

31 May 2024

Executive summary

Canva, proudly founded and headquartered in Australia, is a global online visual communication platform that reaches over 185 million monthly users worldwide. Founded on the principle that creativity should be accessible to everyone, Canva is committed to empowering users globally with our intuitive design platform.

With over 4,500 employees worldwide and more than half of our team based in Australia, our goal is to continue growing and recruiting top talent in the country, which is a vibrant hub for our operations.

Through this submission, we aim to provide insight into critical areas, including:

- **Fostering a strong tech ecosystem in Australia** will require addressing current skill gaps and supporting the growth of the local talent pool to meet the evolving needs of the tech industry. This also involves implementing policies that attract and retain top global talent, thereby strengthening the overall tech sector.
- **Leveraging global talent with the rise of AI is important.** As AI is projected to significantly boost the economy, having the right talent is crucial, and targeted visa programs are essential for filling skill gaps and nurturing local talent.
- **Building a diverse workforce**, with a particular focus on increasing the representation of women in leadership and technical roles, is a key priority for Canva. Achieving these diversity targets, however, is currently challenging, and highlights the urgent need for initiatives that not only promote inclusion but also attract diverse talent from around the world to Australia.
- **The strategic importance of updating the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL)** is essential for maintaining Australia's competitive edge in the tech industry. This update ensures access to a diverse and highly skilled workforce, enabling companies like Canva to attract the critical talent needed to drive innovation and growth, particularly in emerging fields like AI.

By updating the CSOL to include critical and emerging roles, Australia can better position itself at the forefront of global technological innovation, ensuring a robust and future-proof workforce.

Investment in Australia's ICT Sector

In the Tech Council of Australia's 'The Economic Contribution of Australia's Tech Sector' report, Australia's tech sector generated a whopping \$167 billion per year and employed more than 860,000 Australians. To put that in perspective, that's 8.5% of Australia's total GDP. If it continues on this trajectory, the tech industry is expected to employ over one million Australians by 2025 while contributing more to GDP than primary industries or manufacturing by 2030.

Canva has been an integral part of this growth¹, evolving from five people sitting around a single conference table to a team of more than 4,500 people globally with over half of our team based in Australia. Over the years, we've certainly seen that it's possible to build a global technology company right here in Australia, and our commitment to nurturing a great workplace culture and building world-class teams here in Australia has enabled us to attract skilled talent from around the world, contributing to the local tech ecosystem.

Section 1

Canva's Approach to Global Talent and Work Flexibility

As we scale, access to global talent allows us to continue reaching our company goals while building a diverse team with a broad range of skills and experience. Building world-class teams remains a top priority, not only for Canva, but the entire tech sector.

Tech jobs are among the highest-paying and most flexible positions available in the country. For over 40 years, growth in tech jobs has outpaced all other occupations by a factor of four, and Australia has seen a rapid rise in tech jobs since the early 2000s. This underscores the tech sector's position as an increasingly important employer of Australians and a significant source of high-quality jobs.

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1. Canva Create," Canva, accessed 31 July 2023, <https://www.canva.com/canva-create/>.
 2. "AI Image Generator," Canva, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://www.canva.com/ai-image-generator/>.
 3. "Magic Write," Canva, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://www.canva.com/magic-write/>.
 4. "AI Photo Editing," Canva, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://www.canva.com/features/ai-photo-editing/>.
 5. "Magic Design," Canva, accessed 31 July 2023, <https://www.canva.com/magic-design/>.
 6. "Translate," Canva, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://www.canva.com/features/translate/>.
 7. "AI Product Terms," Canva, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://www.canva.com/policies/ai-product-terms/>.

o support continued growth in tech jobs we need to ensure people⁸ are receiving the right training and education domestically, and that Australia is enabling companies to address any remaining gaps through migration. Having the right composition of skills that meets demand enables companies to grow and employ more tech workers across a range of occupations. Programs like the Global Talent Visas, which allow Australian companies to bring skilled talent from overseas, are a step in the right direction.

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Additionally, Canva has adopted a flexible hybrid work model that accommodates different working styles—hybrid, permanent remote, and onsite. Nearly 85% of our Australian team is embracing our hybrid work model, providing flexibility that empowers our 'Canvanauts' to deliver their best work from metro, regional, and rural locations all across Australia.

By participating in this consultation, we look forward to sharing insights with the Australian Government that will aid in bridging current workforce gaps in the tech industry, while also focusing on¹⁰ the growth and upskilling of our local talent pool here in Australia.

Section 2

Section 2. Responses to consultation

We value the opportunity to engage in the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) consultation and provide feedback on the list of in-demand occupations for the new Skills in Demand Visa, a key component of the Australian Government's Migration Strategy for 2024.

Although Australia has a vibrant tech sector, we currently face a shortage of talent with the necessary technical skills and hyper-growth scaling expertise to meet the demand for open roles. Despite significant investments in nurturing local talent and robust recruitment efforts within Australia, with thousands of tech positions advertised monthly, the demand still outpaces the supply of talent with the right experience at this time.

9. Canva Newsroom, "Canva Developers Platform," accessed 31 July 2023 <https://www.canva.com/newsroom/news/canva-developers-platform/>.

10. "AI Safety," Canva, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://www.canva.com/policies/ai-safety/>.

According to the Tech Council of Australia's The State of Australia's Tech Ecosystem Report released in March 2024, tech skills shortages are particularly acute in technical occupations, like software engineering, where it's especially hard to find experienced technical talent. Consequently, Australia must look internationally to attract the critical talent needed to maintain and enhance its competitive edge in the global tech landscape, particularly as AI comes to the forefront, while simultaneously investing in and nurturing our local home-grown talent pipelines.

As we look to the future at Canva, reviewing the Draft Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) is key to understanding which roles are essential for our operations and bold growth plans.

The roles we have identified in this submission not only align with our strategic goals but are also essential in addressing the existing skill gaps in the tech sector. By advocating for the inclusion of these crucial roles in the CSOL, our goal is to ensure steady access to the necessary global talent to continue leading in the highly competitive digital design space.

Canva's growth in Australia

Last year, we significantly expanded our team with 67% of our total hired roles based in Australia.

The roles filled at Canva have been diverse, with 43% in software engineering, 16% as ICT business analysts, more than 10% in multimedia specialties, 2% in marketing, and the remaining 29% across various other areas. As of April 2024, 66% of Canva's total open roles are located in Australia. This robust hiring activity underscores Canva's commitment to growing and diversifying our workforce in Australia.

When we cross-reference the roles we need to fill with data from LinkedIn Talent Pool Reports, it underscores the urgent need for skilled visas in Australia. This is particularly true in certain job sectors where the demand far exceeds the local talent available.

11. "AI Product Terms," Canva, accessed 31 July 2023, <https://www.canva.com/policies/ai-product-terms/>.

12. Canva, "Report Content," Canva Help Center, access 31 July 2023, https://www.canva.com/en_au/help/report-content/.

For instance, the hiring demand for software engineers is high, yet there has been no growth in the available talent pool over the last year. Similarly, business analysts have seen a 2% decline in available talent, despite high demand. Although there has been a slight 1% increase in the talent pool for marketing specialists, the demand remains high, suggesting that the current growth in available talent is still insufficient. Multimedia specialists, while facing moderate demand, have also only seen a marginal 2% increase in available talent. Facilitating skilled visas can bridge these gaps, ensuring that critical sectors are supported and can continue to thrive, enhancing innovation and economic growth in Australia.

By bringing in skilled talent, it enables Canva to have the power to create more teams, develop more products, and spark greater innovation. These experienced professionals don't just enhance our current capabilities, they lay the foundation for our future growth and innovation. This comprehensive strategy is key to meeting the evolving demands of the tech industry and ensuring Canva's continued success locally. We also partner with organisations such as The Field to widen our pool of Australian talent and tap into underserved talent communities, such as people with disabilities, in Australia.

With regards to future growth, Canva's dedication to building a diverse and skilled workforce is underscored by our significant investments in nurturing local talent through initiatives like our Internship Program. By example, the majority of our most recent intern conversion offers went to women, which included offers through our partnership with CareerTrackers, an organisation that supports young First Nations talent. This pivotal initiative enables Canva to build a diverse pipeline of future Canvanauts, provide growth and education opportunities for the next generation, create management experiences for emerging leaders, and enhance our organisational capabilities. With the program growing significantly over the past few years, Canva remains committed to developing local talent.

Complementing our efforts to develop local talent, Canva also strategically utilises global expertise through the Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) visa program. This approach not only diversifies our talent pool but also enhances our ability to mentor and develop future leaders within the company.

Most of Canva's skilled hires are under the Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) visa program, with the majority being medium-to-senior talent. For example, around 6% of our Australian workforce hold a TSS visa, and out of that number, almost 21% act in senior roles where they play a major role in helping to mentor, support and develop local talent in Australia. Additionally, almost 23% of our intern coaches in 2024 held a visa or permanent residency. The inclusion of skilled migrants as managers and mentors in our Internship Program has significantly enriched this initiative.

By integrating skilled professionals, like those under the TSS visa program, into mentoring roles, we ensure that our interns benefit from specialised skilled guidance and mentorship. These mentors contribute global insights and advanced skills that enrich our interns' learning experiences in specialised areas like engineering and design.

In addition to our Internship Program, our focus on nurturing local talent is further supported by substantial investments in early talent and internal training programs, which include partnerships with universities and high schools across Australia. This not only helps grow local talent but also strengthens our teams through the Canva University programs, and as mentioned above, our ongoing partnership with CareerTrackers, working with young First Nations Talent. Together, these interconnected initiatives reinforce our commitment to fostering a skilled and diverse workforce.

Challenges remain, however, in retaining this nurtured talent due to visa limitations, especially in fields like engineering where a significant number of foreign students educated in Australia often leave the country. Similar to trends seen in countries like the UK, where reskilling the existing workforce poses a major challenge, Australia faces the task of retaining trained talent that is ready to contribute to the economy. Addressing these visa constraints could help retain these individuals, ensuring a more robust workforce development strategy and preventing the drain of valuable skills from our economy. This holistic approach not only supports Canva's growth, but importantly contributes to the broader tech industry's needs for a skilled and diverse workforce in Australia.

13. OECD, "Artificial Intelligence & Responsible Business Conduct," OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, <https://mneguidelines.oecd.org/RBC-and-artificial-intelligence.pdf>.

14. McKinsey, "What is Generative AI?," McKinsey Explainers, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-generative-ai>.

CSOL Targeted for Consultation

From a Canva perspective, our focus is particularly on roles that directly enhance our ability to innovate, such as technology development, creative content creation, and market expansion.

The below Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) continue to be essential to Canva as they are specialised skills that continue to make a substantial impact, helping us stay ahead in the fast-paced world of design and digital media:

- Software Engineers (ANZSCO - 261313)
- ICT Business Analysts (ANZSCO - 261111)
- Multimedia Specialists (ANZSCO - 261211)
- Marketing Specialists (ANZSCO - 225113)
- Corporate General Manager (ANZSCO - 111211)¹⁵
- Management Consultants (ANZSCO - 224713)
- Systems Analysts (ANZSCO - 261112)
- Analyst Programmers (ANZSCO - 261311)
- Computer Network and Systems Engineers (ANZSCO - 263111)
- ICT Systems Test Engineers (ANZSCO - 263213)
- ICT Security Specialists (ANZSCO - 262112)
- Public Relations Professionals (ANZSCO - 225311)
- Video Producers (ANZSCO - 212318)

Whilst these critical roles are essential to our growth, the above list does not encompass all of the roles that Canva needs to be able to sponsor under, such as Product Managers that currently sit under ICT Business Analysts (ANZSCO - 261111).¹⁶ Updating the list as part of this consultation, will ensure that we can continue to sponsor key talent needed to deliver against our mission. Furthermore, by ensuring these critical roles remain within the CSOL, we can better ensure that we have access to the necessary global talent.¹⁷

15. European Commission, "Press Corner - European Commission Statement," European Commission, accessed 3 August 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3721.

16. GDPR.eu, "Data Protection Impact Assessment Template," GDPR.eu, [https://gdpr.eu/data-protection-impact-assessment-template/#:~:text=A%20Data%20Protection%20Impact%20Assessment%20\(DPIA\)%20is%20required%20under%20the,help%20you%20execute%20the%20assessment](https://gdpr.eu/data-protection-impact-assessment-template/#:~:text=A%20Data%20Protection%20Impact%20Assessment%20(DPIA)%20is%20required%20under%20the,help%20you%20execute%20the%20assessment).

17. OECD AI Policy Observatory, "Algorithmic Impact Assessment Tool," OECD, <https://oecd.ai/en/catalogue/tools/algorithmic-impact-assessment-tool>.

Innovation in the tech sector is driven by a combination of cutting-edge technology, creative solutions, and strategic market positioning. To maintain our competitive edge, it is essential to have a workforce that is not only skilled but also able to adapt to rapidly changing technological landscapes. For example, the demand for Machine Learning (ML) Engineers has already surpassed supply, highlighting an urgent need for specialised skills in this area. While we are committed to cross-training our current engineers, an immediate and focused strategy is essential to support our rapid expansion into AI.

According to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Data61's Artificial Intelligence Roadmap, AI and digital technologies are poised to significantly impact Australia's economy, with a potential contribution of AUD \$315 billion by 2028. On a global scale, AI is projected to be worth AUD \$22.17 trillion by 2030. To capitalise on this potential, CSIRO estimates that the Australian information, communications and technology (ICT) sector will need to grow at a rate of 20,000 additional workers per year to meet demand. This underscores the urgent need for increased research and development (R&D) investments, attracting the world's best talent to Australia, and fostering the creation of homegrown products and technologies for export to the global market. By focusing on these areas, Australia can solidify its position as a leader in the tech industry and drive sustainable economic growth.

At Canva, we view AI as a collaborative partner that enhances human creativity, and we integrate AI into our products through Magic Studio™, Magic Write™, Magic Design™, Translate and more. We've seen over 6.5 billion uses of our AI products with over 200+ new designs created per second. Our industry-leading Canva Shield also ensures that our AI tools are safe, fair, and inclusive, establishing Canva as a local leader in AI-driven design innovation.

These types of major advances in technology necessitate updating the CSOL to reflect the evolving needs of the tech industry and the emergence of new, crucial roles. Specifically, roles such as Data Scientists, Data Analysts, User Experience Designers, Cyber Security Engineers, and DevOps Engineers have become integral to driving growth and innovation. Over the past two years, the relevance of these roles has significantly increased, particularly in AI-related fields. These roles are not only about keeping up with industry trends but are critical for several reasons

- Data Scientists (ANZSCO - 224115) and Data Analysts (ANZSCO - 224114): These professionals analyse vast amounts of data to derive actionable insights, driving informed decision-making and strategic planning.
- User Experience Designers (ANZSCO - 261113): They enhance the usability and aesthetic appeal of our products, ensuring a seamless and engaging user experience.
- Cyber Security Engineers (ANZSCO - 261315): As cyber threats become more sophisticated, these experts are crucial in protecting our systems and data, maintaining user trust, and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.
- DevOps Engineers (ANZSCO - 261316): They streamline IT operations, improve software development efficiency, and foster a culture of continuous improvement, which is vital for maintaining our competitive edge.

Incorporating these roles into strategic workforce planning will enhance our decision-making capabilities, bolster system security, improve user interactions with digital technologies, and streamline IT operations. This will not only ensure that Canva remains at the forefront of innovation but also that Australia retains its competitiveness in the global tech arena.

Moreover, updating the CSOL within the framework of the ANZSCO to include these roles will facilitate skilled migration policies that attract top global talent. This, in turn, supports local talent development strategies by fostering a collaborative and innovative ecosystem where knowledge transfer and skill development are prioritised.

In conclusion, updating the CSOL to reflect these critical roles is not just about meeting current demands but about future-proofing our workforce to navigate and lead in an increasingly complex and dynamic digital landscape. This strategic move will position Australia at the cutting edge of global technological innovation.

Conclusion

The dynamics of the current labour market have seen a significant portion of the workforce facing reskilling challenges. Given this, Australia's tech industry must keep up with the changing needs and align our current skilled migrant framework to ensure we're able to recruit and retain talent, enabling a robust workforce development strategy.

The targeted update of the CSOL is not only a strategic necessity but also a critical measure to maintain Australia's competitive edge in the tech industry. With AI playing an increasingly pivotal role, having the right talent is essential for Australia to harness AI as a tool to enhance creativity and be at the forefront of innovation. By ensuring access to a diverse and highly skilled workforce, Canva aims to continue our trailblazing path in the tech sector, fostering innovation, and driving growth in the Australian and global markets.

This submission is not merely a reflection of our current needs but a forward-looking plan that aligns with broader industry trends and advancements in technology. Canva remains committed to staying at the forefront of the digital landscape, supporting our team's growth and innovation, and contributing meaningfully to Australia's growing digital economy.

18. GitHub Blog, "Supporting Open Source and Open Science in the EU AI Act," GitHub, accessed 3 August 2023, <https://github.blog/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Supporting-Open-Source-and-Open-Science-in-the-EU-AI-Act.pdf>.

19. G7 Leaders. "G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué." The White House, May 20, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/g7-hiroshima-leaders-communique/>.