



Industry Skills
Australia

2026 WORKFORCE PLANNING UPDATE



TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

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JSC Jobs and Skills Council
Transport and Logistics
An Australian Government Initiative



Acknowledgement of Country

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

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Disclaimer

We have taken great care in preparing this Workforce Planning Update. We aim to provide accurate and helpful information. However, we cannot guarantee that this document is completely error free. Industry Skills Australia Limited is not liable for any harm or loss that may arise from dependence on this information. We encourage readers to use this report as a guide and seek further advice where needed.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in a limited, supportive capacity during the preparation of this work. The purpose of their use was to enhance clarity and useability by refining text, summarising key information, analysing themes, and supporting the collection and transformation of data. AI was not used to generate images or replace original authorship or editorial judgement. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed and verified by the author, who retains full responsibility for the accuracy and final content of this publication.

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About ISA

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) is the Jobs and Skills Council for the Transport Supply Chain industries. These include Aviation, Maritime, Rail, Transport and Logistics, and the emerging sectors of Omnichannel Logistics and Distribution, and Air and Space Transport and Logistics.

ISA is owned and led by industry. Our goal is to build a world class workforce for Australia's Transport Supply Chain industries to boost productivity, create better jobs and build opportunities for individuals. Our 30-year history in the Transport Supply Chain industries supports us in researching workforce needs, promoting skills development and creating training products that meet industry priorities.

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank our stakeholders, including industry, union and government representatives, for sharing their expertise and advice to inform the development of the 2026 Workforce Planning Update.

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Foreword

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Executive Summary

The Transport and Logistics (T&L) industry is essential to Australia's economy, supporting businesses and communities nationwide. It comprises a diverse mix of enterprises across metropolitan, regional and remote areas, with activities spanning three main occupational areas: Road Transport, Logistics and Stevedoring.

The T&L industry employs more than 598,000 people, with the workforce projected to grow by 9.1% over the next decade¹.

The 2025 Workforce Plan identified **key challenges and drivers** that are impacting the T&L workforce. Further stakeholder consultation, research and analysis have confirmed the ongoing relevance of these issues for workforce planning. The key challenges and drivers point to four broad and interconnected priorities for the industry.

- 1 Access to a Skilled Workforce**
- 2 Availability of Training**
- 3 Preparedness for Change**
- 4 Skills for Specialist Roles**

Collaborative Action

Addressing the T&L industry's complex workforce challenges exceeds the remit and resources of any single stakeholder, making collaboration essential. The 2026 Workforce Planning Update highlights collaboration that is progressing shared priorities, this includes ISA-led actions and broader industry initiatives.

¹ Jobs and Skills Australia, *Employment Projections - May 2025 to May 2035*

	2025	2026	2027
1. Access to a skilled workforce			
Addressing Heavy Vehicle Driver Shortages	⚙️		
Improving T&L Career Information		⚙️	
Tasmanian T&L VET in Schools Pilot	⚙️		
Increasing Diversity across Transport Supply Chain Industries		⚙️	
Pre-vocational Supply Chain Ops Skill Set		⚙️	
Skilled Migration		🔗	
Training to Support International Heavy Vehicle Drivers		🔗	
🔗 National Transport Commission: Reforms to Heavy Vehicle National Law			
🔗 Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds			
🔗 Steering Healthy Minds			
🔗 National Transport Commission: Improving Health Screening for Heavy Vehicle Drivers			
2. Availability of training			
Motor Vehicle Driver Training	✓		
VET Workforce Project	⚙️		
Exploring the Use of Virtual Reality or Simulation in Training		🔗	
Improving Regional Training Delivery		🔗	
🔗 Austroads: Review of the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework			
3. Preparedness for change			
Digital Skills	⚙️		
Technology Futures Taskforce Phase 2 – Occupational Analysis		■ ■ ■ ■	
Transition to Net Zero		🔗	
Electric Vehicle Towing and Recovery		🔗	
Automated Technologies		🔗	
🔗 Australian Government: Transport Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan			
🔗 Infrastructure and Transport Ministers: 2024-27 National Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) Action Plan			
4. Skills for specialist roles			
Omnichannel Logistics Skills Gap Analysis	✓		
Furniture Removal	✓		
Skilling Heavy Vehicle Drivers and Licensing Update	⚙️		
Fatigue Management Update		⚙️	
Livestock Transport Training Development	⚙️		
Review of Dangerous Goods Driver Training	⚙️		
Review of the Diploma of Logistics		⚙️	
Stevedoring Workforce Analysis and Future Transformation Support		■ ■ ■ ■	
Heavy Vehicle Pilots and Escorts		■ ■ ■ ■	
Crane Licensing Training Update		■ ■ ■ ■	
Specialist Compliance Training Development		🔗	
Passenger Transport Driver Training		🔗	
Waste Operations Driver Training		🔗	
Container Transport		🔗	
Oversize/Overmass (OSOM) Transport		🔗	
Transport Scheduler Training		🔗	
🔗 National Transport Commission: Comprehensive Review of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code			
🔗 Safe Work Australia: Crane Licensing Review			
🔗 Infrastructure and Transport Ministers: National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy			

- Completed
✓
- Underway
⚙️
- Planned
■ ■ ■ ■
- Exploring
🔗
- Related initiatives
🔗

Industry Overview

About the Industry

The Transport and Logistics (T&L) industry underpins Australia's economic activity and community life by moving people, products and essential services across vast distances. It spans three occupational areas.



Road Transport – operating and coordinating road vehicles for freight and passengers.



Logistics – planning, coordinating and managing flows across modes, including warehousing, freight forwarding, mobile crane operations, inventory and demand/supply planning.



Stevedoring – loading/unloading vessel cargo and managing landside transfers within terminals.

Together these functions make T&L a critical infrastructure sector and an essential service for social and economic wellbeing. T&L enables Australia's food supply, transporting produce, livestock and manufactured food and beverages from farms and fisheries to consumers via distribution centres, saleyards, ports, retail outlets and other nodes in the supply chain.²

More than 598,000 people were employed across road transport, logistics and stevedoring in 2025, with workforce growth projected at 3.2% to May 2030 and 8.2% to May 2035³. This sustained growth reflects T&L's system-wide role. T&L supports every sector that depends on reliable freight and passenger movement, while also generating substantial economic value, including an estimated \$170 billion in revenue and a \$60.6 billion contribution to GDP in FY 2024/25⁴.

Operational roles skew older than the national median: Truck Drivers by around nine years and Bus Drivers by 19 years⁵. Women remain underrepresented in frontline

operations, accounting for only 6% of Truck Drivers and 4% of Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators⁶. Across the T&L industry female participation has risen from 16.3% of operational workers in 2005⁷ to 20.2% in 2025, with stronger representation in administrative roles such as Purchasing/Supply Logistics Clerks (45%) and Transport/ Despatch Clerks (35%)⁸.

Infrastructure capacity and network design are pivotal to industry operations. Vessel sizes and container throughput are rising faster than port upgrades, creating pinch points where quay and landside interfaces struggle to keep pace.⁹ The development of intermodal (inland) ports is a practical system-level response that enables the transfer of discharged containers away from constrained waterfronts. Australia has 37 intermodal facilities currently in the development pipeline (29 proposed and 8 under construction)¹⁰. Intermodals relieve berth/wharf congestion, improve truck turn-around and reduce road bottlenecks around port precincts.¹¹

² Jobs and Skills Australia, *An essential ingredient - The food supply chain workforce*, January 2025.

³ Jobs and Skills Australia, *Employment Projections - May 2025 to May 2035*.

⁴ IBISWorld Industry Wizard, February 2026).

⁵ Jobs and Skills Australia, *Occupation profiles data - November 2025*.

⁶ Jobs and Skills Australia, *Occupation profiles data - November 2025*.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Survey*, Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job, Nov. 2025 (annual average of original data).

⁸ Jobs and Skills Australia, *Occupation profiles data - November 2025*.

⁹ Infrastructure Australia, *East coast deep water container port capacity*, Australian Government, n.d.

¹⁰ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, *Australian Intermodal Terminals Map App*, Australian Government, 2026.

¹¹ Australasian Supply Chain and Logistics Association, *Is Port Congestion Back? What's Different This Time?*, ASCLA website, October 9 2025.



NUMBER OF T&L INDUSTRY BUSINESSES

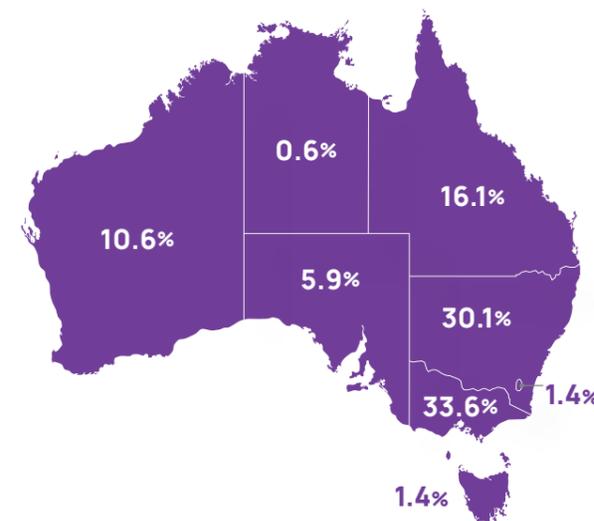
231,327

200+ employees	20-199 employees	0-19 employees
166	1,899	229,262

GDP CONTRIBUTION 2024-2025

\$60.6B

BUSINESS DISTRIBUTION BY STATE %



MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP

8%



COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ON AUSTRALIAN ROADS IN 2025

5 MILLION



AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS MAKING AN ONLINE PURCHASE IN 2024

9.8M



ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE

2024-25

\$170B



WORKFORCE IN T&L COMPANIES

598,072 (2025)

616,985 (2030)

Link to ISA Data Dashboard



Refer to page 45 for sources



Impact of Global Megatrends

Megatrends are major long-term shifts that reshape the economy, workforce and global environment. They influence how industries operate, innovate and plan for the future. Six global megatrends are having significant and enduring impacts across industry and society.

For the Australian T&L industry, these megatrends have implications for future workforce skill requirements.

Demographic Shifts

Demographic shifts are reshaping the structure, stability and capability of Australia's T&L workforce. An ageing population and declining birth rates are reducing natural workforce growth, with labour shortages persisting despite population growth through migration. This is intensifying long-standing skill shortages across operational roles, especially in regional and remote areas, directly affecting freight reliability. As older workers approach retirement, the industry risks losing deep operational knowledge faster than it can be replaced. Succession planning is proving to be a major challenge for many operators.

Demographic shifts are also changing worker expectations, employment models and industry entry pathways. Younger cohorts are less likely to remain in a single job or industry, increasing turnover and weakening long-term progression pipelines. A more transient workforce disrupts traditional skill development pathways, such as apprenticeships and traineeships, while rising diversity requires more sophisticated leadership skills and attention to workplace culture to support attraction and retention. The rise of sham contracting, linked in part to vulnerable, low-skilled or visa-dependent workers, further alters workforce composition and can erode industry standards. Together, these shifts point to a need for redesigned entry pathways, inclusive workplace practices and targeted workforce development strategies to maintain a resilient and sustainable T&L workforce.

Infrastructure Demand

Population growth and the transition to renewable energy are accelerating demand for new and upgraded infrastructure across Australia. These expansions are putting new pressures on the T&L workforce to support the safe movement of large-scale consignments, such as imported wind turbine components. Infrastructure Australia is scoping renewable energy zones where clusters of large-scale renewable energy projects can be developed using economies of scale.¹² These developments, predominantly in regional areas, will bring new operational roles and short-term surge workforces. Specialised skills will be required for safely transporting oversize/overmass (OSOM) loads, coordinating multimodal freight movements and navigating complex road networks.

Many regional freight routes have inadequate infrastructure quality which further increases complexity of OSOM transport activities. The movement of oversized and heavy components demands workers who can manage route constraints, road and bridge capacity and the regulatory processes tied to permits and escorted transport operations. Incidents such as improper load securing underscore gaps in capability and the need for updated competencies as equipment and technologies evolve. Industry stakeholders have flagged the need for specialised OSOM transport capability, pilot and escort driver training, reflecting the increased complexity of freight movements linked to major infrastructure development.

Technological Change

Technological change is impacting jobs roles and capability requirements in the T&L workforce, but the effect is uneven across the industry and technology uptake is generally slower among the small and frontline operators that comprise approximately 70% of T&L operations. Some organisations are modernising operations through automation and AI-driven systems that streamline processes, boost productivity and disrupt traditional business models. In customs broking and freight forwarding, predictive analytics and automated decision making are increasing efficiency and reducing costs, while AI tools help road transport operators adapt to real-time conditions like traffic, weather and road closures to minimise delays.

New warehousing facilities are designed for automation and 4PL providers are offering an increasing range of services to their clients beyond picking and packing. End-to-end supply chain solutions leverage advanced analytics and digital technologies but also require warehouse supervisors and frontline staff with increasingly sophisticated skills. The automation of stevedoring operations in some locations is shifting the workforce composition from manual roles toward technical and supervisory positions. This shift requires strategic planning for workforce reduction, retraining and role redefinition.

For road transport operators, predictive analytics can anticipate maintenance needs and minimise vehicle downtime. Digital tools are also available to support fatigue management and quality assurance. The availability of these tools provides an opportunity for the regulator to improve monitoring of heavy vehicle safety but additional compliance requirements may require greater levels of digital literacy among drivers. However, adoption of these technologies is likely to be more challenging for operators where the uptake of digital infrastructure is lagging, including in regional areas and in smaller businesses.

Energy Transition

Global movement towards net zero emissions is driving a shift to cleaner transport technologies. Freight and passenger operators are beginning to adopt electric vehicles and low-carbon fuel, but the transition is uneven across the industry. Alternative energy sources are not yet viable for all vehicle types and operational contexts. New charging and refuelling infrastructure will be required to support wider uptake across the T&L industry and some operators have indicated that they will need government support to assist with the transition to low carbon vehicles.¹³

Implementation will progress more slowly in regional areas due to the need for new charging and refuelling infrastructure to support the uptake of electric and hydrogen vehicles. Access to qualified maintenance technicians will also be more difficult, as regional communities are already experiencing significant shortages of diesel mechanics and related specialist skills.

The shift to new fuel technologies is not expected to change core driving skills, but drivers will need to become familiar with the new technologies and learn how to operate them safely.¹⁴ Updated safety and response protocols for electric vehicle recovery and towing will also impact skill requirements for tow and salvage operators.¹⁵

Climate Impacts

Climate impacts are putting increasing pressure on Australia's T&L industry, with more frequent and severe extreme weather events disrupting logistics, scheduling and route planning. These events are felt more intensely in remote First Nations communities, where limited storage, seasonal isolation and few alternative transport routes heighten vulnerability to supply chain disruptions.¹⁶ As floods, fires and heatwaves become more common, the workforce will need stronger resilience skills, including skills in emergency freight management and heat-impact mitigation. Greater government and community recognition is needed for the critical role the T&L industry plays in national preparedness, response and recovery during climate-related events.

Geopolitical Instability

Conflict, trade tensions and political volatility are reshaping the global environment, creating uncertainty for supply chains, market confidence and investment flows. These pressures affect both government and industry, with potential implications for major contracts, market demand and access to global supply networks. The private sector is also an important partner and support for Defence logistics planning.

Regional ports and intermodal hubs are particularly impacted by volatile global conditions and may need workforce expansion or reskilling as supply chains are forced to adapt or reroute. For the T&L workforce, this instability may intensify competition for skilled workers and increase demand for strong logistics, leadership and strategic capabilities as organisations adapt to rapidly shifting global conditions. This is illustrated by strong current demand for logistics planners and business skills in scenario modelling, especially in regions that are heavily reliant on a single export commodity.

¹² Infrastructure Australia, [National Electricity Market: Renewable Energy Zone expansions](#), Infrastructure Priority List, Australian Government, n.d.

¹³ AECOM, [Electrifying Road Freight: Pathways to Transition](#) [PDF], Prepared for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, n.d., p.13.

¹⁴ Jobs and Skills Australia, [The Clean Energy Generation](#), Australian Government, 3 October 2023, p.189.

¹⁵ Austroads, [Incident Response for Low and Zero Emission Vehicles](#), p.84.

¹⁶ Infrastructure and Transport Ministers. (2025). [National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy](#). Page 27.

Impact of Regional Issues

The T&L industry is a vital **enabler of regional economic activity and community resilience** and a significant local employer. Across both city and regional areas, employment across the three largest transport and logistics occupations shows steady long-term growth (**Figure 1**), with major cities experiencing stronger gains, particularly among storepersons and logistics clerks, while regional areas remain highly dependent on truck drivers, whose employment has been broadly stable but has declined slightly over the past decade (-2.8%).

Figure 1 T&L Occupation Trends, City vs Regional

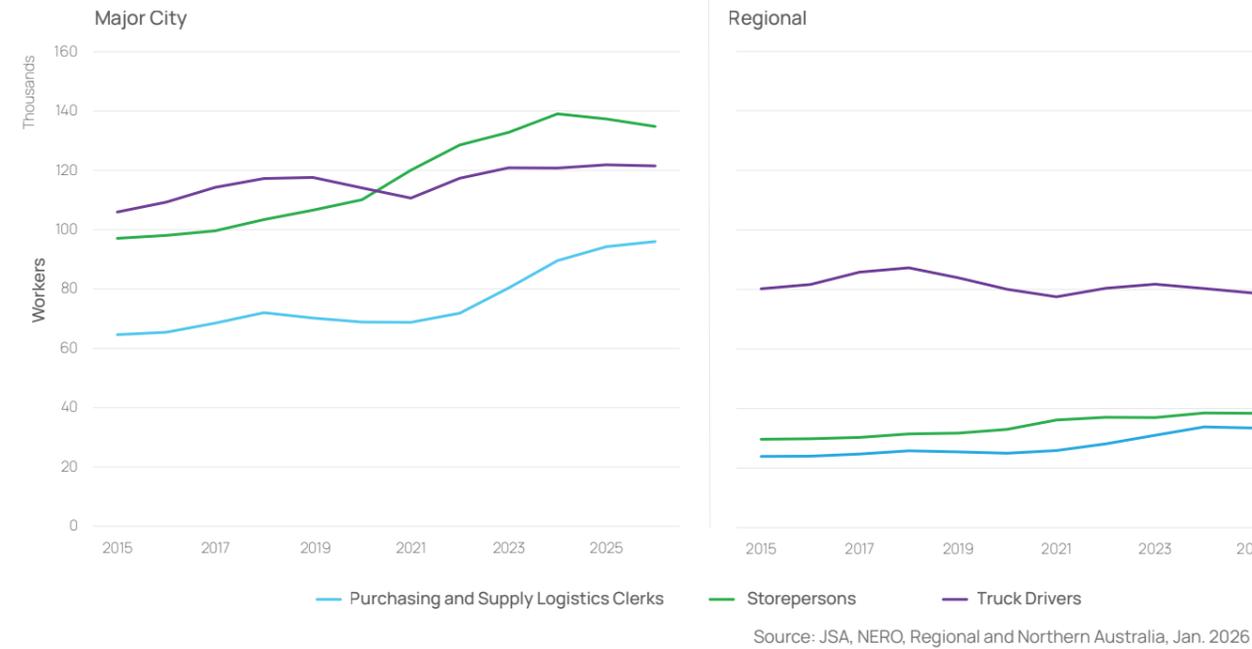


Table 1: Top Regions by Truck Driver Employment (2025)

Jurisdiction	Region	Workers
QLD	Gold Coast	4375
NSW	Hunter Valley excluding Newcastle	3352
QLD	Wide Bay	2900
VIC	Latrobe - Gippsland	2814
WA	Western Australia - Wheat Belt	2712
QLD	Central Queensland	2586
WA	Bunbury	2505
WA	Western Australia - Outback (South)	2335
NSW	New England and North West	2259
QLD	Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday	2150

While each region of Australia is unique, several cross-cutting workforce challenges impact the T&L industry in regional and remote areas.

- **Increasing demand for T&L workers** – Regional population growth and infrastructure developments are increasing demand for T&L workers in regional areas. The development of intermodal hubs drives regional economic growth by better connecting regional producers to national and global markets. These developments create jobs in warehousing, scheduling, maintenance and first- and last- mile operations. Investment in renewable infrastructure will increase demand for skilled heavy vehicle drivers, accompanying pilots/escorts and logistics specialists to support large clean energy infrastructure assets.

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- **Limited labour pool** – Industry workforce issues, such as an ageing population, are magnified in regional areas where skill shortages are more pronounced. Regional employers report difficulty attracting and retaining workers for key T&L occupations, including heavy vehicle drivers. Regional workers are also more likely to require upskilling in technical and digital skills, and those who relocate from a regional area to pursue training or initial career entry often don't return.
- **Limited cross-sector mobility** – Many regional workers are drawn to the Mining sector, where higher wages and more attractive conditions are often available. Attracting Mining workers into the T&L industry is hampered by more than pay and conditions. To work in T&L, experienced mining truck drivers may need to obtain new classes of heavy vehicle licences, complete fatigue management training and/or medical assessments. These requirements create additional cost and administrative barriers for workers and employers.
- **Housing shortages** – Many regions have severe housing shortages making it impossible to accommodate relocating workers and their families. For example, Cairns and surrounding areas have experienced near zero rental accommodation rates. Some regions lack safe and secure housing for staff.
- **Lack of services and amenities** – Limited childcare, poor digital connectivity, inadequate roads and lack of public transport hinder workforce participation and deter potential workers from relocating to regional areas. Access to healthcare can be limited with long wait times for doctor visits and lengthy travel required for specialist consultations and treatment. Some regional areas have fly-in fly-out (FIFO) arrangements for health professionals such as optometrists and other medical specialists. Delayed access to medical specialists can prevent bus and truck drivers from working while their required health checks are finalised. Recruitment for T&L roles that require shiftwork can be restricted by the limited availability of transport and childcare outside regular working hours.
- **Social deterrents** – In some regions, passenger transport is a target for vandalism. Anti-social behaviour by passengers results in high staff turnover for transport operators.
- **Limited training availability** – Many regions lack sector specific training opportunities, requiring workers to travel long distances to participate in training – significantly increasing costs. A shortage of trainers and assessors limits training provision and causes course cancellations, particularly in regional NT where safety concerns are an additional deterrent for visiting or relocating trainers. Poor internet access and limited public transport in regional areas impacts participation in both online and face-to-face training options.

Occupational Snapshot

Link to ISA
Data Dashboard



OCCUPATIONS IN SHORTAGE

Articulated
Truck Driver



Bus Driver



Charter and
Tour Bus Driver



Crane, Hoist or
Lift Operator



Transport
Engineer



Truck Driver
(General)



HIGHEST MEDIAN AGE
Bus and Coach Drivers
58 YEARS OLD

PART-TIME

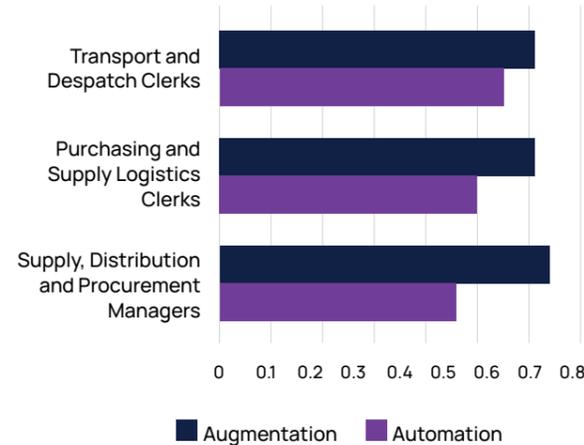


ONLINE JOB
AD GROWTH
2020-2025

67%



AI AUTOMATION/AUGMENTATION EXPOSURE



WORKERS IN T&L ROLES (2025)

974,360



WORKERS IN T&L ROLES (2030)

1,017,760

LOWEST VACANCY RATE (%)

Automobile Drivers

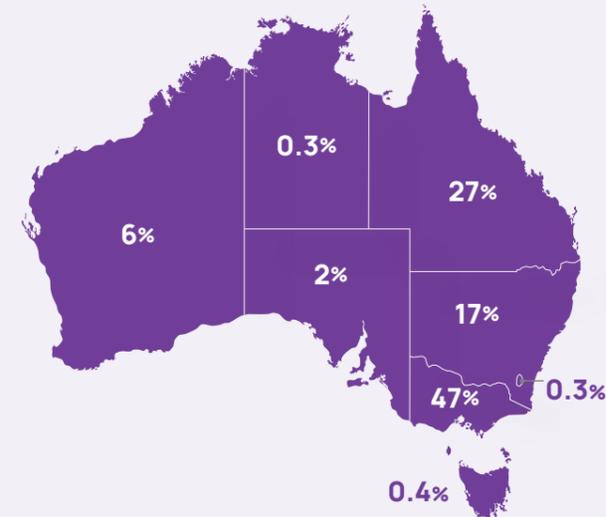
0.1%

Training Highlights

Link to ISA
Data Dashboard



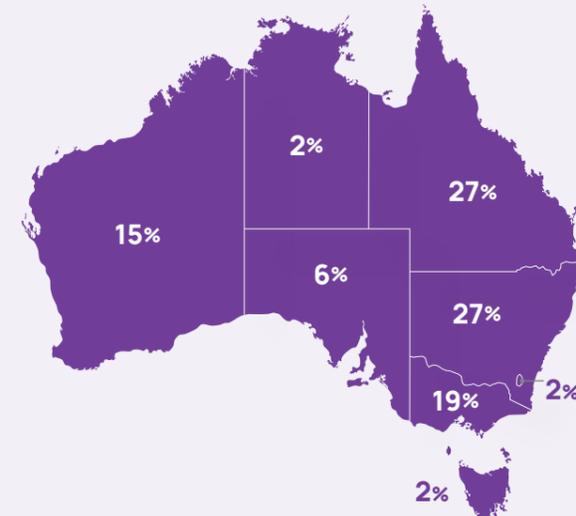
QUALIFICATION ENROLMENTS BY STATE%



TOTAL QUALIFICATION ENROLMENTS 2024

21,807

RTO MAP (EXPLICIT SCOPE)



APPRENTICESHIPS/
TRAINEESHIPS
(% of T&L enrolments)

23%

RTOs WITH SCOPE TO
DELIVER T&L QUALS

186

TRAINING PACKAGE SUMMARY



25 qualifications
54 Skill Sets
417 Units of Competency

PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING



Female
17.2%



First Nations
5.3%



Disability
3.1%

TOP 5 QUALIFICATIONS BY ENROLMENTS (2024)

Cert III in Driving Operations	8,890
Cert III in Supply Chain Operations	7,192
Cert II in Supply Chain Operations	2,826
Cert IV in Motor Vehicle Driver Training	1,124
Cert IV in Supply Chain Operations	455

VETiS STUDENT COUNT

1,564



HIGHEST GRADUATE
EMPLOYMENT RATE
(2020/2021)

Dip of Logistics **98%**

HIGHER EDUCATION
ENROLMENTS (2023)

2,321

Refer to page 45 for sources

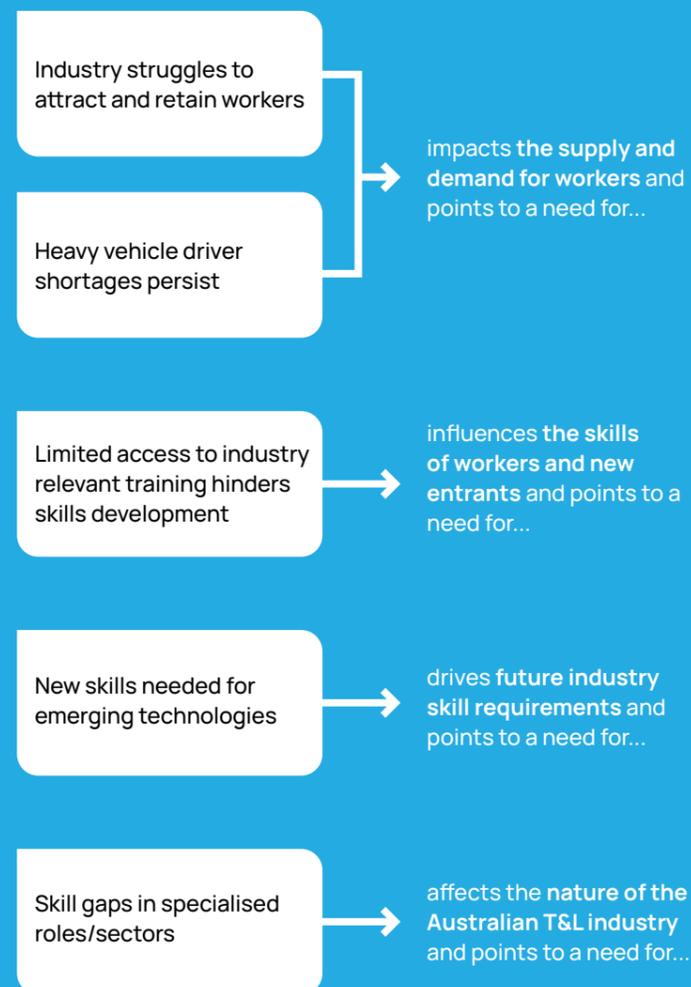
Refer to page 45 for sources

Progress on Industry Priorities

The 2025 Workforce Plan identified **key challenges and drivers** that are impacting the T&L workforce. Further stakeholder consultation, research and analysis have confirmed the ongoing relevance of these issues for workforce planning.

Key challenges and drivers influence workforce requirements in four broad and interconnected ways.

Key Challenges and Drivers identified in 2025 Workforce Plan



Industry Priorities for Workforce Planning and Development

1 Access to a Skilled Workforce

2 Availability of Training

3 Preparedness for Change

4 Skills for Specialist Roles

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1

Access to a Skilled Workforce

The 2025 Workforce Plan reported that the T&L industry struggles to attract and retain workers and that heavy vehicle driver shortages persist.

Occupational Shortages

T&L industry stakeholders report that **ongoing shortages in key occupations** are impacting industry operations and, in some instances, contributing to a decline in standards.¹⁷ Severe shortages of heavy vehicle drivers in passenger and freight transport sectors are a perennial problem. In addition to the shortages identified on Jobs and Skills Australia's Occupational Shortage List, industry stakeholders report that they are experiencing shortages in a range of operational roles including freight handlers and licensed customs brokers. These experiences may represent regional differences or niche roles that have not been picked up by the JSA data collection.



Occupation Title	AUS	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Articulated Truck Driver	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Bus Driver	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Charter and Tour Bus Driver	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Fleet Manager	NS	NS	NS	S	NS	NS	NS	NS	S
Transport Company Manager	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	S
Transport Engineer	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Truck Driver (General)	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S

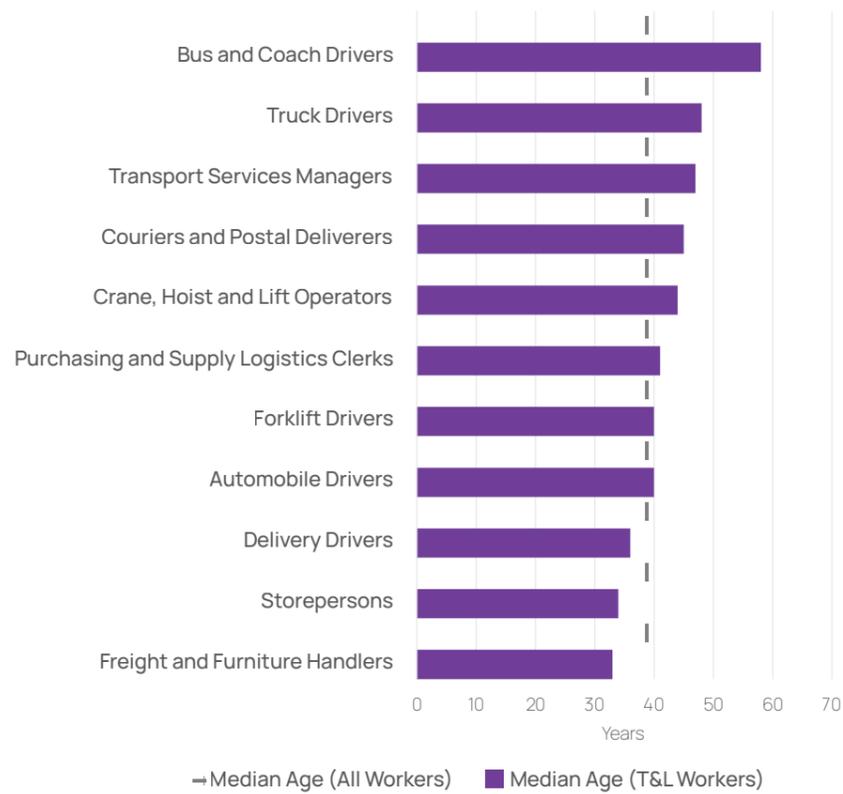
Source: Occupational Shortage List (February 2026)
S = Shortage, R = Regional Shortage, NS = No Shortage

An **ageing workforce**, particularly in truck driver, bus driver and customs broker occupations is a critical concern for industry operators. As older workers approach retirement, the industry is losing deep operational knowledge and experience faster than it can be replaced, largely due to limited succession planning and inadequate support for internal career progression. Gaps in frontline leadership and supervisory capability are affecting safety, compliance and workforce retention as new entrants take up roles that previously relied on mentoring and guidance from experienced workers. Industry stakeholders and advocacy groups have called on government to raise income thresholds for pensioners to enable them to work more without reducing their pension or facing burdensome reporting.



¹⁷ Road Freight NSW, Road Freight NSW and Wester Roads Federation Joint Board Meeting Communique [PDF], 16 October 2025

Figure 2 Median Age of T&L Occupations vs National Median



Without young people coming into the industry, we have no replacement. Then we need to look at the major loss of skills and knowledge we are losing. As these older workers head toward retirement, they take a wealth of knowledge with them.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

Attraction and Retention

While the industry is facing a chronic shortage of drivers and logistics workers, **attracting new recruits is proving difficult**.¹⁸ Employers report that they continue to have difficulty finding suitably skilled and qualified drivers. Small operators struggle to compete with larger organisations and other industries that can offer higher wages and better conditions. Some employers have offered sign-on bonuses of \$6,000 to secure staff. High turnover and poaching are common.

Interest in Truck Driver positions remains exceptionally low, and JSA's Employer Recruitment Insights data underscores the scale of the challenge. With only 15.5 applicants per vacancy and only 58% of vacancies are filled, employers are drawing from one of the smallest and least job-ready applicant pools in the labour market. Given the size and criticality of the occupation, Truck Driver shortages rank among the top five most significant recruitment challenges nationwide (Table 3).

¹⁸ Road Freight NSW, [Road Freight NSW and Wester Roads Federation Joint Board Meeting Communique](#) [PDF], 16 October 2025.

Table 3: Major Occupations with Significant Recruitment Challenges

Occupation title	Applicants per vacancy	Filled vacancies
Aged and Disabled Carers	24.4	67%
Registered Nurses	15.3	72%
Electricians	17.3	50%
Retail Managers	28.2	71%
Truck Drivers	15.5	58%

Source: JSA Atlas, Employer recruitment insights (FY 2024-25)

Employers are finding that **few candidates have the skill level, professionalism or experience** required to safely operate expensive equipment and young people lack awareness of career pathways into the industry, contributing to weak attraction pipelines. Several stakeholders have identified a need to engage with schools and expand pre-apprenticeship/traineeship or pre-employment programs to better prepare and motivate young people to join the sector.

Some industry stakeholders have identified **skilled migration as a potential solution** but bus and truck drivers are not currently included on national Skilled Occupation Lists. In some regions truck drivers are included in Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMA) due to severe labour shortages, providing visa sponsorship pathways outside the standard skilled occupations lists.¹⁹ However, employers report that the visa sponsorship process is expensive and complex, presenting an administrative burden that is beyond many small businesses.

Many stakeholders have observed that **foreign workers are not well-supported** to integrate into the Australian T&L industry. Evidence indicates that some multicultural drivers face wellbeing, safety and employment issues, including harassment, visa-related pressure when asserting their workplace rights, and the use of sham contracting arrangements that undermine lawful wages and entitlements.²⁰ The hostile workplace environment leads many drivers to contemplate leaving the industry.

Industry stakeholders report that **negative workplace experiences and unattractive working conditions** impact the T&L industry's ability to attract and retain workers. Truck driving is highly male dominated²¹ and the workplace culture does not always encourage an inclusive and safe working environment. Isolation, lack of suitable rest facilities, poor access to nutritious food and limited support services, limit the appeal of long-haul driving roles. The rise of sham contracting also has potential to damage the reputation of the trucking sector through media stories highlighting driver exploitation and unsafe practices.²² For bus driving roles, inflexible schedules and increasing anti-social incidents can create a hazardous work environment that contributes to workforce attrition.



Unattractive work conditions is a significant problem affecting recruitment in remote Australia. Extreme heat during long summer months, flies, outside work demands, isolation, lack of connectivity, all contribute to limited applicants and reliance on casual international workers to meet demand.

[ISA Survey Respondent]



¹⁹ Department of Home Affairs, [Designated area migration agreements](#), DHA website, Australian Government, November 2025

²⁰ Australian Trucking Association, [Multicultural Driver Roundtable Findings](#), ATA website, September 2025.

²¹ Jobs and Skills Australia, [Gender Economic Equality Study](#), Paper 2 - Education and training divides - Gendered skills, pathways and outcomes, Australian Government, September 2025, p 99.

²² NatRoad, [NatRoad exposes systemic illegal practices destroying Australian trucking industry](#), NatRoad website, 5 November 2025.

Historically, **heavy vehicle driving roles have higher safety risks** than other occupations.²³ Older male truck drivers have workers' compensation claims at more than double the frequency of male workers across all occupations and age groups.²⁴ Long hours on the road, exposure to unpredictable environments, heavy vehicle operation, manual handling of heavy cargo and freight, and time pressures take a toll on the physical and psychosocial wellbeing of the workforce.²⁵ At the same time, low pay and precarious work arrangements can pressure drivers into working longer hours and taking safety risks. Studies have found that higher pay and better conditions for drivers lead to safer performance, fewer crashes and more sustainable industry outcomes.²⁶ To comply with their duty of care obligations and increase the viability of their operations, employers need the capability to manage risks and support their drivers by integrating health and wellbeing strategies into their operations.

“

Mentoring would be an extremely valuable area for the future of industry. Isolation, being a significant problem for the sector as a whole, would benefit from mentoring to ensure a positive future.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

Tight schedules, long periods away from home and the physical dimensions of their vehicle can make it **difficult for drivers to access healthcare services** when they need them.²⁷ Health studies have found that, due to the fatiguing nature of their work, truck drivers experience higher rates of many chronic health conditions.²⁸ The NTC is reviewing options to improve screening for sleep apnoea, diabetes and cardiac risk to better support driver health.²⁹ While employers are keen to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for their drivers, timely access to suitably qualified medical practitioners is a concern, especially in regional areas. Assessments have potential to cause operational and workforce impacts as drivers

may be stood down while assessments are completed, exacerbating driver shortages and increasing costs for drivers and employers.

In contrast to many other industries, the **share of owner-operators and contractors continues to increase** in truck driving.³⁰ The industry has had consistently low profit margins and is now experiencing rapidly rising fixed and operational costs³¹ that are contributing to increasing rates of insolvency.³² Trucking associations and unions are concerned by a marked increase in the number of employers using sham contracting arrangements, where drivers are engaged as ABN holders to avoid paying standard employee entitlements.^{33, 34} This practice is creating unsustainable competitive pressure in the industry and contributing to declining driver skill and reduced road safety. Industry stakeholders report that many operators are beginning to question their future in the industry.³⁵

Often, **young people and their parents undervalue T&L careers** because heavy vehicle driving is not viewed as a skilled occupation and negative media coverage contributes to a poor industry image. Despite recent research indicating that job roles in T&L are more likely to be augmented than replaced by technology (see **Figure 8**), long-standing messages about job losses linked to automation have eroded confidence in the future of these roles, discouraging new entrants and reinforcing perceptions of limited long-term career security. Industry stakeholders have identified a need for more visible and clearly promoted career pathways to raise awareness of the range of opportunities in the T&L industry.

“

Reset industry messaging, promote transport and logistics as skilled, sustainable careers, highlighting workers' roles in managing technology, safety, and decision-making rather than job loss through automation.”

[ISA Survey Respondent]

²³ Safe Work Australia. (n.d.). [WHS Profile: Truck drivers](#), n.d.

²⁴ Safe Work Australia. (n.d.). [WHS Profile: Truck drivers](#), n.d.

²⁵ Safe Work Australia. (n.d.). [WHS Profile: Truck drivers](#), n.d.

²⁶ MH Belzer and D Peetz, [The effects of innovation in regulation outside the direct employment relationship in road transport](#) [PDF], Report to Transport Education, Audit, Compliance and Health Organisation (TEACHO) Ltd, August 2024.

²⁷ National Transport Commission, [Improving health screening for commercial vehicle drivers: Discussion Paper](#) [PDF], March 2025.

²⁸ Safe Work Australia, [WHS Profile: Truck drivers](#), n.d.

²⁹ National Transport Commission, [Improving health screening for commercial vehicle drivers: Discussion Paper](#) [PDF], March 2025.

³⁰ MH Belzer and D Peetz, [The effects of innovation in regulation outside the direct employment relationship in road transport](#) [PDF], Report to Transport Education, Audit, Compliance and Health Organisation (TEACHO) Ltd, August 2024.

³¹ Road Freight NSW, [Road Freight NSW and Wester Roads Federation Joint Board Meeting Communique](#) [PDF], 16 October 2025.

³² B Ryan, [The Breaking Point: An Urgent Look at the Crisis in Australian Road Transport](#), ProDrive Compliance Group, 2025.

³³ Transport Workers' Union WA, [Illegal Sham Contracts are Booming and Drivers are Paying the Price](#), 10 February 2026.

³⁴ P Lancaster, [Truck associations unite for action on sham practices](#), PowerTorque News, Prime Mover Magazine website, 12 November 2025.

³⁵ B Ryan, [The Breaking Point: An Urgent Look at the Crisis in Australian Road Transport](#), ProDrive Compliance Group, 2025.



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ISA-led Actions

Addressing Heavy Vehicle Driver Shortages

A National Heavy Vehicle Driver Action Plan is being developed by ISA to coordinate industry efforts in addressing the critical driver shortage. Through consultation with stakeholders, the plan will outline the current state of the sector, the impacts of workforce shortages, and the initiatives already underway. It will recommend future actions for ISA, identify areas requiring government or industry support, and provide links to further resources. By creating a clear and unified framework, the plan will align responsibilities, reduce duplication, build consensus on policy and funding needs, and establish a coordinated program of work to strengthen and sustain the heavy vehicle driver workforce.



Improving T&L Career Information

This project supports workforce attraction and development by improving how careers in the industry are promoted and understood. Working with key partners, it will strengthen awareness of the sector and provide clear, accessible career information. The project will showcase the value of working in the sector, outline job roles, skills, qualifications and pathways, and leverage existing initiatives where possible. Together, these activities will raise awareness and support long-term workforce growth and retention.



Tasmanian T&L VET in Schools Pilot

ISA is piloting an innovative program that enables Tasmanian secondary students to complete a Certificate II in Supply Chain Operations while still at school, combining classroom learning with industry placements. Designed to address workforce attraction challenges identified in the Transport and Logistics 2025 Workforce Plan, the pilot creates a clear pathway into the sector by improving awareness, breaking down misconceptions, and establishing school-to-work transitions. Developed with the Tasmanian Transport Association, the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People, local schools and industry partners, the program will offer introductory learning from 2026 and full qualification delivery in 2027, forming the foundation for a future national model of VET in Schools pathways for Transport and Logistics.



Pre-vocational Supply Chain Ops Skill Set

ISA is developing a nationally recognised pre-vocational Skill Set to prepare job seekers and school students for entry-level warehousing roles by building foundational skills in inventory handling, safety compliance and basic operational processes. Responding to strong industry growth and persistent shortages in roles such as pickpackers and forklift operators, the project will create a structured and nationally consistent pathway that improves job readiness and supports school-based “trade taster” initiatives. Developed with industry consultation, the Skill Set will strengthen workforce supply, promote career awareness across the supply chain and expand employment opportunities for priority cohorts.



Increasing Diversity across Transport Supply Chain Industries

This project is building a comprehensive understanding of the current diversity and inclusion landscape across the Transport Supply Chain industries to inform scalable solutions in a second phase. It responds to fragmented diversity and inclusion efforts and the persistent underrepresentation of women, First Nations peoples, CALD communities, neurodiverse individuals and people with disabilities. By analysing demographics, reviewing existing initiatives, mapping gaps, and consolidating tools and resources, the project will deliver an environmental scan and recommendations that support a more inclusive, resilient and future focused workforce.



Skilled Migration

This activity will examine existing skilled migration pathways and policy settings for Transport Supply Chain occupations to assess how well they meet the current and emerging skill needs of industry. The work will involve analysis of available data and targeted consultation with industry, unions and government stakeholders. It will consider issues raised by stakeholders, including the responsiveness and cost of existing processes, and the extent to which current settings ensure that migrant workers have the skills, experience, and safety awareness required to perform effectively in Australian workplaces.



Training to Support International Heavy Vehicle Drivers

ISA is exploring resource development options to support international heavy vehicle drivers into industry. The resources would build skills and knowledge of how the industry operates in Australia, including Australian Heavy Vehicle National Law and other state/territory regulatory requirements, transport terminology and safety culture. The development could also include cultural competency resources for employers to support the integration of migrant workers into the workforce.



Related Initiatives

National Transport Commission: Reforms to Heavy Vehicle National Law

The NTC is in the final stages of delivering an updated law for heavy vehicles in Australia. Progressed in consultation with Australian governments and industry, the law aims to improve the productivity and safety across the heavy vehicle sector.



Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds

Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds is a registered not-for-profit foundation that provides a national approach to improving mental health and physical wellbeing for people working in road transport, warehousing and logistics.



Steering Healthy Minds

Steering Healthy Minds (SHM) is a collaboration between key organisations that works to improve mental health in the transport industry. SHM provides on-the-ground, peer-to-peer support for transport industry workers.



National Transport Commission: Improving Health Screening for Heavy Vehicle Drivers

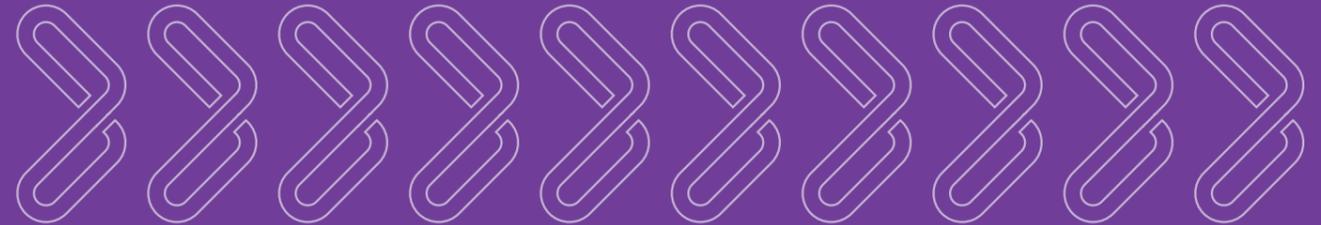
The NTC is identifying options to improve the diagnosis and screening of sleep apnoea, diabetes and cardiac risk levels to support heavy vehicle operators and drivers to manage the risks posed by ill health.



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Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds



Planner that helps businesses create health and safety aligned workplace wellbeing plans alongside industry tailored training, awareness raising resources and programs.

Additional support is provided through the "How Ya Travellin'?" podcast and the Healthy Heads App, which offer wellbeing check ins, fitness and mental health content, and links to crisis lines and professional counselling services.

All initiatives are guided by Australia's first National Mental Health & Wellbeing Roadmap for the sector, built around a framework of prevention, protection and support and seven workplace strategies that strengthen leadership, increase awareness, build better workplace culture, encourage smarter work design, build resilience and coping skills and promote early intervention and recovery.

More details: [Healthy Heads - Supporting Mental Health in Trucking and Logistics](#)



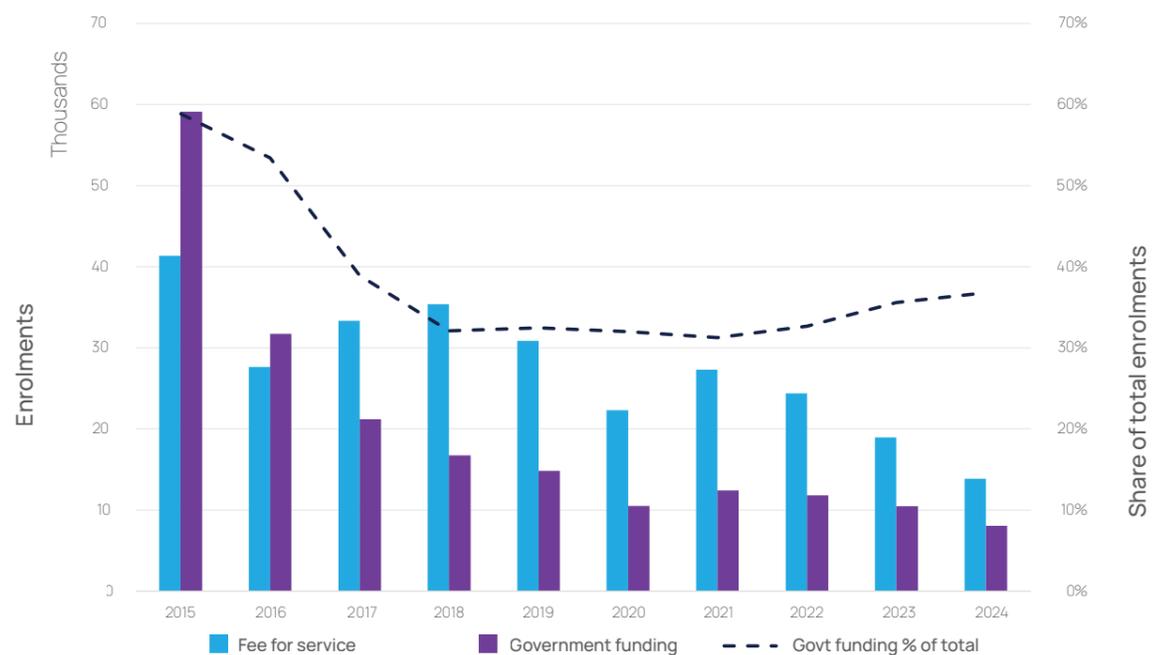
The 2025 Workforce Plan reported that limited access to industry relevant training hinders skills development.

RTO Capability

A range of pressures on RTOs is **affecting the availability and quality of T&L training**. Industry stakeholders report that reduced training incentives and declining funding for private RTOs (Figure 3) are making training delivery unviable for some RTOs. The issue is exacerbated in regional areas where thin markets make it even harder for RTOs to remain financially viable, limiting access to local training.

Additional challenges facing RTOs include the **need for improved resources to support participation** and achievement by learners from marginalised cohorts, and the need to rethink assessment practices in the face of artificial intelligence, to ensure authenticity. Appropriate facilities and resources for the delivery of practical components of heavy vehicle driver training are also required to support consistent assessment outcomes.

Figure 3 Enrolment Trends and Government Funding Share Over Time



There is not enough infrastructure to train young drivers. There are no tracks or training centres for youth to train in or give them the feel for driving. Purpose-built centres that allow drivers to learn how to drive a road train will help with upskilling drivers in a safer environment.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

Industry stakeholders have highlighted the need for more **consistent and streamlined approaches to the recognition of prior learning (RPL)** to accelerate qualification recognition and support upskilling for existing workers. A more efficient RPL system would reduce financial and administrative burdens for RTOs, improve workforce mobility within the T&L industry and better support workers transitioning from other industries. The T&L industry would benefit from the development of compliant RPL assessment kits and from adopting successful RPL approaches already used in other industries such as construction and engineering.

The **limited availability of suitably qualified trainers** is an issue across the VET workforce. In the T&L industry, like many others, there is a significant pay gap between industry roles and VET training roles. Experienced workers can earn more by remaining 'on the tools', especially in a competitive labour market that is already experiencing shortages in key occupations. Recent ISA research³⁶ on the VET workforce confirmed that the complexity and cost of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is a disincentive to prospective trainers and assessors. Those who do transition into a training role often require additional soft skills and updated industry knowledge to maintain vocational currency and professional competency in the face of rapid technological change both in industry and in training and assessment practice.



We are experiencing significant challenges in training removalists and truck drivers. It has become increasingly difficult to find qualified drivers and experienced individuals who can train the next generation.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

Reforms to the **National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework** will also influence future trainer requirements. The new framework will introduce a mix of online, driving/yard and classroom training methods, which may require trainers to adapt their teaching style to accommodate the new formats. Austroads is working on developing best practice standards and training material to support the consistent delivery of the enhanced heavy vehicle competencies.³⁷

Industry stakeholders have observed that **RTOs do not always have the capability or equipment** needed to deliver training that involves the use of increasingly sophisticated industry technology, such as in the complex field of Omnichannel Logistics or in the latest fleet of heavy vehicles. Increased partnerships between industry and RTOs will be necessary to ensure that trainers can maintain industry currency and access equipment using new technologies in a workplace setting.

Funded Entry Pathways

Industry stakeholders report that there is **limited government funding to support training** for the T&L industry. A reliance on private RTOs means that the T&L industry does not benefit from Fee Free TAFE. Industry consistently reports that declining government funding is making T&L training increasingly unaffordable, limiting the ability of employers to skill new workers, especially in regional areas. Small and regional businesses are also disproportionately impacted by a lack of subsidies to assist with the costs of training time, mentoring and supervision, licensing requirements and insurance for younger workers. These costs restrict entry into the industry and contribute to growing driver shortages. Subsidies that are available for training in T&L courses vary between jurisdictions, making it difficult for national employers to identify funding availability for their workforce.

Many industry stakeholders believe there is a **need for strengthened entry pathways** that are supported by paid apprenticeships/traineeships, internships or cadetships. In some jurisdictions, funded pre-apprenticeship/traineeship courses are a cost-effective model for improving apprenticeship/traineeship completions. National availability of these programs may support entry pathways for the T&L industry.

However, T&L employers are not eligible for the Australian Government's apprenticeship hiring incentive because heavy vehicle driving is not included on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List³⁸ despite its recognition as an occupation in shortage. Industry employers and training organisations are already reporting decreasing employer interest in taking on trainees or apprentices due to the removal of the hiring incentive. A further knock-on effect may see reduced demand for apprentice/trainee training, causing RTOs to focus their apprenticeship/traineeship delivery and business models on industries where incentives are still available, further limiting the availability of T&L training.

³⁶ Industry Skills Australia, [VET Workforce Project](#), ISA website, 24 November 2025.

³⁷ Austroads, [Improving the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework: Fact Sheet 3 \[PDF\]](#), n.d.

³⁸ Australian Government, [Financial supports for Australian Apprentices and their employers continue from 1 January 2026](#), Australian Apprenticeships website, n.d.

The increasing **delivery of T&L qualifications through VET in Schools (VETiS)** programs (**Figure 4**) is giving some students early exposure to industry-relevant skills. However, some RTOs report major challenges meeting compliance requirements in school settings, including the lack of specialised facilities, equipment and suitably simulated environments needed for hands-on learning, as well as difficulties securing work placements for students.

These gaps mean that schools need support to invest in shared training hubs and VR/simulation resources to deliver T&L training effectively and safely. Many industry stakeholders recognise that strengthened partnerships between schools and industry will be needed to provide learners with practical experience and work placement opportunities.

Figure 4 Trends in VETiS T&L Qualification Enrolments



Source: NCVET Total VET Activity

Heavy Vehicle Driver Apprenticeships provide a structured, practical pathway into the industry and are recognised by industry stakeholders as a mechanism for addressing looming workforce shortages. To be effective, the apprenticeship model must be accessible, nationally available and designed to support shared learning arrangements between operators so that businesses can manage seasonal fluctuations and variable workloads.

For some occupations in the T&L industry, offshoring and AI replacement for some work functions due to workforce shortages and financial viability issues is leading to the **loss of entry-level roles**. Industry stakeholders have reported that this may occur for customs broking and freight forwarding roles where employers are increasingly less able to train workers in the foundational skills required to progress to higher skilled roles.

Many industry stakeholders have identified a **need for more support to upskill the international and migrant workforce** for roles in the T&L industry. Drivers and employers agree that all drivers should be required to meet the same licensing standards, and that structured induction training and buddy programs are needed.³⁹ The lack of subsidised training for migrant workers makes it difficult for new entrants to integrate safely into the workforce, underscoring the need for targeted government investment.

³⁹ Australian Trucking Association, Multicultural Driver Roundtable Findings, ATA website, September 2025.

ISA-led Actions

Motor Vehicle Driver Training

The Certificate IV in Motor Vehicle Driver Training has been updated to better meet the growing demand for qualified driving instructors across light, heavy vehicle and motorcycle licence classes. Professional driver trainers play a critical role in teaching learners the knowledge, behaviours and skills needed for safe and efficient road use. ISA and a technical committee reviewed the qualification and updated two superseded units from the TAE Training and Education Package to ensure training remains current.



VET Workforce Project

Aimed at building and supporting a secure and sustainable VET workforce, this project is in its critical second phase. ISA is investigating and validating VET workforce challenges and issues identified in Steam 1 and exploring industry-led responses. ISA is collaborating with stakeholders across Aviation, Maritime, Rail, and Transport and Logistics to refine a skills and competency framework and identify practical pathways to attract, develop and retain a diverse and capable VET workforce.



Exploring the Use of Virtual Reality or Simulation in Training

Future ISA activity will identify opportunities to use virtual reality (VR) or simulation in the delivery of training. Use case scenarios might include enabling better access to training in regional areas, supporting training for specific skills, and creating engaging course content for different student cohorts.



Improving Regional Training Delivery

ISA will explore and develop strategies to address the limited access to T&L training in regional areas, including how these considerations can be incorporated into other projects to improve training implementation.



Related Initiatives

Austrroads: Review of the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework

Austrroads is updating the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework to create consistent, higher quality training and licensing standards across Australia. The new nationally aligned training, assessment materials and progression pathways will begin rolling out in 2026, supported by a cost-benefit analysis to ensure the system is practical and financially viable.



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Upskilling Pathways

The Heavy Vehicle Driver Apprenticeship in Action

The Heavy Vehicle Driver (HVD) Apprenticeship was introduced in Queensland to help address a shortage of skilled drivers. While previous industry initiatives improved safety knowledge, the HVD apprenticeship elevates training standards by providing a portable qualification and structured pathway that results in a Nationally recognised trade level qualification. Transport operators, who had been advocating for structured training since the 1990s, saw the apprenticeship as an opportunity to professionalise the occupation, embed consistent skill standards and strengthen safety culture across the workforce.

Employers have found that the apprenticeship complements existing induction, coaching and training by adding a structured, competency-based model with core units and flexible electives. For Bill Manton of Simon National Carriers, flexibility is a key design strength of the apprenticeship.

“The reason why the apprenticeship is a good model, it has a good variety of seven core elements and also the flexibility of other modules... it’s easier to implement those modules into your own business, it doesn’t matter what freight you’re doing”.

Bill Manton, Simon National Carriers

Apprentices at Simon National Carriers also value the consistency of training across the industry. They believe the HVD apprenticeship is particularly valuable for new entrants to the industry who would benefit from building strong foundational skills before progressing to more complex tasks.

“Everyone goes through the same structured training.”

Apprentice, Simon National Carriers

Key benefits of the HVD apprenticeship include:

- Training aligns directly with real world freight operations, preparing apprentices for specialised tasks such as bulk commodity load transport, bulk liquid and gas transport, livestock care, transport and management, oversize/overmass load transport, grocery and refrigerated transport, bus and coach transport and long-distance and metropolitan transport operations.
- The apprenticeship provides a trade equivalent pathway that builds professional pride among drivers and reinforces the value of professional driving as a recognised and respected career.

Manton believes the model works best when partnered with high-quality RTOs that have qualified coaching staff who can demonstrate Transport industry experience and subject matter expertise. Flexible approaches to delivery are essential to ensure that business operations are not impacted by training interruptions. Employers report improved morale, professionalism and mentoring, with apprentices becoming informal coaches who strengthen overall safety culture.

The model is highly effective for upskilling pathways, supporting freight handlers, yard operation and warehouse staff moving into heavy vehicle driving, as well as existing drivers transitioning to higher-class heavy vehicles and career changers entering the Transport industry.

“Having an apprenticeship is for anybody changing their career path and I call it upskilling into our industry. Apprenticeships are perfect.”

Bill Manton, Simon National Carriers

The HVD apprenticeship delivers operational and financial benefits, including reduced incident rates, insurance premiums, workers' compensation claims and asset wear. Standardised, competency-based training also improves onboarding efficiency across locations. Together, these outcomes provide a strong return on investment through risk reduction and improved safety performance.

Apprentices noted the program can feel challenging at first, but encourage new entrants to 'stick with it' as the value becomes clear with growing skills, confidence and real-world application.

Wider adoption of the HVD apprenticeship can be supported by strengthening remuneration and award recognition for experienced drivers, reducing administrative burden on employers and ensuring flexible training for smaller or remote operators. Enhancing RTO capability to support learners with language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) needs and improving national consistency in licensing and insurance settings will further help to attract young people to the apprenticeship.

Success factors for adoption are:

- Strong RTO partnerships - Partner with an RTO that has deep industry experience, aligns with company procedures and offers flexible delivery to integrate training smoothly into operations.
- Driver readiness and supportive environment - Set apprentices up for success by fostering the right attitude and providing supportive coaching, flexible rosters, clear expectations and consistent coaching.
- Proactive administrative planning - Prepare early for administrative requirements especially wage and incentive claims to ensure efficient implementation and support broader national uptake.
- Government support - Greater financial assistance for employers would encourage greater uptake.

Looking forward, Manton sees strong potential for the apprenticeship to become a key workforce strategy, particularly if national funding is aligned and the qualification gains greater recognition as a trade-equivalent pathway. Industry leaders advocate for federal incentives, streamlined administrative systems and declaration of the model in each jurisdiction to improve national consistency and recognition. Strengthening the trainer pipeline, improving RTO quality and raising public awareness will be essential for attracting younger entrants and realising the full potential of the HVD apprenticeship to address Australia's long term driver shortage.

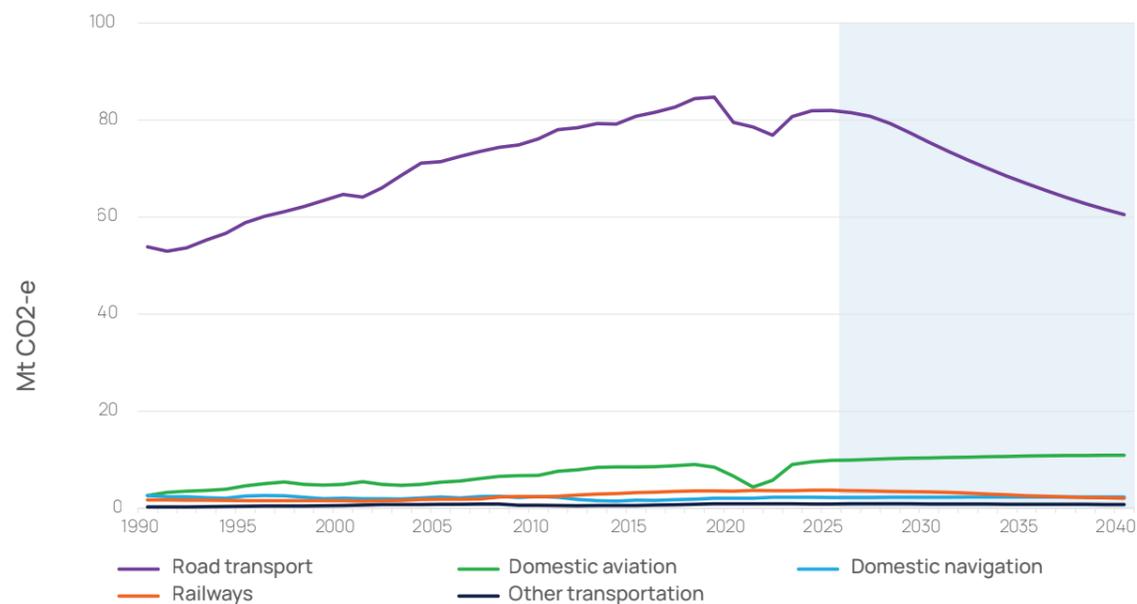


The 2025 Workforce Plan reported that new skills are needed for emerging technologies.

Net Zero

Road transport accounted for more than 80% of Australia's total transport emissions in 2025 (Figure 5) which in turn accounted for around one fifth of the country's total emissions that year.⁴⁰ Though emissions are falling in transport, the share of total emissions will increase to a quarter of the total by 2030. The Australian Government has committed to reducing national emissions to net zero by 2050 and has produced a Net Zero Plan⁴¹ supported by six sector plans. The Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan recognises that a combination of low emission technologies and fuels will be required to decarbonise heavy vehicles to achieve the Australian Government's target of net zero by 2050.⁴²

Figure 5 Transport emissions, 1990 to 2040



Source: DCCEEW Australia's emissions projections 2025

⁴⁰ Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, [Australia's emissions projections 2025](#). (Figures 6 & 20).

⁴¹ Australian Government, [Australia's Net Zero Plan](#) [PDF], 2025.

⁴² Australian Government, [Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan: Transport Sector Plan](#) [PDF], September 2025, p 28.

Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan envisages a staged approach to Net Zero.

Short-term 2025-2030: Electrification of buses, rigid trucks and some articulated trucks, supported by expanded charging infrastructure and nationally consistent regulations. Early uptake will occur on fixed routes and metropolitan areas. Low-carbon liquid fuels (LCLFs) will be used where electrification is not yet viable.

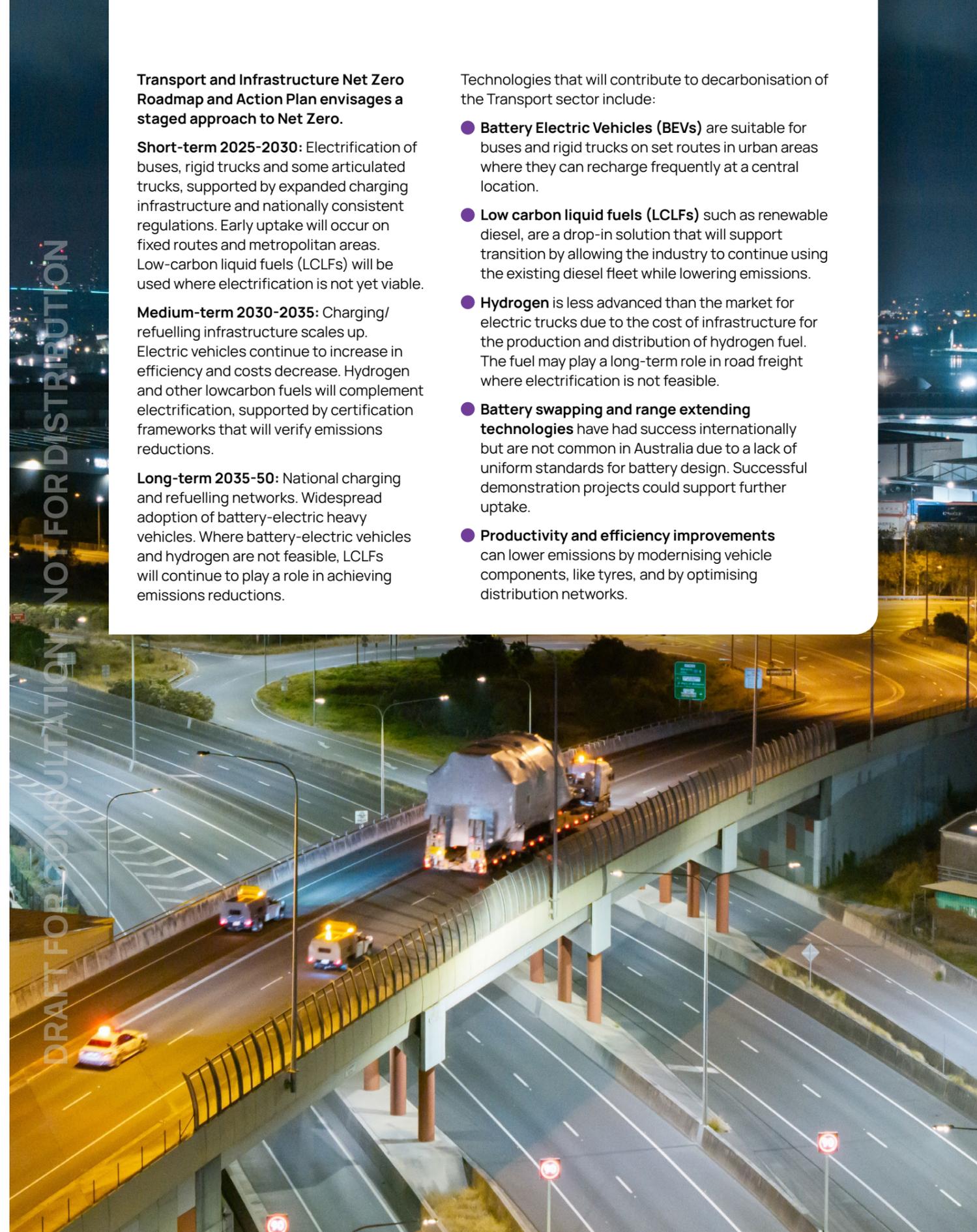
Medium-term 2030-2035: Charging/refuelling infrastructure scales up. Electric vehicles continue to increase in efficiency and costs decrease. Hydrogen and other lowcarbon fuels will complement electrification, supported by certification frameworks that will verify emissions reductions.

Long-term 2035-50: National charging and refuelling networks. Widespread adoption of battery-electric heavy vehicles. Where battery-electric vehicles and hydrogen are not feasible, LCLFs will continue to play a role in achieving emissions reductions.

Technologies that will contribute to decarbonisation of the Transport sector include:

- **Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs)** are suitable for buses and rigid trucks on set routes in urban areas where they can recharge frequently at a central location.
- **Low carbon liquid fuels (LCLFs)** such as renewable diesel, are a drop-in solution that will support transition by allowing the industry to continue using the existing diesel fleet while lowering emissions.
- **Hydrogen** is less advanced than the market for electric trucks due to the cost of infrastructure for the production and distribution of hydrogen fuel. The fuel may play a long-term role in road freight where electrification is not feasible.
- **Battery swapping and range extending technologies** have had success internationally but are not common in Australia due to a lack of uniform standards for battery design. Successful demonstration projects could support further uptake.
- **Productivity and efficiency improvements** can lower emissions by modernising vehicle components, like tyres, and by optimising distribution networks.

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Although electrification of road freight has been identified as critical to achieve net zero targets⁴³ industry stakeholders report that a **lack of infrastructure and skills is limiting EV rollout**. This is especially the case in regional areas where the lack of charging/refuelling infrastructure is being felt. Public transport providers are the transport operators that have been most involved in clean energy to date.⁴⁴

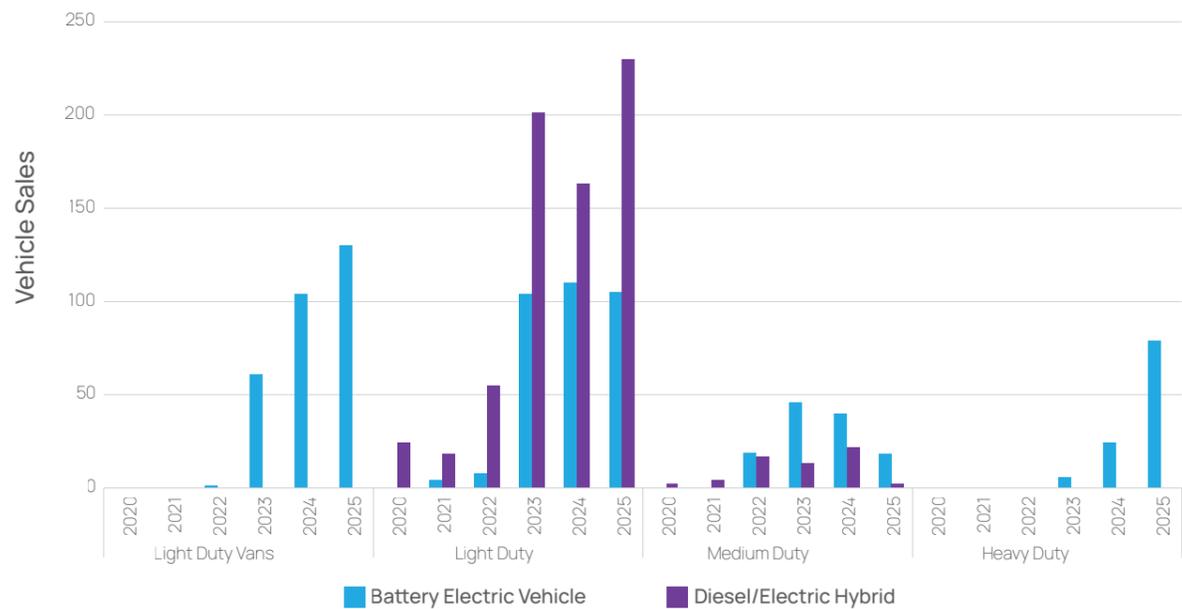


The likelihood of EV Heavy Vehicles, suitable to meet the needs of Australia's ever expanding freight task, cost effectively, in the next 10-15 years is extremely low.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

Road freight will gradually **shift from fossil fuels to renewables**, but the transition isn't unfolding uniformly across vehicle classes (**Figure 6**). In commercial vans and heavy-duty trucks, the story is straightforward: battery-electric models are the only low-emission technology gaining traction, and their uptake is rising steadily year on year. Medium-duty trucks show a very different pattern, with both hybrid and electric sales climbing to a clear peak around 2023 before softening noticeably in 2025. Meanwhile, light-duty trucks stand out with strongest uptake, where hybrids continue to surge even as electric adoption stabilises, pointing to a dual-technology landscape rather than a single dominant pathway. Hydrogen has been identified as a likely complement to battery-electric options for heavy vehicles that require higher energy.⁴⁵ However, some stakeholders express uncertainty about hydrogen's future role in transport due to high production costs, logistical challenges and efficiency constraints, which have slowed uptake.⁴⁶ To support productivity and efficiency improvements, some industry stakeholders advocate for enabling an increase in the use of high productivity vehicles with greater payload capacity. This shift would reduce emissions by decreasing the total number of heavy vehicles on the road.

Figure 6 Battery Electric Vehicles vs Hybrid Sales Across Duty Classes longer



Source: Truck Industry Council 2025. Historical Low and Zero Emission Heavy Vehicle Sales dashboard

A shift to new fuel technologies **will not change the core skills of a Heavy Vehicle Driver**, but drivers will need to become familiar with the new technologies and learn how to operate them safely.⁴⁷ As the EV fleet expands, the need for updated safety and response protocols⁴⁸ will also impact skill requirements for workers involved in vehicle recovery and towing. Austroads has identified knowledge gaps relating to risk and risk management during recovery and salvage processes for EVs. Training for tow and salvage operators will need to support safe recovery and storage practices.⁴⁹

Some industry stakeholders have reported **reluctance to invest in low carbon vehicles** without government incentives. There is concern that without greater government support and investment, industry will not be able to meet 2050 emissions targets.⁵⁰



Many of our operators are being 'forced' through government contracts to take up EV and electrification of depots. The industry is at the forefront of electrification and can demonstrate clearly how a lack of infrastructure and bipartisan government planning is impacting the goal of net zero.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

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⁴³ AECOM, [Electrifying Road Freight: Pathways to Transition](#) [PDF], Prepared for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, p 2.

⁴⁴ Jobs and Skills Australia, [The Clean Energy Generation](#) [PDF], Australian Government, 2023, p 92.

⁴⁵ Jobs and Skills Australia, [The Clean Energy Generation](#) [PDF], Australian Government, 2023, p 189.

⁴⁶ Austroads, [Incident Response for Low and Zero Emission Vehicles](#), 2025, p 6.

⁴⁷ Jobs and Skills Australia, [The Clean Energy Generation](#) [PDF], 2023, p 189.

⁴⁸ Austroads, [Incident Response for Low and Zero Emission Vehicles](#), 2025, p 1.

⁴⁹ Austroads, [Incident Response for Low and Zero Emission Vehicles](#), 2025, p 84.

⁵⁰ AECOM, [Electrifying Road Freight: Pathways to Transition](#), Prepared for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, n.d. p 13.

New Technology

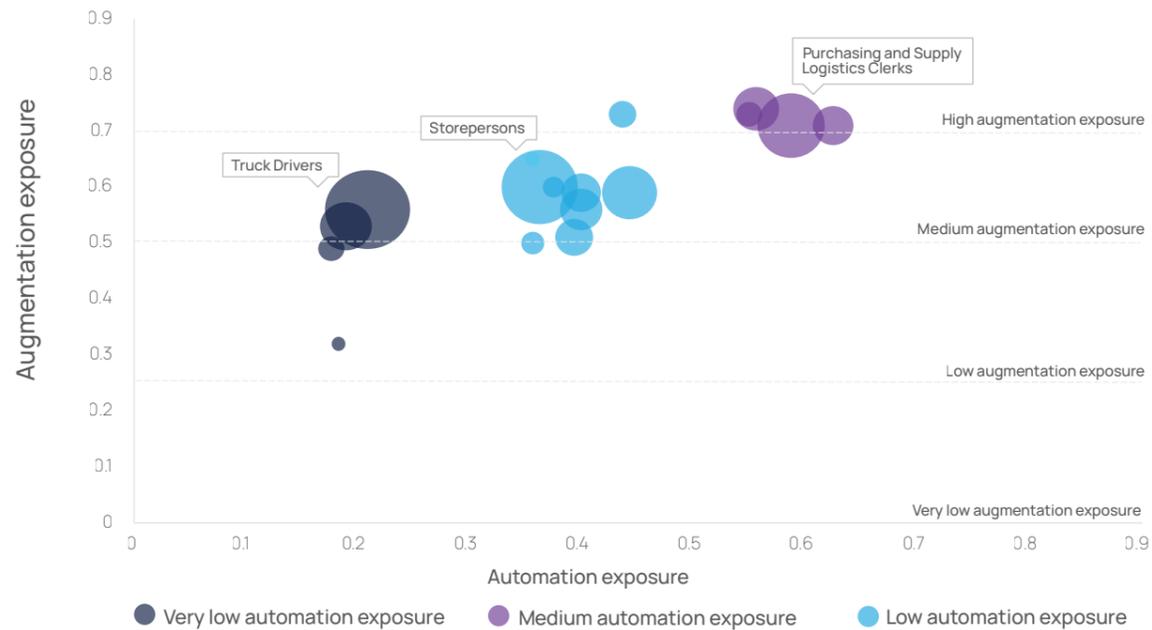
Technology in the T&L industry is changing rapidly.

Road vehicles are becoming increasingly connected, electric and automated. Sensor technology, automation, artificial intelligence, connectivity and data analysis are being adopted in road vehicles, infrastructure and road management systems.⁵¹ The uptake of advanced business technologies is making manual processes obsolete for some customs broking and freight forwarding tasks. Operations that continue to rely on paper, email and spreadsheet-based processes will increasingly be regarded as a compliance and security risk.⁵²

The implementation of artificial intelligence (AI), automation and other technologies offers potential efficiencies and productivity gains for the T&L industry. However, industry stakeholders report that there is **wide variation in employer responses** to AI, automation and other new technologies.

Industry reporting aligns with findings from JSA's Our Gen AI Transition study⁵³, which shows that T&L occupations are distributed across the **Medium, Low, and Very Low** exposure bands for automation, while augmentation exposure is consistently higher across all roles (**Figure 7**). Occupations in the **Medium** automation exposure category, such as clerks, managers and importers/exporters, also record **High** augmentation exposure, reflecting the information-rich nature of these roles and their reliance on data processing and administrative workflows. A second cluster comprises **Low** automation exposure operational roles, such as storepersons, couriers and delivery drivers, and bus and coach drivers. Although these roles involve physical tasks, they also show **moderate-to-high** augmentation exposure due to frequent interaction with digital systems. Finally, occupations such as truck drivers and crane or hoist operators fall into the **Very Low** automation exposure category. Even within this group, augmentation exposure remains higher than automation, indicating that while these roles are less susceptible to task replacement, they still benefit from AI-enabled support tools, such as safety systems, scheduling optimisation, or assisted navigation, rather than full automation.

Figure 7 Occupational Exposure to Automation and Augmentation.ai



Source: JSA (2026) Our Gen AI Transition

⁵¹ Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting, [National Road Transport Technology Strategy \[PDF\]](#), p 6.

⁵² P Hazell, [How AI will reshape supply chains in 2026](#), MHD Supply Chain News, 8 January 2026.

⁵³ Jobs and Skills Australia, [Our Gen AI Transition: Exposures, Adaptation, Dynamism \[Dataset\]](#), Australian Government, 2026.

Low margins for transport businesses create **financial constraints that can prevent investment** in fleet upgrades and technology adoption.⁵⁴ This is especially the case for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) who comprise 98% of operators in the freight industry.⁵⁵ Often these businesses have low levels of digital maturity and need to focus on operational efficiency and cost management. However, this can mean that they put off upgrading their systems or testing new technologies that could offer long-term benefits.



AI is useful but its use needs to be specifically targeted. It is not a one size fits all solution.

[ISA Survey Respondent]

Although they are still evolving, **connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) have potential to produce productivity benefits** for the freight and logistics sector.⁵⁶ CAVs have potential to make road transport safer and more efficient, productive, sustainable and accessible. The National Road Transport Technology Strategy aims for Australian governments to take a nationally consistent approach to road transport technology deployment.⁵⁷ CAVs could reduce the need for traditional driving skills, shifting parts of the workforce toward customer-facing and technology-supported roles. This may create demand for reskilling and redeployment as new occupations emerge and existing ones evolve in response to automation and changing service models.⁵⁸

In the logistics sector, recent research found that most companies are **still exploring pilot use cases** and learning how to manage AI within existing workflows.⁵⁹ Early focus areas for AI uptake include reducing manual admin, improving accuracy in despatch and delivery, improving health and safety, and providing faster and more insightful customer responses.⁶⁰ The research identified skill shortages as a barrier to technological progress because technical expertise is required to drive the transformation.⁶¹

Some logistics operators are using AI agents to support workflows by autonomously managing communications for appointment scheduling and driver follow-up calls. Advocates for the technology report that AI agents relieve workers of repetitive and time-consuming tasks, enabling them to tackle more high-value work.⁶² More cautious industry operators are looking for regulatory guidance and standards before investing in AI in a compliance-heavy sector.



⁵⁴ AECOM, [Electrifying Road Freight: Pathways to Transition \[PDF\]](#), Prepared for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, Citing data from ATA 2023.

⁵⁵ AECOM, [Electrifying Road Freight: Pathways to Transition \[PDF\]](#), Prepared for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, p 12, Citing data from EVC & ATA 2022.

⁵⁶ Infrastructure and Transport Ministers, [National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy \[PDF\]](#), 2025, p 22.

⁵⁷ Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting, [National Road Technology Transport Strategy \[PDF\]](#), 2025, p 5.

⁵⁸ Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting, [National Road Technology Transport Strategy \[PDF\]](#), 2025, p 20.

⁵⁹ Origin, [Origin Logistics Technology Outlook 2025](#).

⁶⁰ Origin, [Origin Logistics Technology Outlook 2025](#).

⁶¹ Origin, [Origin Logistics Technology Outlook 2025](#).

⁶² P Hazell [DHL Supply Chain expands use of AI agents to streamline global operations](#), MHD Supply Chain News, 27 November 2025.



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Automation is no longer about replacing people — it's about amplifying them. AI-driven agents are taking on repetitive, transactional workloads like ETA updates and document verification, freeing human teams to focus on exceptions, critical decisions and higher-value analysis.

[Steve Blough, Chief Supply Chain Strategist at Infios⁶³]

The **cold storage sector is increasingly turning to targeted automation** to overcome capacity constraints caused by one of the sharpest demand surges in decades.⁶⁴ Population growth, e-commerce and increasing food and pharmaceutical exports are driving increased demand for cold chain logistics and storage that is outpacing Australia's refrigerated warehouse capacity.⁶⁵ Automation is increasingly being used to enable higher storage density in existing facilities.

Operators are using digital warehouse management and control systems, supported by AI-enhanced decision-making to improve inventory accuracy and operational planning.⁶⁶ As these systems are leveraged to optimise new and existing facilities, the workforce will need new capabilities for technical roles such as automation supervision, systems reporting, maintenance and data-driven operational planning.

Industry stakeholders have flagged an **increased need for cyber security, data analytical and digital literacy skills** in the T&L industry.⁶⁷ To protect businesses against cyber threats, the broader T&L workforce needs strong digital literacy skills and understanding to recognise basic cyber risks, like phishing, and respond appropriately. However, industry stakeholders have reported that there is a lack of available training for building digital literacy.

⁶³ Hazell, P. (8 January 2026). [How AI will reshape supply chains in 2026](#). MHD Supply Chain News.

⁶⁴ D Rubie, [Australia and New Zealand's cold chain running out of room: Building capacity and resilience with automation](#), Refrigerated Warehouse and Transport Association of Australia, n.d.

⁶⁵ CBRE, [Cold Chain Logistics in Australia](#), 16 June 2024.

⁶⁶ D Rubie, [Australia and New Zealand's cold chain running out of room: Building capacity and resilience with automation](#), Refrigerated Warehouse and Transport Association of Australia, n.d.

⁶⁷ P Hazell, [How AI will reshape supply chains in 2026](#), MHD Supply Chain News, 8 January 2026.

ISA-led Actions

Digital Skills

ISA is analysing the digital skills required across Australia's transport supply chain industries to support and strengthen workforce capability. Using the international DigComp framework, the project will develop Digital Occupational profiles for key roles across Aviation, Maritime, Rail, and Transport and Logistics. These profiles will define the digital knowledge, skills and proficiency levels required for workers to support their readiness in an increasingly digital operating environment. The profiles will also inform a strategic review of training packages by identifying skills gaps and reskilling needs that reflect these evolving job roles and digital skill requirements.



Technology Futures Taskforce Phase 2 - Occupational Analysis

The Technology Futures Taskforce (TFT) will pilot a methodology to identify new and emerging technologies set to reshape key transport supply chain occupations and the training products that support them. It will combine AI analysis with expert insights from industry to validate the findings and anchor them into the Australian context. This phase will focus on four occupations undergoing significant technological change. It will deliver occupation reports, map affected training products, estimate the technology adoption rate and develop a scalable Technology Trend Radar. Together, these outputs will strengthen workforce readiness, guide upskilling and reskilling, and enable training packages to anticipate future skill needs.



Stakeholder Consultation

ISA will conduct targeted consultation activities to inform the development of future strategies or initiatives that support the T&L workforce in preparing for change. Stakeholder engagement will explore:

- Transition to Net Zero
- Electric Vehicle Towing and Recovery
- Automated Technologies



Related Initiatives

Australian Government: Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan

The Australian Government's Net Zero Plan sets out and extends Australia's action on climate change. The Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan is the sector plan for transport and transport infrastructure. It covers all transport modes and considers cross cutting issues including low carbon fuels, freight and supply chains, systemwide efficiencies and transport infrastructure.



Infrastructure and Transport Ministers: 2024-27 National Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) Action Plan

The 2024-27 Action Plan builds on the 2016-19 and 2020-23 National Land Transport Technology Action Plans to prepare Australia for the deployment of CAVs, including Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS), and related future mobility technologies and services.



The 2025 Workforce Plan reported that there are skills gaps in specialised roles and sectors.

Nationally Consistent Training

Industry stakeholders have identified **gaps in training to support safety and compliance**. In a highly regulated industry, nationally consistent training is critical for ensuring that the workforce has the skills to satisfy updated regulatory requirements.

Areas where existing gaps may require training product development include:

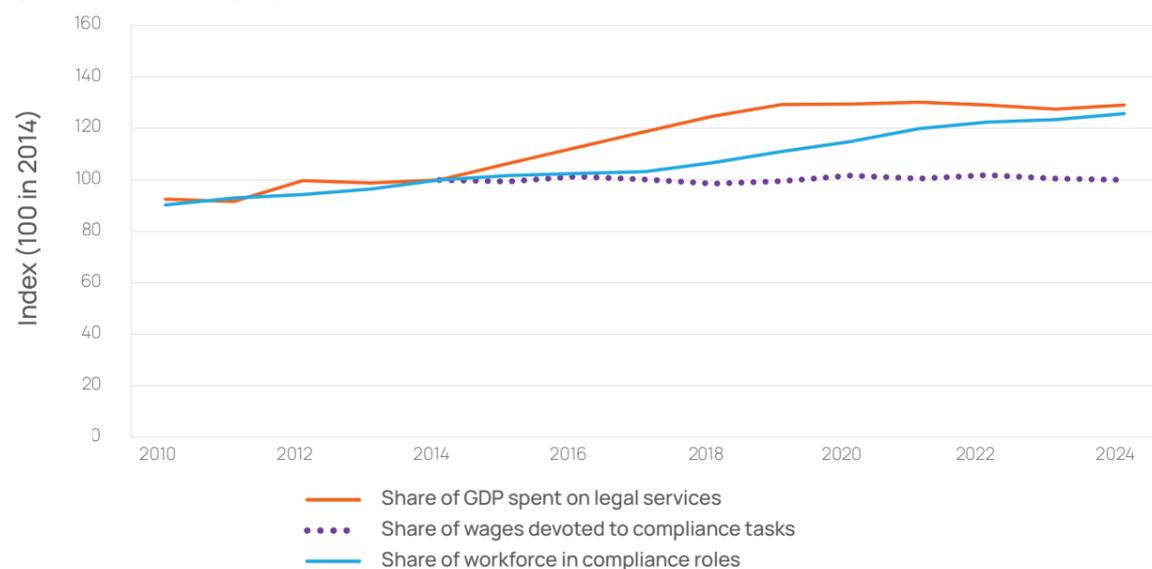
- **Specialist compliance training** – upskilling in compliance requirements, safety practices and regulatory changes is needed for occupations that operate in high-risk environments.
- **Waste operations driver training** – existing training products need to be reviewed to ensure their currency and alignment with the NHVR's Waste and Recycling Industry Code of Practice.
- **Container transport** – existing training products need to be reviewed to ensure their relevance and to support increased RTO capacity to deliver the learning outcomes required by industry.
- **Training for electric vehicle towing and recovery** – the development of consistent guidance and training for towing providers is needed to ensure safe practice when working with electric vehicles.

- **Oversize-Overmass (OSOM) transport** – improved training products or guidance is needed to support heavy vehicle drivers transporting OSOM loads.
- **Transport scheduler** – a review of existing training products is needed to ensure their suitability for skilling workers in scheduling and fleet allocation roles in multiple transport sectors.
- **Space Transport and Logistics** – skill requirements need to be determined for specialised T&L roles to support the space industry.

Licensing and Compliance

Industry stakeholders report that **compliance requirements are increasing**. This is consistent with the Productivity Commission's recent inquiry report's findings⁶⁸ of growing regulation and rising compliance-related activity since 2010, although it also notes that the share of wages devoted to compliance tasks has been broadly flat since 2014 (**Figure 9**). Stakeholders also indicate that, while there is growing demand for dedicated transport compliance roles in the industry, there is currently no specific, consistent training available.

Figure 9: Indicators of Rising Regulatory and Compliance Burden



Source: Productivity Commission 2025. Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy

⁶⁸ Productivity Commission, [Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy](#) [PDF], Inquiry Report No. 109, 10 December 2025.

Licensing rules and processes are **inconsistent across jurisdictions**. The lack of a harmonised approach for workers to gain a Driver's Authority for employment in the passenger transport sector impedes workforce mobility. Industry stakeholders have also reported that long timeframes for licensing and renewals are impacting their business operations. Rural operators, in particular, face challenges in accessing training and assessment for multi-combination licences.



Regulatory requirements are becoming increasingly difficult and frustrating, leading to many unfortunately not complying and utilising the thought that hopefully they will never be caught.

[ISA survey respondent]

Industry stakeholders have also **called for a move to an hours-based requirement** for licence progression based on approved log books, electronic apps or state-recognised forms.⁶⁹ The South Australian licensing mode has been identified as a model that could be adopted in other jurisdictions. It offers a supervised multi-combination (MC) training program as an alternative to the one year waiting period for progressing to MC after gaining an HR/HC licence.⁷⁰

Some industry stakeholders have reported that **licensing and insurance age restrictions are a major barrier** to workforce planning and development. Licensing age restrictions create a barrier for young people entering the T&L industry. An attractive industry entry pathway could be created by lowering the minimum age for forklift licences to 16 for young people who are participating in a structured training program. Similar licensing age reductions have been suggested for people undertaking a Heavy Vehicle Driver Apprenticeships.

Insurance costs for young drivers create a **financial burden for employers that acts as a deterrent to employing young people**. Some stakeholders have advocated for solutions that would reduce insurance premiums for drivers employed through apprenticeship or traineeship arrangements.



⁶⁹ Australian Trucking Association, [Multicultural Driver Roundtable Findings](#), ATA website, 2025.

⁷⁰ Department of Infrastructure and Transport, [My Licence - My heavy vehicle licence - MC licence program](#), mylicence.sa.gov.au website, Government of South Australia, n.d.

Omnichannel Logistics Skills Gap Analysis

ISA released its Omnichannel Skills Gap Analysis Report in November 2025. This landmark study examines the skills required to support the rapid growth of omnichannel logistics in Australia's transport and logistics (T&L) sector. The report identifies critical skills gaps in areas such as managing integrated inventory systems, Omnichannel fulfilment processes, AI-driven analytics, and reverse logistics across multiple channels. To address these gaps, the report presents recommendations for adapting Training Packages and tailoring training products to meet the evolving needs of the omnichannel logistics industry.



Furniture Removal

Training products from the Transport and Logistics Training Package have been updated to enable furniture removal workers to develop skills that are transferable across the broader supply chain. With support from the Australian Furniture Removers Association and industry stakeholders, two underused qualifications were removed, and six updated furniture removal units were embedded into widely delivered Supply Chain and Driving Operations qualifications. These updates reflect current practice and provide workers with more accessible and portable training pathways.



Skilling Heavy Vehicle Drivers and Licensing Update

Heavy vehicle licensing competency standards within vocational training products are being reviewed and updated to align with upcoming Austroads reforms to the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework. With Australia facing a growing shortage of heavy vehicle drivers and increasing freight demands, the project will address inconsistent training and licensing practices by aligning units with new national requirements for learning, assessment, practical experience and licence progression. Focusing on skills gaps for new HV and multicomination drivers, the project will establish a minimum competency benchmark and strengthen employer confidence. It will be delivered in three stages, with unit reviews completed through 2026 and implementation support in 2027.



Fatigue Management Update

Fatigue management training products are being updated by ISA to align with forthcoming changes to the Heavy Vehicle National Law, which will introduce revised fatigue requirements from mid to late 2026. In response to a request from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR), the project will update the TLIF0005 and TLIF0006 units to reflect the amended legislation and develop supporting learning and assessment resources to ensure consistent national delivery. A Technical Committee of subject matter experts will guide the work, ensuring the updated training supports safer, more efficient and clearly understood fatigue management practices across the heavy vehicle industry.



Livestock Transport Training Development

A new livestock transport Skill Set is being developed to establish a nationally consistent benchmark for training and industry best practice. The Skill Set will be aligned with the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Land Transport of Livestock and the NHVR's regulatory advice. As livestock transport plays a critical role in road freight, drivers require specialised skills that combine animal welfare obligations with heavy vehicle operation. In response to industry requests and limited access to relevant training across multiple training packages, ISA is reviewing current units and identifying future training and assessment needs through research and consultation. These findings will inform the project's second phase.



Review of Dangerous Goods Driver Training

Dangerous goods driver training products are being reviewed and updated to support nationally consistent training and assessment and to reflect current industry practice and regulatory requirements. As the transport of hazardous materials demands strict safety compliance, the project aims to improve the quality and consistency of driver preparation ahead of forthcoming changes to the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, which is undergoing a comprehensive review. In response to a request from the Competent Authorities Panel, ISA is reviewing the TLILIC0001 Licence to Transport Dangerous Goods by Road unit and related training products to strengthen safety, raise training standards, and prepare industry for updated regulatory expectations.



Review of the Diploma of Logistics

To strengthen leadership and operational management capability across the transport and logistics industry, ISA is reviewing and updating the Diploma of Logistics (TLI50224). The project will align the qualification with current and emerging workforce needs and ensure clear pathways into higher-level roles. Responding to declining enrolments and industry feedback, the updated Diploma will better reflect the impacts of digital transformation, ESG requirements, compliance and sustainability expectations, and growing skills needs in cyber security and data analytics. The refreshed qualification will support mobility across supply chain functions and prepare workers for senior management responsibilities.



Stevedoring Workforce Analysis and Future Transformation Support

This project will support workforce transformation for Stevedoring operations by assessing the impact of automation and emerging technologies and developing pathways to support transition across the Transport Supply Chain Industries. By identifying new skill requirements and analysing the portability of stevedoring skills into sectors facing workforce shortages, project outcomes will guide workforce planning, support displaced workers, strengthen cross-industry mobility and ensure the VET system remains responsive.



Heavy Vehicle Pilots and Escorts

This project aims to establish a nationally consistent training and licensing model for heavy vehicle pilot and escorts to strengthen safety, compliance, and capability across all jurisdictions. ISA will work with state and territory agencies to develop and review training products to address variations in current training quality, regulatory oversight, and operational expectations, as well as critical skills gaps, particularly in bridge supervision. The project will harmonise training, improve workforce capability and support a safer, more reliable approach to heavy vehicle pilot and escort operations nationwide.



Crane Licensing Training Update

Safe Work Australia (SWA) has requested an update to crane operation Units of Competency to align with amendments to the model Work, Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations as of 5 December 2025. These amendments are part of the first stage of reforms to the Crane Licensing Framework which is currently under review to improve safety outcomes and ensure the licensing system keeps pace with changing work practices and technology.



Stakeholder Consultation

ISA will conduct targeted consultation activities to inform the development of future strategies or initiatives that support the T&L workforce in skilling for specialist roles. Stakeholder engagement will explore:

- Specialist Compliance Training Development
- Passenger Transport Driver Training
- Waste Operations Driver Training
- Container Transport
- OSOM
- Transport Scheduler Training



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Related Initiatives

National Transport Commission: Comprehensive Review of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code

The Australian Dangerous Goods Code establishes the requirements for the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail in Australia. It sets out rules and guidelines for classifying, packaging, marking, labelling and transporting dangerous goods safely. The NTC is consulting with stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive review to ensure the Code meets current best practices and the needs of industry and regulators.



Safe Work Australia: Crane Licensing Review

Safe Work Australia (SWA) published amendments to the model WHS regulations in December 2025. These reforms are in response to the first phase of the Crane Licensing Review which SWA is conducting. The Review is a two stage regulatory impact analysis to assess the impacts of further amendments to the model WHS regulations in response to technological advancements and evolving industry practices.



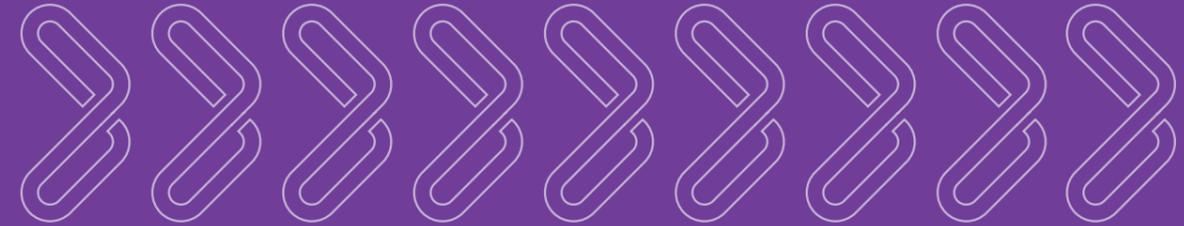
Infrastructure and Transport Ministers: National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy

The National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy was initially endorsed in 2019 by Commonwealth, state and territory infrastructure and transport ministers to address emerging challenges in Australia's freight and supply chain sectors. Following a comprehensive review, the strategy was refreshed and a new National Action Plan was developed for 2025-2029.



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Review of the Transport and Logistics Training Package - Furniture Removal



At the request of the Australian Furniture Removers Association (AFRA), Industry Skills Australia (ISA) led a comprehensive review of furniture removal training products in the Transport and Logistics Training Package, ensuring they remain aligned with current industry needs. A technical committee comprising industry subject matter experts, provided guidance throughout the process. A national consultation program ensured stakeholder feedback was incorporated into all stages of the review.

Outcomes:

- Furniture removal specific Units of Competency were incorporated into three qualifications - Certificate II in Supply Chain Operations, Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations and Certificate III in Driving Operations to reflect industry requirements.
- Two qualifications were deleted - Certificate II and Certificate III in Furniture Removal due to low usage and lack of training delivery options.
- A Furniture Removal specialisation was added to the Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations, ensuring the skills remain formally recognised within a more portable qualification.
- Six Units of Competency were revised and updated to align with current industry needs.

Integrating these units into widely delivered qualifications increases access to training, supports more RTOs to offer relevant programs, and provides clearer, more flexible pathways. This enables furniture removal workers to gain accredited, transferable skills applicable across the broader Supply Chain sector.

For employers, the strengthened pathways will enhance workforce attraction strategies, skilling and retention by providing improved training options while maintaining recognition of essential furniture removal skills within a more accessible qualification structure. In addition, AFRA is developing resources for the Units of Competency to assist RTOs in the delivery of the qualifications and will provide subject matter experts to further support trainers and assessors.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Explanatory Notes to Data

Occupational Data (Workers) vs Industrial Data (Workforce)

When analysing the workforce and industry data in Australia, two classifications are commonly used: ANZSCO/OSCA and ANZSIC.

- ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) or OSCA (Occupation Standard Classification for Australia) categorises occupations based on skill level and specialisation
- While OSCA replaced ANZSCO for use in Australia in December 2024, the underlying data (such as the Labour Force Survey, or the Occupational Shortage List) are yet to be updated.
- ANZSIC (Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification) classifies businesses into industry sectors. This groups companies based on the primary activities they are engaged in.

In simple terms, ANZSCO/OSCA is about what people do in their jobs, and ANZSIC is about the industry or sector where businesses operate. They are used for different purposes and are not directly comparable.

In this document, we use the term 'Workers' when referring to occupational data (ANZSCO/OSCA) and industry 'Workforce' when referring to industrial data (ANZSIC).

Occupational Shortage vs Skills Shortage

In this document, we distinguish between occupational shortages and skills shortages.

- Occupational shortage: This occurs when employers struggle to fill vacancies for a specific occupation or can't find employees with specialised skills needed in that occupation. Essentially, there aren't enough qualified people available to do the job.
- Skills shortage: This refers to a situation where the existing workforce does not possess the right skills to meet the demands of their sector or occupation. It's not about the number of employees, but about the quality or suitability of their skills.

Business Count

In the Counts of Australian Businesses data, industries are classified by the main industry linked to a business ABN. This method has limitations. Firstly, businesses operating in several States/Territories are counted only once, making enterprise figures appear low in some areas. This does not mean that there are no enterprises in those regions; rather, that their headquarters are located elsewhere. Secondly, if an organisation operates in multiple industries, it is only counted in one, leading to potential inaccuracies in industry classification.

Training Data

Total VET Activity (TVA) data is collected from all types of RTOs and not only those in receipt of Commonwealth or State funding.

Endnotes/Special References

* Scenic and Sightseeing Transport is an industrial category that covers all transport modes, and the workforce is split proportionately among the transport sectors according to historical Census distributions.

Sources for infographics

Data	Source
Australian households making an online purchase in 2024	Australia Post, eCommerce Report 2025
Automation/augmentation exposure	JSA, Our Gen AI Transition, Occupation exposure data 2025 Note: JSA exposure scores estimate the potential for Gen AI to augment or automate tasks in each occupation. They reflect technical potential rather than actual adoption or employment effects.
Business No Business distribution by state %	ABS Counts of Australian Businesses 2025
Commercial vehicles on Australian roads in 2025	Road Vehicles, Australia, January 2025
Female (%)	ABS Labour Force 2023 2025, four-quarter average data
GDP contribution \$b 2024-2025 Estimated annual revenue \$b 2024-2025	IBISWorld Industry Wizard
Higher education enrolments (2023)	Jobs and Skills Atlas, 2026
Highest graduate employment rate (2020/2021)	JSA, VET Graduate Outcomes 2020-21
Highest median age	JSA, Occupation Profile data (Nov 2025)
Lowest vacancy rate (%)	JSA, Jobs and Skills Atlas 2026
Median gender pay gap	Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) 2024/25 (46 Road Transport)
Occupation Shortages	JSA, Occupation Shortage List 2025
Online job ad growth % (2020 - 2025)	JSA, Internet Vacancy Index 2025
Part-time (%)	JSA, Occupation Profile 2025
Qualification enrolments 2024 Qualification enrolments by state % VETiS student count Gender/First Nations/Disability % (2024) Apprenticeships/Traineeships (% of T&L enrolments) Top 5 qualifications by enrolments (2024)	NCVER, Total VET Activity 2024
RTOs with explicit scope to deliver T&L quals Training Package summary (# quals, units, skill sets) RTO map (Explicit scope)	training.gov.au 2026
Workforce in T&L companies (2025) Workforce in T&L companies (2030) Workers in T&L roles (2025) Workers in T&L roles (2030)	JSA, Employment Projections 2025

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Appendix B: Abbreviation List

AFRA	Australian Furniture Removers Association
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
AR	Augmented Reality
BEV	Battery Electric Vehicle
CAV	Connected and Automated Vehicle
DAMA	Designated Area Migration Agreement
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
FIFO	Fly-in Fly-out
HHTS	Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds
HR/HV	Heavy Rigid/Heavy Combination
HVD	Heavy Vehicle Driver
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Body
ISA	Industry Skills Australia
JSA	Jobs and Skills Australia
JSC	Jobs and Skills Councils
LCLF	Low Carbon Liquid Fuel
LLND	Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital
MC	Multi-combination
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NHVR	National Heavy Vehicle Regulator
NTC	National Transport Commission
OSCA	Occupation Standard Classification for Australia
OSL	Occupation Shortage List
OSOM	Oversize/Overmass
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SME	Small-Medium Enterprise
SWA	Safe Work Australia
SWPC	Strategic Workforce Planning Committee
T&L	Transport and Logistics
TLI	Transport and Logistics Training Package
TWU	Transport Workers' Union
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	VET in Schools
VR	Virtual Reality

Appendix C: Methodology

ISA's workforce planning process is underpinned by deep industry knowledge and a commitment to delivering reliable and forward-looking workforce advice.

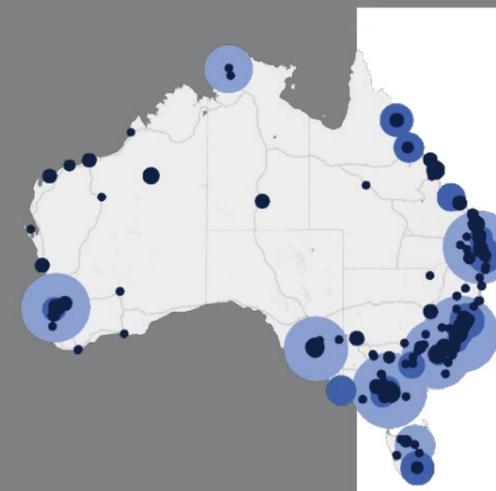
Ongoing engagement with industry informs our comprehensive approach to workforce planning. We speak regularly with stakeholders to understand real-world workforce issues. We then combine these insights with careful analysis of workforce and training data.

By reviewing evidence to continually test what we hear, we build a clear and practical picture of how industry is changing and what pressures lie ahead.

The 2026 Workforce Planning Update builds on the industry intelligence compiled in the 2025 Workforce Plan and provides information on the progress of initiatives to address identified industry challenges.

Key steps in preparing the 2026 Workforce Planning Update

- 1 Stakeholder engagement**
 Industry roundtables, leader dinners and targeted consultations validated the challenges identified in the 2025 Workforce Plan and flagged new and emerging issues
- 2 SWPC reflection**
 The SWPC reviewed consultation insights to refine themes, confirm industry priorities and shape potential actions.
- 3 Scoping survey**
 A public survey tested themes, priorities and proposed responses with industry stakeholders.
- 4 Draft development**
 Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed to illustrate identified challenges and document progress against industry priorities.
- 5 Public feedback**
 A draft update was shared with stakeholders for review and comment.
- 6 Finalisation**
 Guided by the SWPC, stakeholder feedback was incorporated to refine and complete the 2026 Workforce Planning Update.



Roundtables

Through a national series of Industry Dinners and Roundtables, ISA heard directly from industry stakeholders across Australia. This on-the-ground engagement with industry leaders, employers, unions, industry organisations and government representatives provides critical intelligence that cannot be captured through data alone. It plays a central role in understanding the real-world challenges facing the industry and clarifying where effort is most urgently needed.

Stakeholders highlighted the complex workforce challenges affecting their operations and stressed the need for collaboration to address interconnected issues within and across industry sectors. They also helped to identify practical, forward-looking solutions to advance industry priorities.

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