and alignment with the new Waste and Recycling Industry Code of Practice, along with other relevant state/territory requirements.

### Container transport

Review existing training products for the skilling of drivers in the operation of specialised equipment used to load and load containers on side loading vehicles. This could include developing guidance materials to support training delivery or industry best practice.

### Electric vehicle towing and recovery

Analyse existing standards and regulations around the towing and recovery of electric vehicles to inform development of training which supports best practice and compliance for operators in this sector.

### Oversize/Overmass (OSOM) transport

Review existing training products to determine if new products require development to support heavy vehicle drivers transporting OSOM loads.

### Transport scheduler training

Review current transport scheduler training to ensure products can be used to skill workers in scheduling and fleet allocation roles in multiple transport sectors.

## E. New skills needed for emerging technologies

### Transition to net zero

Ongoing consultation with industry stakeholders to determine the skill requirements associated with the implementation and adoption of zero emission vehicles and technologies. This will also be informed by the development of the Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan.

### Automated technologies

Identify new or updated skill requirements for sectors implementing automated vehicles, systems or equipment.

### Digital transformation

Ongoing monitoring of industry's current digital capabilities, areas which require upskilling and programs or initiatives that will assist in the digital transformation.

### Port operations

Assess skill requirements for port operations including specialised training to respond to technological advancements and offshore wind projects. Review existing Stevedoring qualifications to ensure relevancy.





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