



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

# Statement of Intent

This statement responds to the Statement of Expectations issued by the Minister for Skills and Training to the Commissioner of Jobs and Skills Australia on 20 June 2024.

## Immediate priorities

JSA has devoted significant effort to establishing ongoing and time limited engagement mechanisms to build and enhance key stakeholder relationships. These mechanisms are outlined in JSA's *Engagement and outreach strategy* and are elaborated below.

As outlined in the Government's Migration Strategy, JSA has been tasked with providing advice on which occupations should qualify for the Core Skills Pathway of the new Skills in Demand visa for temporary employer sponsored migration. JSA has developed a new migration labour market indicator model drawing on a wide range of data sources to form the starting point for this advice, which is currently being supplemented by extensive stakeholder engagement. This will come through an online survey, submissions process, a structured qualitative research project looking at the real-life experiences of people interacting with the temporary migration system and extensive bilateral engagements with stakeholders. This methodology will inform JSA's advice to Government in late 2024 and lessons from this year's process will be incorporated to improve JSA's advice in future years. Furthermore, JSA continues to work closely with the Department of Home Affairs to provide advice on policy development work for other elements of the Migration Strategy.

Major projects underway as part of JSA's 2023-24 work plan are nearing completion. The Early Childhood Education and Care capacity study will be complete on schedule and is expected to be published in August 2024. The Food Supply Chain Capacity study has been delayed with the agreement of the Minister for Skills and Training, reflecting feedback from stakeholders on the time needed to finish a quality report. The project will now be completed in September 2024. The International Students outcome and pathways study will be completed in August 2024, slightly behind schedule due to delays with data access.

JSA's work plan for 2024-25 has been developed with extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. This includes input from a public submission process and engagement with the JSA Ministerial Advisory Board (MAB), Jobs and Skills Councils, State and Territory governments and Commonwealth departments and agencies. In addition to finalising and promoting existing projects and maintaining ongoing products, the 2024-25 work plan will focus on the potential impacts of Artificial Intelligence on the labour market and the education and training systems as well as opportunities for the labour market and education and training system to support greater gender equality. Initial scoping work will be undertaken on projects on labour market outcomes for first nations people and better inclusion of people living with a disability.

The work plan for 2024-25 will also include continuation of existing work on analysing the performance of the skills system in meeting Australia's current, emerging and future skills needs. This includes analysing the performance of both the VET system and the higher education system, through continued development of linked data assets to look at outcomes from education and training as well as pathways from the education system into the labour market. JSA will also continue to focus on how the VET and higher education sectors can

work better together as a more coherent tertiary education system. To support this work, JSA will establish an Education and Training Reference Group, under the terms of reference for the MAB as well as convening a broader education and training sector forum to engage with a broader range of stakeholders. These groups will assist JSA in formulating its advice on issues like tertiary education attainment targets, the establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission and monitoring the outcomes under the National Skills Agreement.

JSA makes extensive use of linked administrative data to deliver high quality, detailed analysis while minimising reporting costs for business and the community. This includes JSA's Skills Tracker and VET National Data assets and the use of administrative data to supplement the survey of Australian adult literacy and numeracy skills, Understanding Skills Across Australia, and provide insights into the skill levels for priority groups.

A new strategic plan is under development, to be completed in the second half of 2024. This will set out a multi-year planning horizon, longer term outcomes for JSA as well as a framework for measuring impact. This new strategic plan will support the development of a multi-year work plan for JSA's activities, focused on fostering inclusive participation; understanding today's workforce, shaping Australia's future workforce; optimising pathways and system architecture and activating and informed dialogue.

## **Ongoing priorities**

JSA's work plans for 2023-24 and 2024-25 explicitly cover all priorities listed in the Minister's statement of expectations with the exception of the following items:

- construction workforce to support increased housing supply
- employment services reform

In the case of construction, JSA is collaborating with BuildSkills, the Jobs and Skills Council covering the construction sector and liaising with other Government agencies to support workforce development efforts required to increase housing supply.

In relation to employment services reform, JSA is supporting the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) in Government consideration of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services report Rebuilding Employment Services.

JSA will give specific focus to how its work can support the Future Made in Australia initiative, with attention paid to the 2024-25 workplan and how this work could be used to support the future development of the initiative. Consideration will be given to the need for a specific project to support the initiative in the 2025-26 workplan.

JSA continues to publish a wide range of labour market and skills system data in engaging and user-friendly ways through products like Jobs and Skills Atlas, Labour Market Insights and Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation to expand and improve the quality of information available to the community.

## **Relationships within Government**

JSA maintains a standing capability to provide information and advice to the Ministers for Skills and Training and Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department on all matters in JSA's legislative remit. JSA and the Department have developed a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the close working relationship between the entities and articulates the services provided by JSA to the Department and vice versa. The annual JSA work plan is developed in collaboration with the Department.

JSA maintains a standing Interdepartmental Committee to engage all Commonwealth departments and agencies in its work. This committee is a vehicle for departments and

agencies to provide input into the development of the annual work plan and major studies and projects, as well as an opportunity to discuss workforce related issues being dealt with across the Commonwealth, including promoting the use of JSA products. The IDC is the primary vehicle through which we identify opportunities for departments to commission JSA studies, which are then followed up bilaterally. In addition, the JSA Commissioner is available to meet with Commonwealth Ministers as requested.

## External Engagement and Communication

JSA's external engagement activities are conducted according to its *Engagement and outreach strategy*. Major projects generally have their own project steering committee, which is tripartite and comprises representatives from unions, business, the education and training sector, Commonwealth and state and territory governments, and experts in the field of the study. These groups provide advice on the terms of reference, study methodology, analysis, findings and recommendations. For studies which do not have their own discrete project steering committee, JSA maintains forums for consultation with:

- the Ministerial Advisory Board
- Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)
- States and Territories
- Commonwealth departments and agencies.

Some JSA products, such as the Skills Priority List and Core Skills Occupation List, also include discrete stakeholder engagement plans which include public submissions processes, surveys and extensive bilateral engagement. JSA also maintains a consultation hub on the website to facilitate broad engagement.

JSA's engagement with states and territory governments is extensive, through:

- State and territory representation on the MAB
- periodic presentation to the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council, including consultation on the annual work plan
- State and Territory Partnership forum
- specialist working groups to consider labour market and skills system issues
- participation in regular Federated Industry Skills Network meetings
- regular and ad hoc bilateral meetings with jurisdictions.

JSA maintains dialogue with JSCs through attendance at the quarterly JSC CEO forums, regular joint workshops and bilateral meetings and projects. The department, JSA and JSCs have developed an operating protocol to ensure a smooth flow of communication and engagement. JSA has developed a data sharing platform for the JSCs to facilitate access to all of JSA's data resources and provided input into and feedback on JSA workforce plans.

JSA's engagement activities will also move to a more proactive stance with the appointment of Deputy Commissioners, as permitted under the Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022. The appointment of Deputy Commissioners will substantially increase our capacity to more proactively engage with a wider range of stakeholders and raise the profile of JSA's work.

In the second half of 2024, JSA will develop a new communication strategy, with the aim of further lifting JSA's public profile and taking a more proactive stance with media and communications activities.