

# Statement of Expectations

## Jobs and Skills Australia

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### Introduction

This Statement sets out the Government's expectations for Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA).

JSA is a key economic advisory body providing independent advice on current, emerging and future workforce, skills and training issues to improve employment opportunities and economic growth.

### The role of Jobs and Skills Australia

The Government expects JSA to perform a leading role in helping to strengthen Australia's economy by undertaking research and analysis, harnessing insights from industry (business and unions), undertaking workforce forecasting that takes an occupation and industry-based view, and preparing capacity and cohort studies for emerging and growing industries. This will provide a greater understanding of the current capacity of the workforce, and the emerging and future Australian workforce skills needs to inform Australia's policy and program settings across a range of areas, including vocational education and training (VET), higher education, and skilled migration. As an independent advisor to Government, JSA develops and maintains a set of high-quality datasets, dashboards and tools to ensure understanding of labour markets, including skills shortages, occupational demand and other issues.

Given this remit, the work of JSA will have an impact across a range of Australian Government portfolios, State and Territory Governments, unions and industry bodies.

The Government recognises and respects the independent advice provided by JSA. I expect JSA to fulfill its functions in good faith and to the best of its ability.

JSA's advice to Government is to be supported by genuine consultation and collaboration with tripartite partners. Transparent tripartite engagement with stakeholders ensures industry and cohort-specific issues are considered in advice to Government about skills shortages and labour market issues. JSAs deliverables are to be firmly aligned to their agreed annual work plans and resourcing achieved through Budget processes.

JSA's core legislated functions are outlined in the [Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022](#) (JSA Act).

### Deliverables and expectations

The Government expects JSA to be a central economic advisory body that is a highly respected and trusted voice on labour market and skills and training needs and issues. JSA is expected to play a significant stewardship role as part of the broader skills architecture.

The Government's expectations for JSA are that it will:

- deliver timely, relevant and responsive analysis and advice of the highest integrity and quality
- engage in genuine consultation and collaboration with tripartite partners
- be efficient and effective in its use of resources
- administer responsibilities in a way that minimises compliance costs for business and the community
- work in partnership with Australian, State and Territory Government Ministers and Agencies and a broad range of stakeholders
- exercise leadership of Australia's national workforce and skills data system, working in partnership with other organisations to expand and improve the quality and awareness of data services available to governments and the community
- inform the best approach to deliver skills to a modern economy.

## **Immediate priorities**

JSA should continue to focus on establishing and enhancing key stakeholder relationships. The Government expects JSA to work closely with tripartite partners, including the newly established Ministerial Advisory Board, to ensure advice to government and stakeholders is high quality, balanced and incorporates a wide range of views. Establishing strong working relationships with the members of the Board and the Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) is crucial, as these critical stakeholder groups will inform JSA's work.

JSA should continue build its skilled migration advisory functions as an immediate priority, including work on providing advice to the Government on the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL). I expect the stakeholder relationships above will inform this function, and in reciprocity, help build a broader range of industry stakeholders.

Timely delivery and promulgation of the studies and products already agreed in the 2023-24 Annual Work Plan, including the Early Childhood Education and Care, Food Supply Chain capacity studies, international students employment outcomes cohort study and research into the VET First Nations Workforce. These are expected to be of high quality and rigorous with a focus on their useability for Government and key stakeholders. JSA will be expected to champion and promote these products to key stakeholders and the broader public to demonstrate the valuable contribution that JSA's evidence base provides.

The development of a well considered workplan for 2024-25, following the process outlined in the JSA Act, is also a near term priority. The workplan for 2024-25 should build on existing work, add new projects that are consistent with the Government's long term priorities outlined below and be closely linked to the functions outlined in the JSA Act.

JSA is expected to provide analysis across the tertiary education sector. This may take the form of explicit advice from a whole of economy approach to both vocational education and training and higher education data. This is to include the formation of an appropriate forum to obtain advice from relevant stakeholders on matters relating to the tertiary education sector.

An additional priority for JSA will be developing a long-term strategy and vision in consultation with the Ministerial Advisory Board. The Government expects that JSA will look beyond their next annual work plan at the likely future labour market and skill system priorities and consider the data, analysis and research that would support planning for these priorities. The Government expects this long-term strategy and vision will inform the statutory review of operation of JSA's enabling legislation.

## Ongoing priorities

The Government expects JSA to provide advice that considers how Australia might maximise jobs and skills related opportunities and address challenges associated with the major forces, mega trends and transitions likely to impact the Australian economy over coming decades, including but not limited to:

- Skills and labour shortages
- Emerging and growing occupations and industries including the *A Future Made in Australia* initiative, clean energy and the net zero transformation
- Skilled migration
- Removing barriers to achieve gender equality
- Digital transformation
- Growth of the care and support economy
- The construction workforce to support increased housing supply
- Employment services reform
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- International students outcomes, including through the International Education and Skills Strategic Framework
- Informing the VET reform agenda and ambitions for a more harmonised tertiary education system
- Addressing the findings of the Employment White Paper, and supporting implementation of the National Skills Agreement, and the Australian Universities Accord.

The Government also expects JSA to continue providing advice on Australia's migration program, including to inform the Government's skilled migration reform agenda. JSA should focus on how the VET and higher education systems and migration can work better together to meet Australia's current and future skills needs.

## Relationship with the Government, including the responsible Minister and portfolio, and other departments and agencies

The key role of JSA is to provide advice to the Minister for Skills and Training and the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Secretary) on Australia's current and emerging labour market (including workforce needs) and Australia's current, emerging and future skills and training priorities.

JSA should provide the Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Secretary, and any other relevant portfolio Minister with accurate and timely advice on significant issues in its core areas of business. This may include advice on matters where the Government speaks publicly on any labour market, workforce or skills issues, operational and budget issues, development of annual work plan, capacity studies, workforce forecasting, data analysis and collection, and identification of labour market imbalances. It also includes information and advice to assist with briefing Ministers and the Secretary for meetings, media, social media and correspondence.

The Government expects JSA and the department will maintain a close and productive relationship, particularly with the relevant areas of Skills and Training, Employment and Workforce, and Workplace Relations Groups. While JSA undertakes analysis and develops advice, the department remains the policy lead for employment, skills and training. The Department is expected to take account of JSA's analysis and advice when developing policy advice for Government on skills and workforce issues.

The Government expects the Department and JSA to work collaboratively on the administrative procedures associated with the commissioning of capacity, cohort and other studies. This includes keeping each other informed of developments and resource limitations.

The Government expects JSA to engage with any Australian Government Minister, department, agency, or entity, with an interest in, or responsibilities for, the supply of skilled workers, the labour market or workforce development, and any requiring advice on JSA's core legislated functions as set out in the JSA Act.

JSA is expected to actively engage across Government departments and agencies for the purposes of sharing JSA insights and data and to seek input on JSA studies, products and information of relevance to those portfolios. The Government expects that JSA will work with Government departments and agencies to commission work from JSA, including in the form of capacity and cohort studies, that would be funded through cost recovery from commissioning agencies. JSA should work to further develop and mature this cost recovery model in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

The Government also expects that JSA will work cooperatively with other Government departments and agencies to promote JSA's data, analysis and research and ensure it is effectively disseminated to those agencies responsible for implementing evidence-based policy development and reforms.

## **External engagement and communication**

The Government expects JSA to develop and maintain robust, effective and collaborative working relationships to effectively consult and perform its legislated functions.

JSA is a trusted source of independent and expert advice providing valuable information, data and analysis for its wide range of diverse stakeholders, but this requires JSA to continue to strengthen and broaden its engagement activities. The Government expects JSA to embed a strong tripartite approach to collaboration and consultation across all stakeholders when exercising its core functions, consistent with the Government's commitment for JSA to develop and harness effective relationships as a key component of the tripartite partnership approach.

The Government expects that JSA will undertake broad stakeholder engagement to support the development of studies and products. This includes effective and genuine engagement with a range

of priority or disadvantaged cohorts, such as First Nations Australians, regional Australians, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse background and people with disability. The Government also expects JSA to broaden the sources of qualitative information collected to inform key products, particularly to incorporate the voice of workers, job seekers and students into JSA products.

The Ministerial Advisory Board is a crucial component in the overall governance and stakeholder engagement arrangements for JSA. While not a decision-making body, the Board is expected to provide advice and insight to the Commissioner and Minister for Skills and Training to guide the delivery and performance of JSA.

The Government also expects JSA to consult appropriately with state and territory government Ministers and agencies in the provision of advice on workforce planning and skills issues, to ensure a nationally consistent approach to labour market and skills forecasting and a more joined up approach to workforce planning. State and territory governments have responsibility for many policy levers that may impact JSA core functions. JSA's engagement with state and territory governments is legislated in the JSA Act, with the relationship enhanced through the state and territory representatives on the Board, JSA's State and Territory Government Partnership Forum and other relevant groups. JSA may be required to attend or contribute to the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council and its related Skills Senior Officials Network.

JSA is also expected to work in a collaborative partnership with JSCs, as the voice of industry, recognising and supporting their on-the-ground experience and industry expertise, to align workforce planning for their industry sectors, creating a coherent understanding of the skills landscape, and developing appropriate strategies to address workforce challenges and skills gaps. JSA and JSCs perform separate but complementary roles across the skills and training system. JSA has an economy-wide remit covering labour market, workforce, skills and training needs; whereas JSCs undertake workforce planning and targeted actions to diagnose and address skills and training challenges for their sectors. The Government expects that JSA will work with JSCs to support workforce planning and on the development and conduct of capacity studies relevant to the industries that each JSC represents. JSC's industry intelligence and JSA's national datasets will complement each other.