Workforce and Skills Analysis

Annex

FSO Workforce Plan 2026

Future Skills Organisation is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. PO Box 16194, Collins Street West, Melbourne VIC 8007.

Contents

Introduction

This Workforce and Skills Analysis is the detailed evidence Annex to FSO Workforce Plan 2026: *Mixed Signals, Future Opportunities*. The main report sets out the national picture for the Finance, Technology and Business (FTB) sectors and what it means for workers, employers and the training system. This analysis sits beside it, presenting evidence on how occupations and educational products are performing, and what skills and knowledge changes are occurring across these sectors.

> **How to use this document**
> The document covers three sectors: Finance, Technology and Business. Within each sector, related occupations and the qualifications that feed them are grouped into clusters. You can skip straight to the sector or cluster of your choice using the full contents list which includes live links.
>
> Prefer to get answers directly? You can use the Workforce Intelligence Agent to access the content from this annex along with Workforce Plan 2026 data or use the Workforce Dashboards to explore the data yourself.
>
> Visit the FSO website to access the full suite of Workforce Plan 2026 products.

Evidence base

This report annex draws on three evidence streams:

1. **Quantitative data**: Occupation workforce size and composition, projections to 2035, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education enrolments and outcomes, and generative artificial intelligence (AI) exposure scores. Data sources are indicated through D references throughout, with a full list in the Data Sources. Key terms related to these measures can be found below.
2. **Consultation (qualitative) data**: Stakeholder evidence was gathered through the FSO Workforce Roadshows, meetings, interviews, and a survey. Where relevant to workforce planning, intelligence gathered through other FSO projects has also been integrated into this report annex.
3. **Literature, policy and international sources**: Published research, government policy documents, grey literature, and international workforce analysis are used.

Use of AI

This report was prepared with assistance from AI tools. Human judgement and oversight were maintained throughout, and all AI-assisted content was reviewed and verified by subject matter experts prior to publication. The use of AI reflects a commitment to responsible adoption of emerging technologies while maintaining rigorous quality standards and human oversight.

Key terms

These key terms are used throughout this report annex. Please refer to the Glossary and Acronyms section for a full list.

Group	Term	Definition
Artificial intelligence	Artificial intelligence (AI)	Digital systems that perform tasks normally requiring human judgement, such as analysing data, generating content, recognising patterns or supporting decisions.
	Augmentation exposure	A measure of the potential for an occupation's tasks to be enhanced, rather than replaced, by generative AI (its generative AI augmentation exposure), reported on a zero-to-one scale. Scores describe technical potential; actual adoption will vary.

Group	Term	Definition
	Automation exposure	A measure of the potential for an occupation's tasks to be automated by generative AI (its generative AI automation exposure), reported on a zero-to-one scale. Scores describe technical potential; actual adoption will vary.
	Generative AI	A class of AI that creates new content, such as text, code, images or audio, in response to prompts, rather than only classifying or predicting from existing data.
Education and training	Training package	A nationally endorsed set of qualifications, skill sets and units of competency (UoC) for an industry, used as the basis for accredited VET.
	Enrolments	The count of students enrolled in a VET qualification in a given year, regardless of when they started.
	Commencements	The count of students who begin a qualification in a given year, used to measure new entry into a training pathway.
	Completion rates	The proportion of students who finish a qualification, reported here as the observed four-year completion rate for a commencing cohort (the NCVER measure).
	Field of education	A classification grouping qualifications and courses by subject area, used to compare training and higher education activity across disciplines.
	Graduate outcomes	Measures of what students do after finishing a qualification, such as employment, further study and the relevance of training to their job.
	National Training Register	The national register of nationally recognised training (training.gov.au), recording training packages, qualifications and the registered training organisations approved to deliver them.
Occupation	Attrition	The rate at which workers leave an occupation or the workforce, through retirement, career change or other exits, creating demand for replacement workers.
	Gender Segregation Intensity Scale	A Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) measure of the female and male share within an occupation, used to rate how gender-segregated each occupation is.
	Occupation	A grouping of jobs involving similar tasks and skills, classified in this report using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).
	Occupation Shortage List	The Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) annual list of occupations assessed as in shortage, used as the basis for the Core Skills Occupation List. Distinct from the quarterly Occupation Shortage Report.
	Shortage	An assessment that demand for workers in an occupation exceeds available supply, as rated on the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Occupation Shortage List.
	Workforce projections	Trend-based modelling of future workforce demand, supply, attrition, education, migration and job movement to 2035, prepared for FSO and read as a baseline rather than a prediction.

Finance

The finance workforce is growing but highly exposed to generative AI, with supply likely to be a binding future constraint. Most finance occupations added workers over the past decade, and many are projected to keep growing to 2035. The largest projected shortfalls, in accounting clerks, bookkeepers and finance brokers among others, come from workers leaving faster than new entrants arrive. Attrition drives the gaps in this sector, and it is the recurring story across its occupations.[D2,D3]

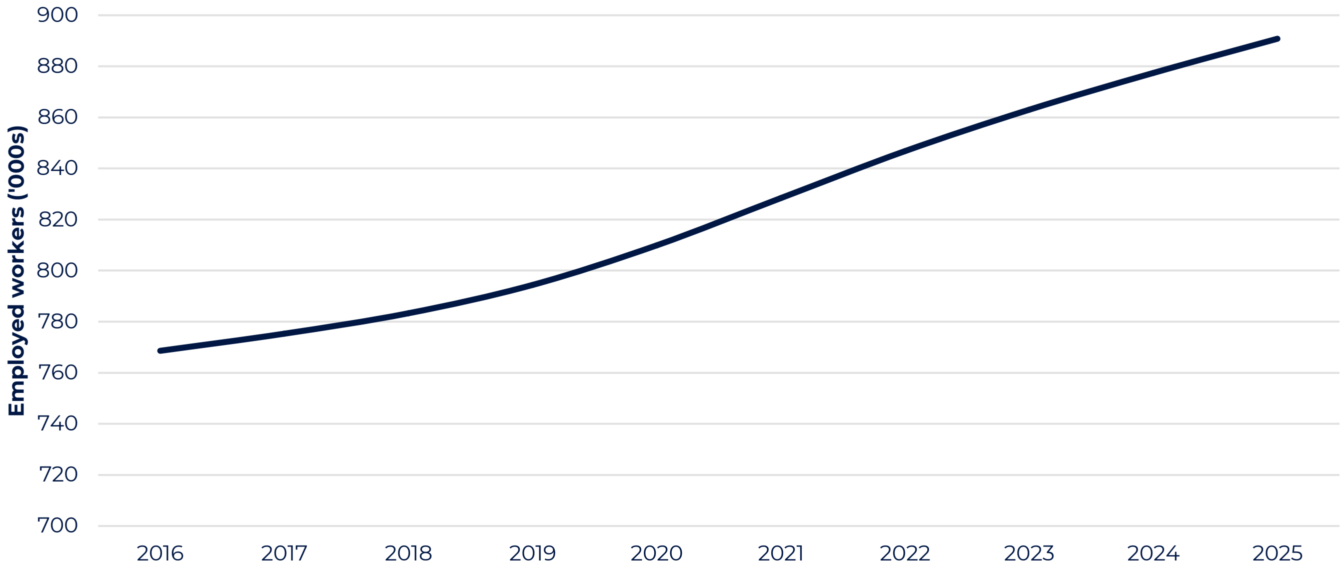

Figure 1: *Finance sector workforce, employment 2016 to 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

The finance occupations facing the greatest supply shortfalls, accounting clerks and bookkeepers, are also among those with the highest generative AI automation exposure.[D4] The impact of generative AI on these workforces may result in softening of demand while creating increased need for upskilling and reskilling as tasks change. Roles with judgement-heavy tasks, including accountants, finance managers and advisers, have higher generative AI augmentation exposure[D4], where these tools may change the work with human-level judgement continuing to play a large role.

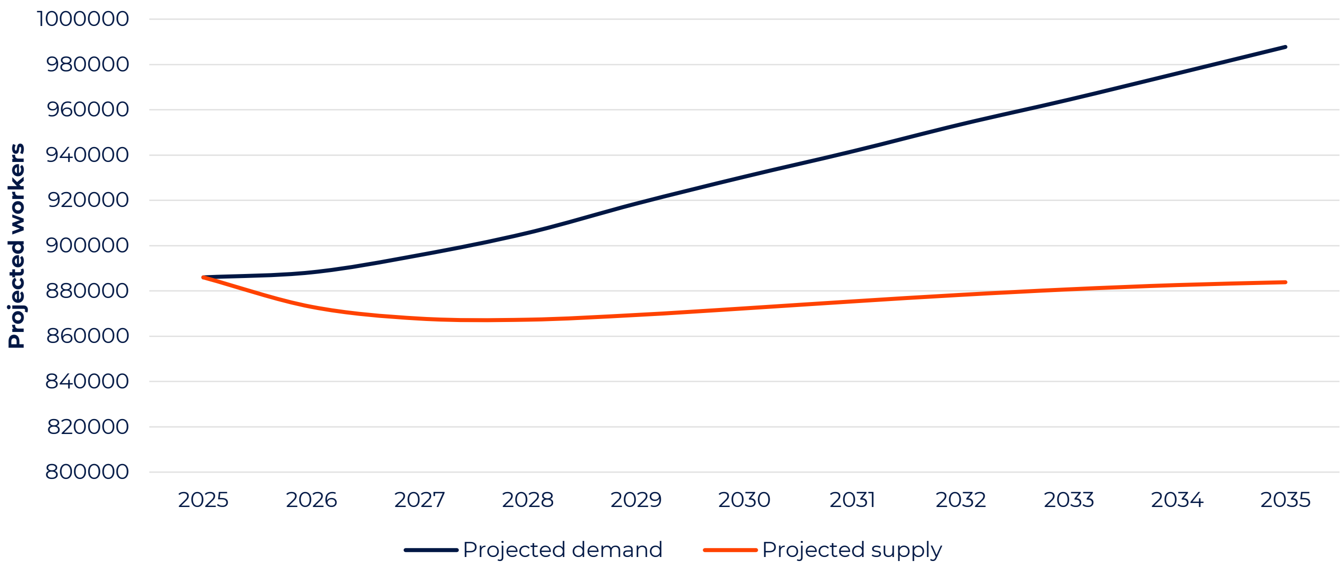

Figure 2: *Finance sector projected workforce demand and supply, 2025 to 2035.*

Source: Future Skills Organisation and Oxford Economics Australia 2026, projections data.[D3]

VET enrolments in the Financial Services (FNS) training package have remained flat since 2020, moving between 59,000 and 71,000 a year and reaching about 67,000 in 2024. Beneath that steady total, growth is uneven: finance and mortgage broking enrolments have climbed steeply, while several specialist qualifications have few or no enrolments.[D5]

Shifting to tertiary education, commencements in accounting, and banking and finance bachelor degrees have declined over this period, from around 12,800 full-time equivalent students in 2020 to around 10,300 in 2024.[D8]

More students move through VET than higher education each year. However, the two systems count different things: VET figures are total enrolments while the higher education figures are commencing full-time-equivalent students. They should be read as parallel pictures rather than a direct comparison.[D5,D8]

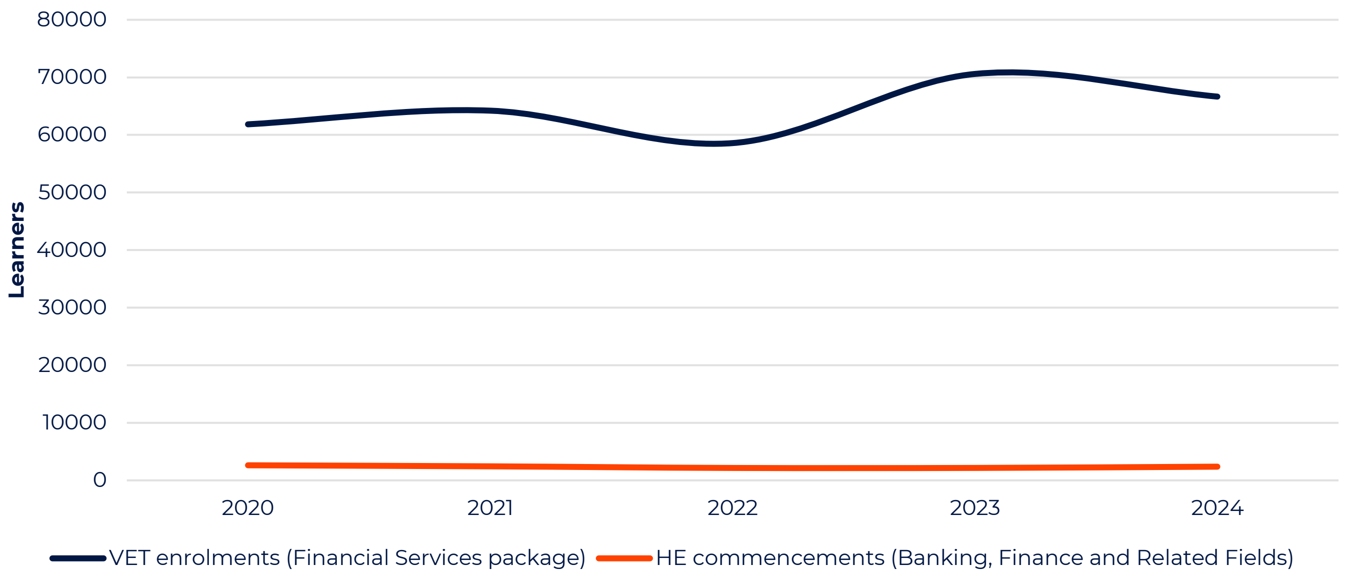

Figure 3: *Finance sector training, VET enrolments and higher education commencements, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Regulation is rapidly reshaping finance skills. Several reforms are changing what finance workers need to know: the mandatory climate-related financial disclosure regime,[1] the operational risk standard for prudentially regulated institutions,[2] the advice reforms flowing from the Quality of Advice Review,[3,4] the expansion of anti-money laundering obligations to new professions,[5] and payday superannuation.[6] Each lands on different parts of the workforce, changing what workers in those roles need to know and be able to do.

Connecting to the wider evidence base: These sector trends are detailed in the cluster sections that follow, and the underlying workforce and training data is available to explore in the Workforce Dashboards. The main report places these finance findings alongside those for technology and business in the national picture.

Active projects

Four areas of finance training are being examined through active FSO projects:

- Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll: A Needs and Gaps Analysis examining these qualifications.
- Finance and Mortgage Broking: A Training Product Development project updating the Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking and the Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management.
- Insurance: A Needs and Gaps Analysis examining these qualifications.
- Sustainable Finance: A Training Product Development project developing new products related to Sustainable Finance Disclosures for use within Accounting, Bookkeeping, and Quality Auditing.

Cluster 1: Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate III in Accounts Administration · *Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping · Diploma of Accounting · Advanced Diploma of Accounting · Diploma of Payroll Services*

Higher Education fields of education in scope: Accounting

Active project: The Payroll, Bookkeeping and Accounting Needs and Gaps Analysis has recently been completed. All five qualifications covered here are under review.

Summary

This cluster covers six occupations, from clerical roles to accounting, with five VET qualifications and a higher education pathway as the main supply channels. These occupations are Accountants, Auditors and Corporate Treasurers, Accounting Clerks, Bookkeepers, Payroll Clerks, and Finance Managers.

The workforce picture is uneven. Accountants are growing and projected to remain in surplus to 2035.[D3] Accounting Clerks and Bookkeepers face the largest projected supply shortfalls of any Finance occupations, and among the largest across the FTB sectors.[D3] These shortfalls are attrition-driven, not the result of demand growth,[D3] meaning the training pipeline needs to replace exits from these roles, and VET is the main domestic training pipeline (around 37,600 combined VET enrolments across the five qualifications in 2024).[D5]

Generative AI exposure is a defining feature of these occupations. Accounting Clerks and Bookkeepers, the occupations with the largest supply gaps, are among the occupations with the highest generative AI automation exposure in the national workforce.[D4] This creates a tension for workforce planning: the supply gap is immediate, but AI-driven task changes may moderate demand for these roles over the next 10 years.[D3] Training pipelines for these occupations take time to produce job-ready workers, which means decisions made now about training investment will shape supply well into the period when AI impacts are likely to be pronounced.

The five qualifications covered here serve distinct purposes across the workforce pipeline, and they perform unevenly.

- The Certificate III in Accounts Administration works predominantly as a stepping stone to further study.[D5] Fewer completers rate it as relevant to their work (65%, the lowest of the five qualifications),[D7] but 50% to 67% enrol in further VET, which fits its role as preparation for the Certificate IV.[D13]
- The Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping has the highest number of enrolments in this cluster (28,600 in 2024) but draws the most sustained stakeholder concern that its content falls short of industry needs.[D5] It is the main qualification for learners seeking work as bookkeepers or registration as a BAS Agent.[D5]
- The Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Accounting record above-average completion rates and the strongest graduate outcomes of the five qualifications and feed learners toward professional accounting roles and accreditation.[D6,D7]
- Accounting higher education enrolments are falling, which shifts more of the supply task onto VET.[D8] Both domestic and international enrolments have fallen since 2019, which strengthens the case for clear articulation pathways from VET into professional accreditation.[D8]
- The Diploma of Payroll Services performs well but stays underused as payroll compliance grows more complex.[D5,D7] It is small (545 enrolments in 2024 across just 7 RTOs), completer outcomes are strong, and take-up sits below what the growing compliance demands of the payroll function would warrant.[D5,D7]

Occupational demand

Six occupations sit within this cluster. The chart below shows 2025 employment for each occupation, with a combined total of approximately 607,500 nationally.[D2]

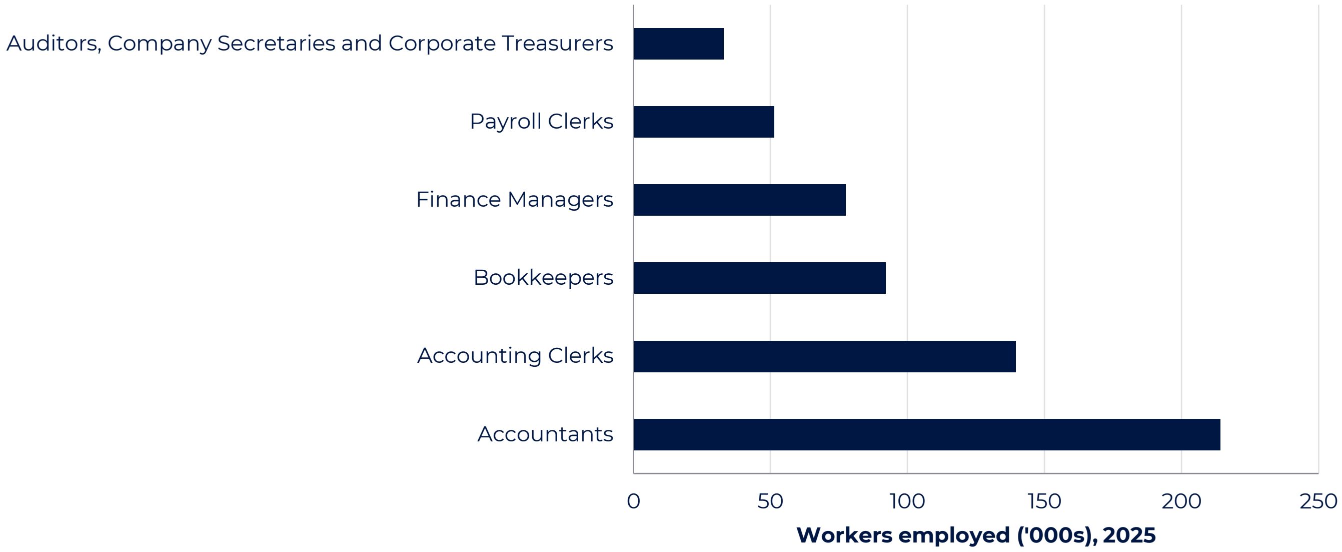

Figure 4: *Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Accountants are the largest and most consistently growing occupation in this cluster of the finance sector, expanding from approximately 186,200 in 2016 to 214,200 in 2025.[D2] The workforce has grown steadily for 10 years and is expected to be in surplus to 2035, as supply from higher education continues to exceed demand.[D3]

The accounting workforce are predominantly higher education qualified, with 80% holding a bachelor degree or higher.[D2] This reflects the primary professional pathway for accreditation with Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) and Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) Australia.[7,8] While VET pathways exist, they require extra study or experience, highlighting the need for stronger links between VET (Diploma/Advanced Diploma) and university programs leading to full professional membership.

Generative AI exposure scores for accountants show moderate automation exposure (0.54) and higher augmentation exposure (0.73)[D4], where generative AI speeds up outputs without removing the reasoning behind them. This reflects the significant share of accounting work that involves judgement, analysis, and client interaction that AI tools can augment without replacing.

Accounting Clerks have the largest projected supply gap of any occupation across the FTB sectors, at approximately 51,800 to 2035.[D3] At 139,600 in 2025, employment has grown modestly from approximately 133,000 in 2016.[D2] The gap is attrition-driven: the occupation loses workers at a rate of 35% over the decade to 2035, faster than new entrants replace them.[D3]

The highest qualification level for accounting clerks is relatively balanced: VET accounts for 36% of the qualification mix and higher education accounts for 31%.[D2] Accounting Clerks are 80% female,[D2] rated highly female dominated on the JSA Gender Segregation Intensity Scale.[D9] The workforce most exposed to this supply gap is disproportionately female.

Accounting Clerks sit amongst the highest occupations on generative AI automation exposure, with an automation score of 0.71 and an augmentation score of 0.74[D4], with the routine transactional core of the role exposed to substitution while the interpretive parts are supported. The high automation score reflects the concentration of data entry, reconciliation, and transaction processing in this role, which are already within the capability of current AI tools.

Bookkeepers have seen workforce decline over the past decade, falling from approximately 104,600 in 2016 to 92,000 in 2025,[D2] and its high generative AI exposure signals potential for further change. However, in contrast, the supply gap to 2035 is approximately 40,100, driven by an attrition rate of 48%, the fourth highest of any occupation across the FTB workforce.[D3]

Bookkeepers have high generative AI augmentation exposure of 0.77 with an automation exposure score of 0.69,[D4] as routine processing is exposed to substitution while advisory work is supported by generative AI.

The workforce share with VET as a highest qualification has risen from approximately 34% to 41% over this period, and the higher education share from around 21% to 28%.[D2] 90% of Bookkeepers are female,[D2] rated almost completely female dominated on the JSA Gender Segregation Intensity Scale. The 2025 workforce share has eased to the lower edge of this rating band since the segregation scale was set on 2021 data.[D9]

Payroll Clerks have grown from approximately 38,000 in 2016 to 51,400 in 2025, but a high attrition rate (42%) produces a projected supply gap to 2035 of approximately 10,300.[D3] Payroll Clerks have a generative AI automation exposure score of 0.68 and an augmentation score of 0.70[D4]: routine processing is the most exposed task to automation while checking and exception-handling are supported and augmented rather than replaced.

The highest qualification level for payroll clerks slightly preferences VET (35%) over higher education (28%).[D2] Payroll Clerks is highly female dominated (84% female)[D2] on the JSA Gender Segregation Intensity Scale.[D9]

Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers is the only finance sector occupation currently listed in shortage on the Occupational Shortage List, despite being projected to be in surplus by 2035. At 32,900 in 2025, the shortage driver classification is uncertain and unchanged from 2024.[D10] The coexistence of a projected surplus and a current shortage listing reflects a timing difference between current market conditions and medium-term supply expectations.

Workers in this occupation predominantly hold higher education qualifications (70%) as their highest level, with a 20% having a VET qualification as their highest qualification.[D2] This occupation has an AI automation exposure score of 0.45 and an augmentation score of 0.74[D4], a judgement-led profile where generative AI supports analytical output without reducing professional decision-making. This lower automation exposure score reflects the role of this workforce in interpreting information, advising clients and stakeholders, and managing staff.

Finance Managers project a surplus to 2035 despite an attrition rate of 47%, meaning demand is still met despite nearly half the workforce changing each year.[D3] Most have higher education qualifications (68%), with 22% from VET,[D2] and gender is balanced.[D9] Finance Managers have an AI automation exposure score of 0.46 and an augmentation score of 0.75.[D4] Similarly to Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers, this relatively low automation exposure score reflects the role of Finance Managers in interpreting and advising on financial information, and managing teams.

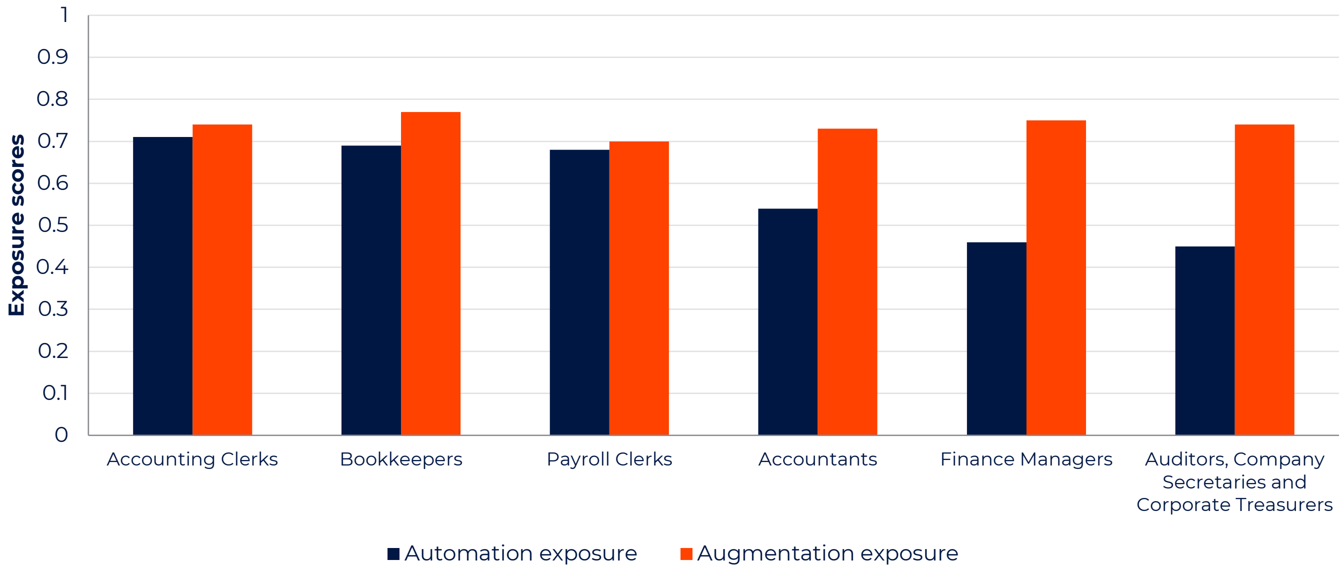

Figure 5: *Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers five VET qualifications: the Certificate III in Accounts Administration, the Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping, the Diploma of Accounting, the Advanced Diploma of Accounting, and the Diploma of Payroll Services. It also covers the Accounting narrow field of education in higher education.

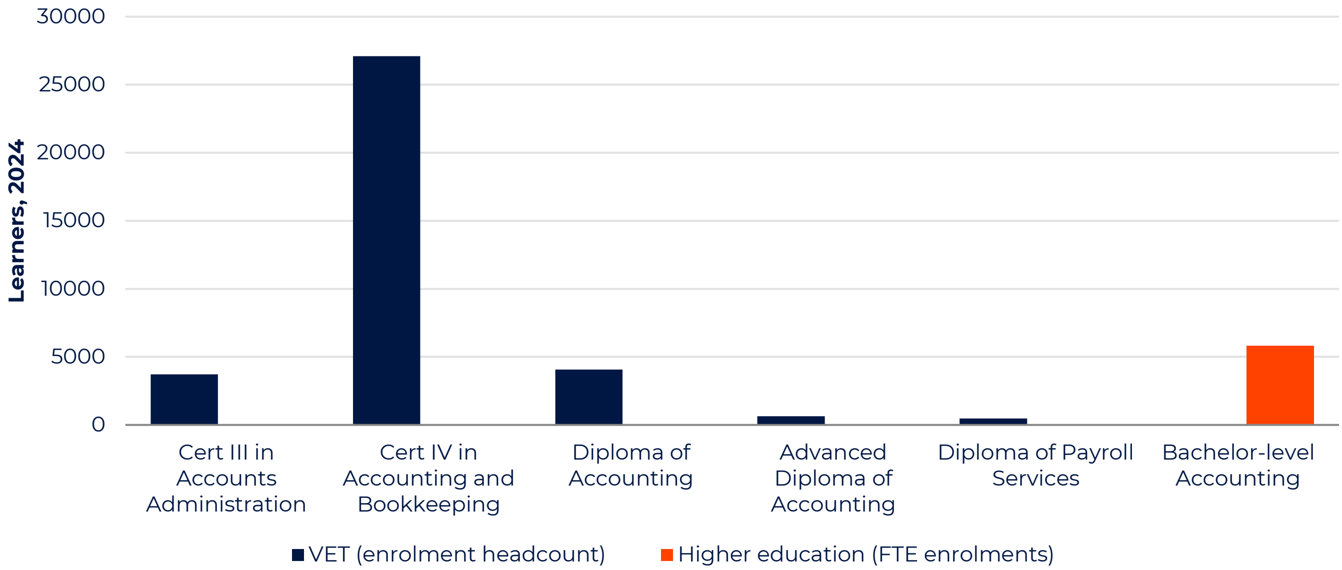

Figure 6: *Accounting, Bookkeeping and Payroll: VET and higher education enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Accounts administration

The Certificate III in Accounts Administration is the entry point to the qualification ladder for accounting, bookkeeping and payroll, not a standalone employment pathway.[D5,D12] It is listed on the National Training Register with 41 registered training organisations (RTOs) holding it on their scope, and had 3,710 enrolments in 2024 (FNS30322).[D5,D12] This is the smallest qualification in the accounting group by volume.

The completion rate for the superseded qualification was 37%, based on the 2019 commencing cohort, below the national VET average.[D6] Student outcomes data shows 77% of completers enrolled primarily for employment reasons, 75% achieved their main reason for training, 82% were employed or in further study after completing, and 65% found their training relevant to their work.[D7]

The relevance of training to work rating is low, which may be due to the nature of a qualification which is primarily developed as a pathway into further study. Approximately 50% to 67% of completers from superseded cohorts 2016 to 2020 went on to enrol in further VET.[D13] This is consistent with planned progression toward the Certificate IV, not unrealised employment motivation. Learners assessing the Certificate III partly as preparation for the next qualification are likely rating relevance against that purpose.

Bookkeeping and accounting

The Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping is the largest qualification in this section by volume and carries the most sustained stakeholder concern about content quality.[D5,D12] With 143 RTOs having the qualification on their scope and 28,600 enrolments in 2024, this qualification has good market uptake. It is an occupation-ready pathway for bookkeeper, accounts clerk, and payroll officer roles,[D5,D12] and meets the requirements for registration as a BAS Agent with the Tax Practitioners Board.[9]

The completion rate for the superseded qualification was 41% (2019 commencing cohort), below the national VET average.[D6] Given that a full qualification is a requirement of BAS Agent registration, this low completion rate is concerning as an indicator of entry into the profession. Student outcomes data shows 87% of completers enrolled primarily for employment reasons, the highest motivation figure across these five qualifications. Of the qualification completers, 76% achieved their main reason for training, 86% were employed or in further study, and 75% found their training relevant to their work.[D7]

The relevance of training to work rating is concerningly low given its occupation-ready intention. Employer and industry body feedback indicate there are gaps in the qualification content versus industry needs. Of critical concern is that completers can operate accounting software but cannot apply the underlying accounting reasoning the software requires.

The Diploma of Accounting is the progression pathway for learners seeking accounting roles.[D5,D12] It has 96 RTOs with the qualification on scope and 4,060 enrolments in 2024 (FNS50222).[D5,D12] The completion rate for the superseded qualification was 67%, based on the 2019 commencing cohort, above the national VET average and substantially above the Certificate III and IV rates.[D6]

Student outcomes data for the Diploma shows 81% enrolled primarily for employment reasons, 78% achieved their main reason, 87% were employed or in further study, and 80% found their training relevant.[D7] Outcomes at this level are strong across all four measures.

The Advanced Diploma of Accounting shows the sharpest enrolment drop-off over the past 5 years, with 51 RTOs having the qualification on their scope and 685 enrolments in 2024.[D5,D12] This qualification includes entry requirements to have completed a Diploma of Accounting, and offers formal pathways into several higher education bachelor degrees in accounting or related fields. It provides progression to senior accounting roles.[D7] The completion rate for the superseded qualification was 63%, based on the 2019 commencing cohort.[D6]

Student outcomes data for the Advanced Diploma shows 79% enrolled primarily for employment reasons, 84% achieved their main reason, 91% were employed or in further study, and 85% found their training relevant.[D7] The 85% relevance figure is the strongest of the five qualifications.

Enrolments in higher education Accounting programs have fallen sharply since 2019, increasing the supply role VET plays in the profession.[D8] Full-time equivalent bachelor enrolments declined from approximately 9,200 in 2019 to approximately 5,800 in 2024.[D8] Domestic enrolments fell from approximately 4,500 to approximately 3,200; international enrolments fell from approximately 4,700 to approximately 2,700.[D8]

Despite falling enrolments, employment outcomes for graduates remain strong: 87% of domestic graduates seeking full-time employment found it in 2024, well above the all-fields average of 74%.[D8]

Payroll

The Diploma of Payroll Services is small in volume but strong on outcomes, and underutilised relative to the compliance demands of the payroll function.[D5,D12] Only 7 RTOs hold this qualification on their scope, with 545 enrolments in 2024.[D5,D12] This is a concerning signal for an occupation-ready qualification serving the payroll profession, limiting learner access. The qualification covers payroll services practice generally rather than payroll management specifically. The completion rate for the superseded qualification was 48%, based on the 2019 commencing cohort.[D6]

Student outcomes data shows 90% of completers enrolled primarily for employment reasons, a higher motivation figure than others in accounting and bookkeeping.[D7] Of the qualification completers, 83% achieved their main reason, 93% were employed or in further study, and 79% found their training relevant.[D7]

Stakeholder feedback indicates concerns related to limited availability of payroll-specific training. Payroll compliance requirements are growing: Single Touch Payroll Phase 2, increasing award complexity, and variation in payroll tax obligations across jurisdictions all raise the technical demands on payroll practitioners.[10,11] That compliance context makes delivery concentration a practical issue for further exploration in the Needs and Gaps Analysis project.

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is changing the tasks of accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll work, but the pace and scale of that change cannot currently be measured. The generative AI exposure scores place Accounting Clerks, Bookkeepers, and Payroll Clerks within the higher exposure range of assessed occupations.[D4] The tasks most exposed include data entry, transaction processing, reconciliation, and routine payroll calculations. These are already within the capability of current AI tools, and they are the core tasks of entry and mid-level work in these roles.

For Accountants and Finance Managers, augmentation is the more significant dimension. AI tools are changing the speed and scale at which financial analysis, reporting, and scenario modelling can be produced. Employers consulted through FSO Workforce Roadshows described a consistent shift: the value placed on accounting credentials is increasingly tied to reasoning and interpretation, not operational task completion.

The Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping content challenge connects directly to the AI picture. The skills most at risk from automation are the operational tasks that Certificate IV graduates are currently assessed as performing well. The skills employers most need are the reasoning and judgement skills graduates are assessed as lacking.

Regulatory change is the other main driver of skills and knowledge change across these qualifications. The Tax Practitioners Board requires ongoing professional development for practitioners working at Diploma of Accounting level and above.[12] Single Touch Payroll Phase 2 has expanded employer reporting obligations and raised the technical demands on payroll practitioners.[10] State and territory payroll tax legislation varies and is subject to amendment, requiring current jurisdiction-specific knowledge.[11]

Professional judgement and ethics are receiving increased attention across the accounting profession. CA ANZ and CPA Australia have both strengthened ethics standards for members following high-profile corporate governance failures in Australia.[13,14] VET qualifications in this section sit below membership entry level for both bodies, but the direction of professional standards creates context for curriculum development at the Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels.

The expansion of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) obligations is creating an additional compliance capability requirement across parts of the accounting profession.[5] While specialist AML/CTF roles remain concentrated in compliance and financial crime functions, accountants providing designated services increasingly require capability in customer due diligence, risk assessment, recordkeeping and suspicious matter reporting. The primary workforce impact is likely to be capability uplift within existing accounting, bookkeeping and practice-management roles rather than growth in dedicated AML/CTF occupations.

These requirements sit alongside broader regulatory changes affecting the profession and reinforce the need for accounting workers to combine technical accounting capability with risk, governance and compliance knowledge. Further information is provided in the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing cluster.

Implications for action

All five VET qualifications are under review through the Payroll, Bookkeeping and Accounting Needs and Gaps Analysis. The evidence in this section supports that process, with two threads running through it. The first is a content currency question: employers and industry bodies describe Certificate IV graduates as able to operate accounting software but less able to apply the accounting reasoning behind it, a gap that student outcomes data is consistent with. The second is the tension between near-term supply shortfalls in Accounting Clerks and Bookkeepers and the high generative AI automation exposure of those same roles, which leaves the future shape of demand uncertain.

Cluster 2: Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing

VET qualifications in scope: Graduate Certificate in Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing · Graduate Diploma of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing

Summary

The March 2026 expansion of Australia's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) obligations reaches a large new group of professionals, including lawyers, accountants, and real estate agents. The *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment Act 2024* extended the regime to these Tranche 2 entities, significantly expanding the regulated population beyond the banks, financial institutions, and gambling providers that have historically carried AML/CTF compliance responsibilities.[5]

Two graduate-level VET qualifications exist for AML/CTF practice, but neither has achieved meaningful enrolment volume.[D5] The Graduate Certificate in Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (FNS80020) and the Graduate Diploma of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (FNS80120) are both delivered by one RTO.[D12] Enrolment data across the period examined is low, which may reflect limited demand reducing delivery, or the characteristics of a specialist postgraduate market at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 8 where higher education programs serve a similar function.[D5]

AML/CTF compliance is a specialisation built into many occupations, not a standalone job. The two qualifications map to a range of occupation-ready and progression destinations.[D11] Those destinations include External Auditor, Internal Auditor, Finance Manager, Credit Risk Manager, and Commissioned Police Officer, reflecting a practitioner base that spans financial services, professional services, and law enforcement.[D11]

The expansion of AML/CTF obligations to accountants, lawyers, conveyancers, real estate professionals, trust and company service providers and dealers in precious metals and stones means AML/CTF capability is becoming relevant to a much broader professional workforce.[5] The primary workforce impact is expected to be capability uplift within existing occupations rather than demand for new specialist AML/CTF occupations.

Where the work sits

AML/CTF compliance does not correspond to a standalone occupation, therefore workforce data at the occupational level is not available for this specialisation. Relevant roles sit within broader compliance, risk management, and financial crime investigation categories.[D11]

The Training and Occupation Pathways data confirms this spread: the Graduate Certificate (FNS80020) maps to External Auditor and Internal Auditor as occupation-ready destinations, with Finance Manager, Credit Risk Manager, Corporate Treasurer, Commissioned Police Officer, Taxation Compliance Officer, and Credit or Loans Officer identified as progression pathways.[D11] The Graduate Diploma (FNS80120) additionally maps to Financial Adviser as a specialised training pathway and Financial Institution Manager as a progression pathway.[D11]

With the expansion of AML/CTF obligations, there are a number of additional occupations now relevant to AML/CTF which are not listed as outcomes of these qualifications. Many sit outside of the finance sector, in the broader business and other professional services areas. Further information about relevant occupations is provided in the relevant clusters for Accounting, Financial Risk Management, and Legal and Conveyancing.

Education and training trends

This section covers two VET qualifications: the Graduate Certificate in Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (FNS80020) and the Graduate Diploma of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (FNS80120).

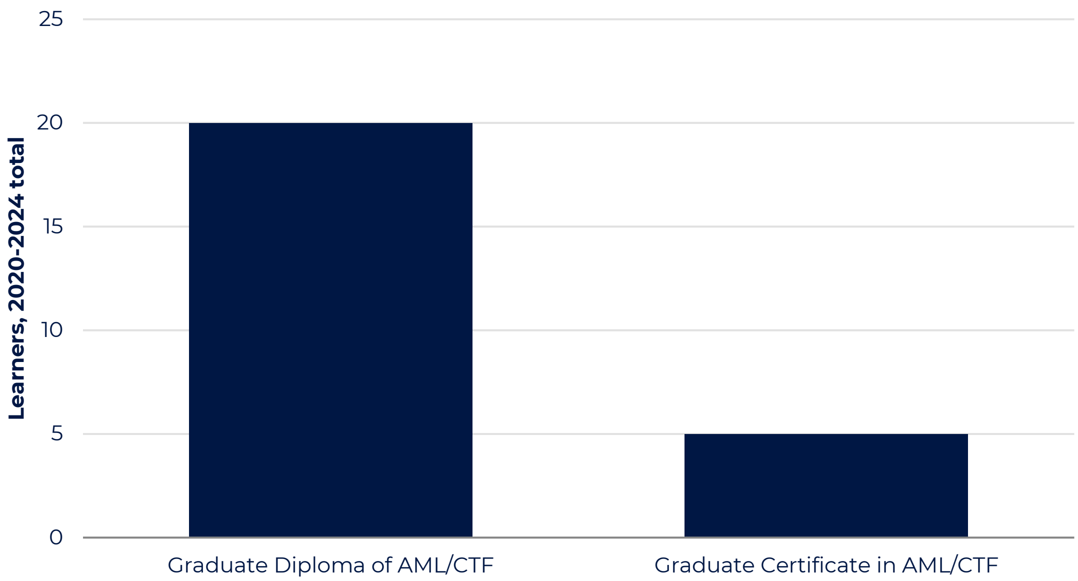

Figure 7: *VET enrolments, AML/CTF qualifications, 2020-2024 total*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Both qualifications are delivered by a single provider,[D12] and enrolment data across the period 2019 to 2024 shows very low volumes for both qualifications,[D5] a pattern consistent with a specialist postgraduate VET market rather than one indicating product failure. The Graduate Certificate (FNS80020) recorded five enrolments in 2024, its first year with reported data. The current Graduate Diploma (FNS80120) shows nil commencing enrolments in any year; the superseded Graduate Diploma (FNS80115) recorded 20 enrolments in 2020. Because both qualifications are delivered online and on-demand, annual cohorts may frequently fall below the five-enrolment threshold at which data is suppressed in published national statistics, so the true volume may be slightly higher than the figures suggest.

Higher education programs in law, compliance, and financial crime serve a comparable function for many practitioners. Tranche 2 reforms alter the scale of the potential learner population in ways that may change this picture, with VET qualifications offering a viable upskilling alternative for many Tranche 2 occupations.

Completion rates and student outcomes data is suppressed for these qualifications due to low student numbers.

Skills and knowledge changes

The Tranche 2 reforms create a skills gap for professional service providers who have not previously operated within the AML/CTF framework.[5] Legal practitioners, accountants, real estate agents, trust and company service providers, and dealers in precious metals and stones must now establish customer due diligence processes, implement transaction monitoring programmes, and meet suspicious matter reporting obligations.[5] These are substantive compliance capabilities, not awareness-level knowledge, and they represent a key learning requirement for practitioners across those professions.

The workforce impact of the Tranche 2 reforms is likely to be felt primarily through capability uplift within existing occupations rather than growth in specialist AML/CTF roles. While specialist compliance professionals will continue to play an important role, many of the newly regulated professions have not historically required formal AML/CTF capability. As a result, accountants, lawyers, conveyancers, real estate professionals and associated support staff are increasingly expected to understand customer due diligence, risk assessment, recordkeeping requirements, suspicious matter reporting and the operation of AML/CTF programs within their organisations.[5]

The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) has issued guidance to assist Tranche 2 entities in preparing for compliance,[5] and has released and updated resources including education materials and starter kits to support understanding of these obligations.[15] Organisations are required to provide training to staff in relevant AML/CTF functions, tailored and appropriate to the individual based on their role, risks, capabilities, and the organisational context.[16] The training does not need to be accredited, however accredited VET training products may be used for this purpose.[16] The gap between general awareness training and the depth of knowledge captured in an AQF Level 8 graduate qualification is likely to be significant for practitioners taking on substantive compliance responsibilities.

Within established AML/CTF practice, the growing use of AI and machine learning in transaction monitoring and financial crime detection is changing the knowledge requirements of compliance roles.[17] Machine learning systems are increasingly used to analyse transaction patterns and identify potentially suspicious activity, requiring practitioners to understand how these tools operate, interpret their outputs, and apply professional judgement when assessing risk and determining appropriate action. As AML/CTF obligations expand across a broader range of industries, the ability to combine regulatory knowledge with technology-enabled compliance capability is becoming increasingly important.

Implications for action

The AML/CTF qualifications face pressure in an environment of increasing complexity within specialised roles alongside Tranche 2 entities requiring capability uplift. The Tranche 2 reforms create a substantive new compliance learning requirement for professions that have never carried AML/CTF obligations, while two new risk areas, digital asset transactions and AI-driven transaction monitoring, are reshaping what established practitioners need to know.

The current Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma provide specialist training for AML/CTF, however usage is too low to determine the types of outcomes being provided. Skills development in occupations impacted by Tranche 2 reforms requires significant contextualisation for the role but can be developed through accredited VET training products.

Cluster 3: Banking

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Banking Services · Diploma of Banking Services Management · Advanced Diploma of Banking Services Management

Summary

Bank Workers have contracted by nearly a third over the past decade, from approximately 54,000 in 2016 to 39,200 in 2025, making this one of the sharpest occupational contractions in the finance sector.[D2] Automation of counter and transaction services, branch network consolidation, and the near-complete migration of routine banking to digital channels are the established drivers.[10,D4] Workforce projections indicate possible demand recovery to 2035,[D3] though the trajectory depends materially on how AI deployment in banking continues to evolve.

VET qualifications in banking serve a small, mostly employed learner market,[D5] and the Certificate IV carries the largest enrolment with strong completions and outcomes.[D6,D7] FSO stakeholder feedback indicates that VET is not yet strongly embedded in banking employers' workforce strategies, despite growing senior-level interest in accredited learning pathways. The banking sector employs workers with a mix of formal and informal credentials, with higher education dominating at experienced and senior levels.[D2]

The skills banking roles now demand are changing faster than the qualifications can keep up with. Digital payments, scams prevention, fraud detection, and open banking are creating capability needs that traditional banking credentials do not cover well.[18,19,20]

Education and training overview:

- The Certificate IV in Banking Services is the most active qualification in the suite and performs strongly. It had 460 enrolments in 2024,[D5] 95% of completers enrolled for employment reasons,[D7] and completion rates for the superseded version have stayed above the national average.[D6]
- The Diploma of Banking Services Management holds a low but stable enrolment of about 40 learners per year.[D5]
- The Advanced Diploma of Banking Services Management is the only qualification in the suite growing, up from 80 enrolments in 2023 to 145 in 2024.[D5]

Occupational demand

Bank Workers numbered 39,200 in 2025, down from 54,000 in 2016, a sustained decline of 34% over the decade.[D2]

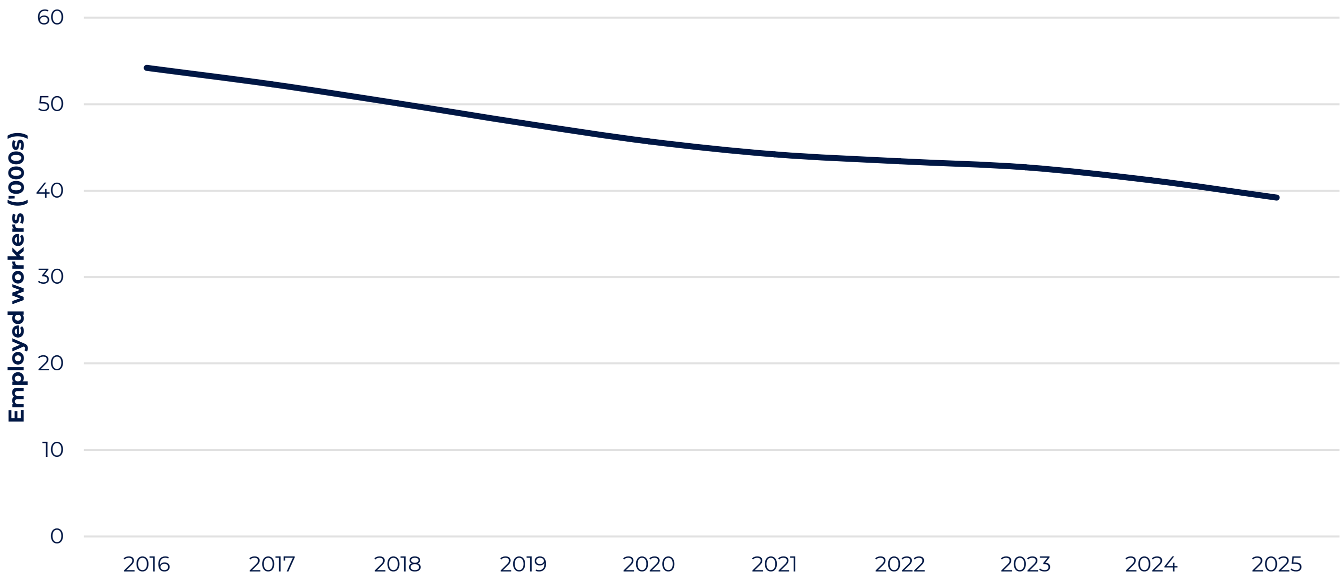

Figure 8: *Bank Workers employment, 2016–2025*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Workforce projections indicate demand for Bank Workers recovering from 2026 and reaching approximately 45,900 by 2035, though this projection carries uncertainty given the ongoing pace of AI deployment in banking operations.[D3] By 2035, modelled total supply is projected at approximately 37,600 against modelled demand of 45,900, indicating a projected shortfall of around 8,300.[D3]

Bank Workers carry a generative AI automation exposure score of 0.54 and an augmentation score of 0.67.[D4] The medium automation exposure score sits alongside ongoing impacts of digital technology: counter services, data entry, and standard transaction processing have been automated at scale, and generative AI is continuing to impact the role. The augmentation score indicates that the roles remaining in the occupation have meaningful potential for generative AI to enhance productivity in customer enquiry handling, problem resolution, and complex service delivery.

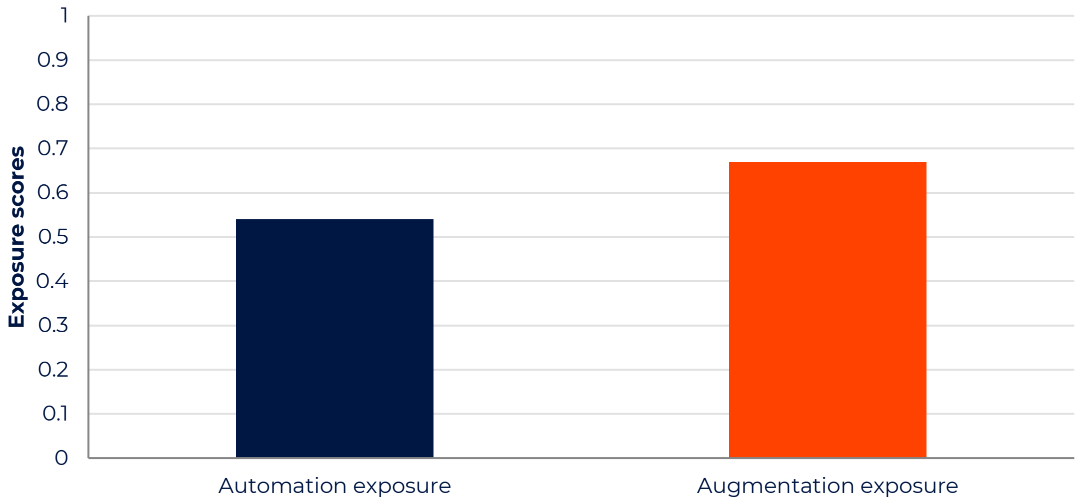

Figure 9: *Bank Workers: generative AI exposure scores*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Higher education has grown its share of the Bank Workers workforce over the past decade, from 28% in 2016 to 44% in 2025 as the workforce as a whole contracted.[D2] VET has held a broadly stable share at around 22%, but in absolute terms the VET-qualified workforce has fallen over the same period. VET remains the second-largest supply channel but its absolute contribution to the workforce has shrunk alongside the occupation.

Bank Workers are notably female dominated,[D9] **with women making up 65% of the occupation in 2025.**[D2] This gender composition has persisted across the period of occupational decline and is a relevant equity consideration if further contraction affects the occupation disproportionately.

Education and training trends

This section covers three VET qualifications: the Certificate IV in Banking Services, the Diploma of Banking Services Management, and the Advanced Diploma of Banking Services Management. It also covers the higher education field of Banking, Finance and Related Fields, which is the larger formal supply pipeline into banking work.

The Banking VET suite is small in absolute terms, sits in a thin national delivery network, and serves a specialised cohort of workers who are employed and upskilling. Combined enrolments across the three qualifications totalled approximately 650 in 2024, compared with approximately 4,500 commencing bachelor full-time equivalent students in the related higher education field that year.[D5,D8] The qualifications are designed for targeted upskilling and management progression among workers already in financial services roles. Student outcomes evidence supports this reading, with employment motivation rates among the highest in the FNS training package.[D7]

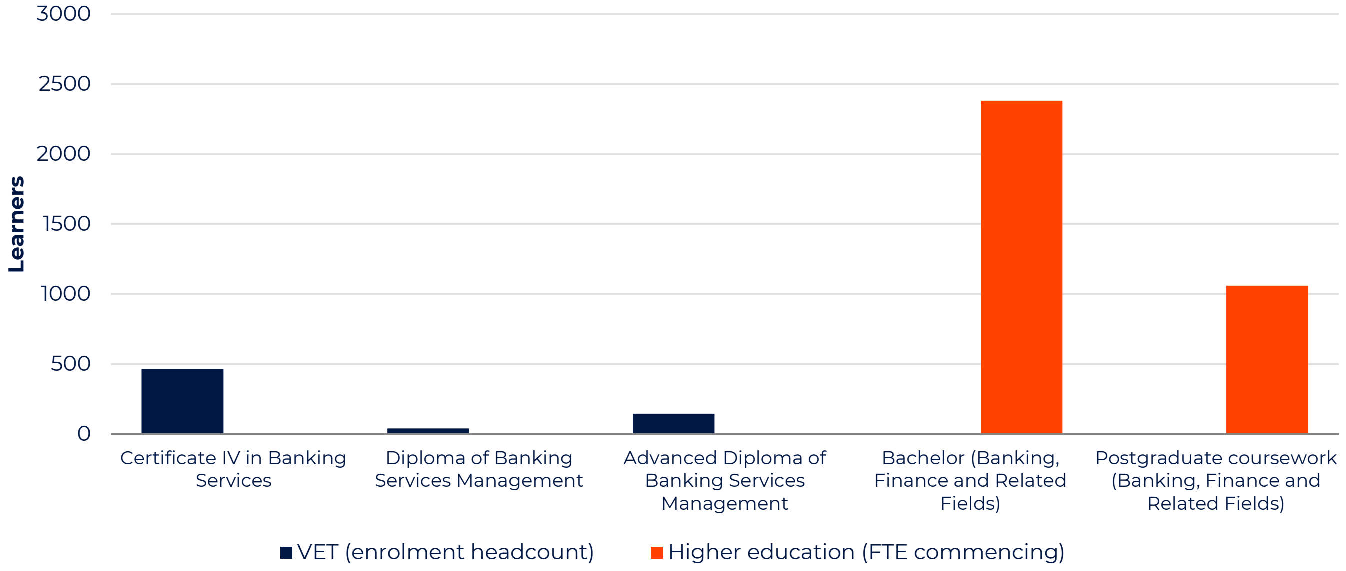

Figure 10: *Banking: VET and higher education enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Certificate IV in Banking Services

The Certificate IV in Banking Services is designed for entry-level banking and credit roles and performs strongly across enrolment, completion, and graduate outcomes. The qualification confirms occupation-ready outcomes for Bank Officer and Credit or Loans Officer.[D11] Progression pathways extend into Capital Markets Specialist and other financial services and investment specialist roles.

Three RTOs hold the qualification on their scope according to the National Training Register: two with national delivery scope and one with New South Wales-only scope.[D12] Enrolments were 460 in 2024 (FNS42022), compared with 555 across the current and superseded qualifications in 2021.[D5] A spike to approximately 1,095 in 2023 reflects qualification transition dynamics, with learners moving from the superseded version to the current version. The longer-run trend sits in the range of 450 to 650 per year.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 80%, well above the national VET program average of 51%.[D6] Completion rates across the 2016 to 2020 cohorts ranged from 74% to 89%, placing this qualification among the highest performing in the FNS package on this measure. Strong completion combined with strong employment outcomes indicates the qualification is working well for the learners it attracts.

The student outcomes data confirms that learners are predominantly employed workers seeking to formalise or advance their banking-specific skills. Of completers, 95% enrolled for employment-related reasons, against an FNS training package average of 81%.[D7] This is the highest employment motivation rate of any qualification in the Banking suite and one of the highest across the package. Of completers, 87% achieved their main reason for training wholly or partly, against a package average of 84%.

Employment outcomes are also above the package benchmark. Of completers, 88% were employed or in further study after training, compared with the package average of 86%.[D7] Relevance is the standout result: 87% of employed completers reported their training was highly or somewhat relevant to their work, against the package average of 76%. Three in four completers reported at least one job-related benefit (77%), and two in three reported improved employment circumstances (67%).

Direct stakeholder feedback on the Certificate IV specifically is limited. The strongest signal sits at the market positioning level rather than the product level. Employer consultation with a major bank described VET as "not on radar" at senior banking levels, with higher-education-led graduate pathways continuing to dominate frontline and management recruitment. The qualification works for those who choose it, but few large banking employers steer their workforce toward it.

Diploma of Banking Services Management

The Diploma of Banking Services Management is a small qualification with a thin Australian delivery network and a broader occupational reach than its name suggests. The qualification confirms occupation-ready outcomes for Financial Institution Manager and Bank Officer, includes Bookkeeper as a specialised training pathway, and offers progression into Investment Manager, Service Manager, and Credit Risk Manager roles.[D11] The scope therefore extends beyond banking management into financial services management more broadly.

Three RTOs hold the Diploma on their scope, but the functional Australian delivery network is smaller than this suggests: one of the three holds scope exclusively for overseas delivery, leaving effective domestic delivery distributed across two providers.[D12] Enrolments were approximately 40 in 2024.[D5] Volume at this level has remained consistent since 2022, but the underlying numbers are very small, and small fluctuations would represent material shifts in the qualification's market presence.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 57% (indicative only due to small sample), with rates across the 2016 to 2020 cohorts ranging from 57% to 69%.[D6] These rates sit above the national VET program average and are broadly consistent with the higher complexity of Diploma-level study.

Student outcomes for Diploma completers indicate a strongly employment-motivated cohort with strong workplace outcomes, though sample sizes warrant indicative-only treatment. All Diploma completers enrolled for employment-related reasons (100%, indicative only).[D7] Of completers, 72% achieved their main reason for training wholly or partly (indicative only), below the package average of 84%. Of completers, 87% were employed or in further study after training (indicative only), broadly in line with the package average.

Of employed completers, 92% reported their training as highly or somewhat relevant to their work (indicative only), well above the package average of 76%.[D7] The same proportion reported at least one job-related benefit, and 73% reported improved employment circumstances (indicative only). The gap between achieved main reason for training and relevance stands out: completers report strong workplace benefit but a lower rate of having achieved the specific reason they enrolled. With sample sizes this small, the pattern should be read as directional.

Advanced Diploma of Banking Services Management

The Advanced Diploma of Banking Services Management has the broadest provider network of the three qualifications but the smallest student outcomes evidence base. The qualification confirms occupation-ready outcomes for Financial Institution Manager, Customer Service Manager, Bank Officer, and Service Manager roles.[D11] Progression pathways extend into Retail Manager, Credit Risk Manager, and Corporate Services Manager.

Six RTOs hold the qualification on their scope: five with national delivery scope and one with Victoria-only scope.[D12] This is the strongest delivery network in the Banking suite by RTO count. Enrolments were 145 in 2024 (FNS60622), up from 80 in 2023, with the longer-run trend in the range of 100 to 200 per year since 2020.[D5] Volume sits between the Diploma and the Certificate IV, which is unusual for the highest-level qualification in a suite.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 52%, sitting at the national VET program average.[D6] Completion rates across the 2016 to 2020 cohorts ranged from 52% to 75% (indicative only), with most cohorts in the mid-50s. These rates are consistent with the longer duration and higher complexity of Advanced Diploma study.

Student outcomes data is not reportable for this qualification due to small sample size. Published results for completers across all reported indicators are suppressed.[D7] The absence of student outcomes evidence limits the assessment that can be made of how well the qualification is serving its learners.

Higher education context

Higher education is the larger formal supply pipeline into banking work, and the bachelor pipeline rebounded in 2024 after a multi-year decline. Commencing bachelor full-time equivalent enrolments in Banking, Finance and Related Fields reached 4,504 in 2024: 2,382 domestic and 2,122 international.[D8] This is a recovery from the 2022 low of 3,917 commencements and approaches the pre-pandemic peak of 5,209 in 2019. Domestic commencements grew across 2023 and 2024 after several years of decline, and international commencements recovered to near-2019 levels.

Postgraduate coursework commencements are international student dominated. Commencing postgraduate coursework full-time equivalent enrolments reached 5,346 in 2024: 1,061 domestic and 4,285 international.[D8]

Postgraduate volume has consistently exceeded bachelor volume in this field since 2017, reflecting the use of postgraduate study in banking as both a career-entry route for international students and a mid-career upskilling route for domestic professionals.

Graduate employment outcomes in Banking and Finance are consistently above the all-fields average. Short-term full-time employment of domestic Banking and Finance bachelor graduates seeking full-time work was 82% in 2024, against an all-fields average of 74%.[D8] This is a sustained pattern: the gap between Banking and Finance graduates and the all-fields average has held between 5 and 9 percentage points since 2016. The graduate pipeline is delivering employable graduates into a workforce that values the degree.

Education pathways and delivery

The relative scale of the higher education and VET pipelines is the structural feature that frames the analysis for banking. The three VET qualifications combined enrolled approximately 650 learners in 2024. The higher education field most closely aligned with banking work enrolled approximately 4,500 commencing bachelor and 5,300 commencing postgraduate full-time equivalent students in the same year.[D5,D8] Higher education will carry most capability response needed for banking work. The VET qualifications supply a small, specialised cohort of workers who are upskilling and serve it well within that scope.

FSO Workforce Roadshow consultations in the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Tasmania raised limited private RTO presence for finance qualifications as a barrier to access in their jurisdictions. The Northern Territory consultation specifically noted the absence of any local training pathway for loans officer roles, despite local demand. The national network of three to six RTOs per qualification distributes thinly across these markets, and access is most constrained where RTO presence is lowest.

Skills and knowledge changes

The near-complete migration of routine banking transactions to digital channels has fundamentally altered the skill composition of bank-facing roles, shifting emphasis from transaction processing toward complex enquiry handling, customer problem resolution, and digital service delivery. According to the Australian Banking Association's (ABA) Bank on It 2025 report, 99% of customer-bank interactions now occur via digital channels, and branch interactions have fallen by 51% since 2019.[18] The residual in-person and complex work of Bank Workers has become disproportionately concentrated in tasks that are exceptions to automated processes: complaints, hardship, complex account queries, and situations where human judgement or empathy is required.[18]

Scams prevention and fraud detection have emerged as a substantive new capability domain for banking roles, driven by the *Scams Prevention Framework Act 2025* and the growing sophistication of financial crime targeting digital banking channels.[19] The Act creates obligations for banks and designated digital communication platforms that require workers across frontline, compliance, and risk functions to identify, escalate, and respond to scam activity. This is a capability requirement that extends well beyond awareness-level training and into operational judgement about suspicious transactions and customer protection.

Open banking implementation under the Consumer Data Right framework and the continued growth of digital and mobile payment systems are creating knowledge requirements that are not well represented in traditional banking qualifications.[20,21] Banking workers operating in customer-facing and account management roles increasingly need to understand data-sharing frameworks, consent mechanisms, and the interoperability of financial products, as well as the practical implications of real-time payment systems for customer transactions and disputes.

Employer engagement with the banking qualification suite remains limited relative to the size of the sector and the pace of workforce change occurring within it. Stakeholder intelligence indicates that major banking employers are actively refreshing job architectures and capability frameworks but that VET qualifications are not strongly embedded in those frameworks. Senior interest in accredited learning pathways exists but has not translated into systematic qualification uptake.

Implications for action

There are no active projects for the Banking qualifications, and the available evidence does not yet indicate a need for training product development. The evidence is directional on several fronts: the qualification suite serves a contracting occupation; the skills being demanded of banking workers are shifting faster than the qualification content has been tested against; and employer engagement with accredited VET pathways is limited despite growing interest. These are signals that warrant continued monitoring.

Cluster 4: Credit Management

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate III in Mercantile Agents · Certificate IV in Credit Management · Diploma of Credit Management

Summary

There are diverging workforce trends in credit management: Credit and Loans Officers are growing and broadly in supply-demand balance to 2035, while Debt Collectors are contracting yet face a supply gap driven by attrition outpacing entry.[D3] Credit and Loans Officers grew from approximately 28,400 in 2016 to 35,900 in 2025, with higher education widening its lead as the dominant supply channel over the decade.[D2,D3] Debt Collectors fell from approximately 8,600 to 6,500 over the same period, and VET remains the larger supply channel for this smaller workforce.[D2,D3]

Both occupations have medium to high generative AI exposures,[D4] with a shift in the task mix a likely outcome. Routine credit assessment, collections contact and reporting work face substitution pressure, while judgement, customer vulnerability assessment and dispute resolution may be augmented. The likely effect is concentration of demand on workers who can operate effectively in the augmented portion of these roles.

The three VET qualifications in scope serve two distinct purposes:

- The Certificate III in Mercantile Agents covers field collections work that the occupation data does not cover, and its market is thin and declining. Enrolments are low, but the most recent superseded cohort with a usable sample completed well above the financial services training package average.[D5,D6]
- The Certificate IV in Credit Management is the main occupation-ready qualification for Credit or Loans Officer and completes at or above the financial services training package average.[D11,D6]
- The Diploma sits at the edge of viability, with only five enrolments in 2024 across two providers and student outcomes data fully suppressed.[D5,D7]

Occupational demand

Two occupations are covered: Credit and Loans Officers and Debt Collectors. Mercantile work also covers process serving, repossessions and field service activity that is not captured in either occupational classification.

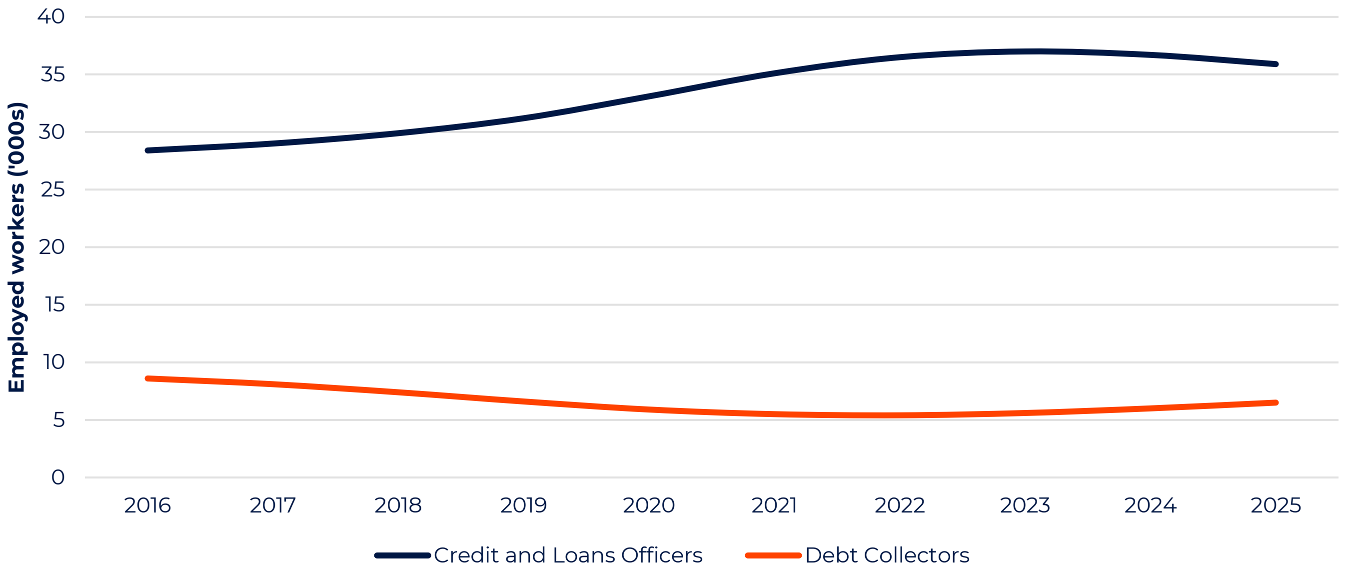

Figure 11: *Credit Management occupations: employment, 2016–2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Credit and Loans Officers grew from approximately 28,400 in 2016 to 35,900 in 2025, with higher education widening its lead as the dominant supply channel over the past decade.[D2] Workforce projections place demand at approximately 39,500 by 2035 against supply of approximately 39,200, leaving the two effectively in balance to

2035.[D3] Higher education was the highest qualification held by 46% of workers in the occupation in 2025, up from 33% in 2016.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced,[D9] with a female share of 57%.[D2]

Generative AI exposure scores for Credit and Loans Officers are medium to high, at 0.68 for automation and 0.71 for augmentation[D4], so routine lending and collections tasks are exposed to substitution while customer judgement and escalation are supported. Routine credit assessment, account servicing and collections tasks face substitution pressure, while judgement-intensive work in risk decisions, customer dispute handling and hardship assessment is exposed to augmentation. The likely effect is a shift in the task mix, with demand concentrating on workers who can operate in the augmented portion of the role.

Debt Collectors fell from approximately 8,600 in 2016 to 6,500 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections place demand at approximately 7,500 by 2035 against supply of approximately 4,600, producing a supply gap of approximately 2,900 to 2035.[D3] The gap is attrition driven: roughly a quarter of the 2025 workforce is projected to exit by 2035, and new entrants are not forecast to keep pace.[D3] VET was the highest qualification held by 36% of workers, ahead of higher education at 23%.[D2]

The occupation is moderately female dominated,[D9] with a female share of 68%.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores sit at 0.69 for automation and 0.70 for augmentation.[D4] Routine collections contact, payment arrangement work and skip tracing face substitution pressure, while augmentation supports case management and customer vulnerability assessment.

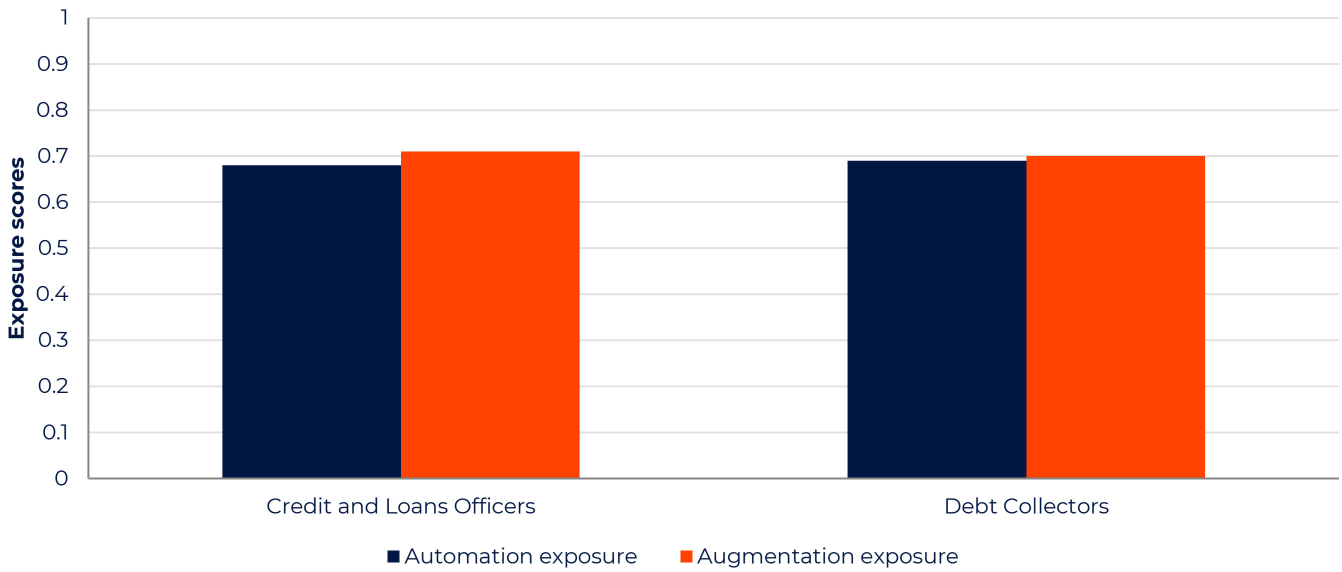

Figure 12: *Credit Management occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers three VET qualifications: the Certificate III in Mercantile Agents, the Certificate IV in Credit Management, and the Diploma of Credit Management. No higher education field maps specifically to credit or mercantile work; higher education appears in the workforce profile in the section above rather than as a parallel qualification stream.

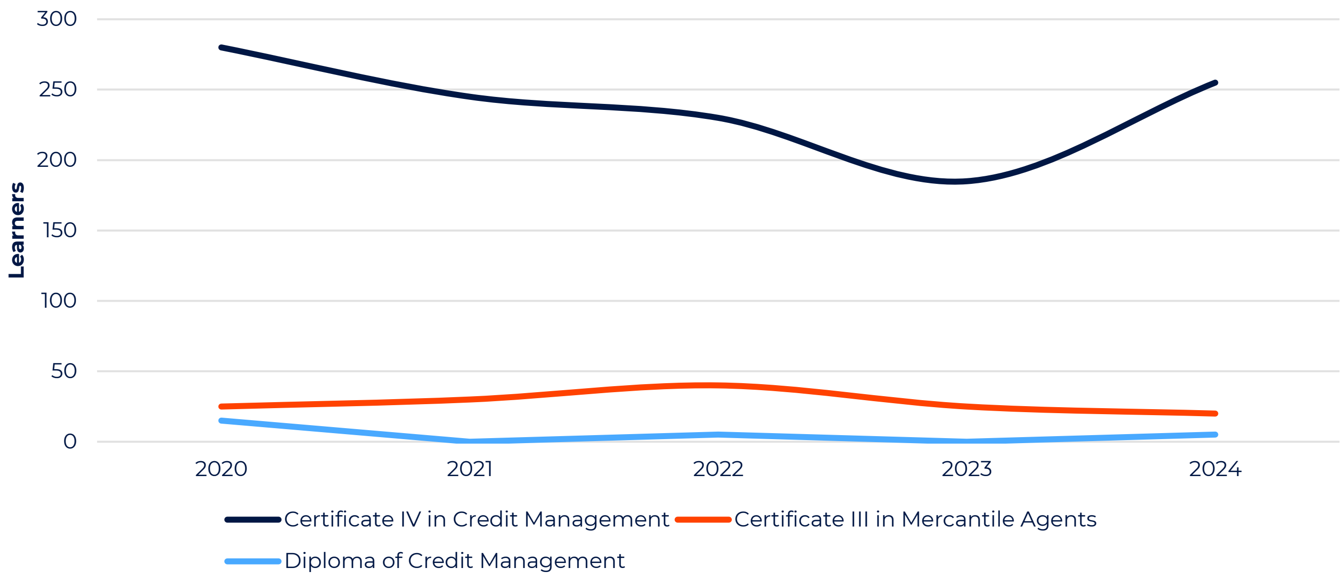

Figure 13: *Credit Management: VET enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Mercantile agency

The Certificate III in Mercantile Agents covers field-based work in collections, process serving and repossessions, alongside the office-based components of debt collection.[D12] It is occupation-ready for both Credit or Loans Officer and Debt Collector, lists Stockbroker as a specialised training pathway, and identifies Insurance Agent and Capital Markets Specialist as progression pathways.[D11] The qualification carries a licensing requirement and does not include a work placement requirement. Engaging in credit activities requires an Australian Credit Licence issued by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) under the *National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009* (Cth), or registration as an authorised credit representative of a licensee.[D12]

The Certificate III in Mercantile Agents qualification market is thin and declining: 35 enrolments in 2022, 25 in 2023, and 20 in 2024 for the current qualifications.[D5] Four registered training organisations hold the qualification on their scope listed on the National Training Register.[D12] The superseded qualification (FNS30415) carried 25 enrolments in 2020, 20 in 2021 and 5 in 2022 before ceasing.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the current qualification is not yet available because the relevant cohorts have not passed through a complete four-year window. The superseded qualification (FNS30415) returned a four-year completion rate of 74% for the 2018 commencing cohort of 65 learners, well above the financial services training package average of 60% for that year.[D6] The two more recent cohorts for the superseded qualification, in 2019 and 2020, are based on commencing counts of around 20 learners and are indicative only.

Student outcomes data for the current Certificate III in Mercantile Agents is suppressed across all indicators because of small sample size.[D7] The completion rate finding for the 2018 superseded cohort is therefore the strongest available signal of qualification performance.

Credit management practice

The Certificate IV in Credit Management is occupation-ready for Credit or Loans Officer and lists Debt Collector as a progression pathway.[D11] Enrolments are rebuilding following a transition between qualifications, with the current qualification carrying 170 enrolments in 2023 and 255 in 2024.[D5] Four registered training organisations hold the qualification on their scope listed on the National Training Register.[D12] The immediately preceding superseded qualification (FNS40120) carried 115 enrolments in 2021 and 225 in 2022 before falling to 15 in 2023 as the qualification update took effect.[D5] The combined trajectory shows modest recovery rather than market expansion.

Completion rates sit at or above the financial services training package average across every available cohort year. Four-year completion rates for the immediately preceding superseded qualification (FNS40120) are not yet available, as the relevant cohorts have not passed through a complete four-year window. An earlier superseded qualification (FNS40115) returned four-year completion rates that ranged from a high of 73% (2018 commencing cohort) to a low of 57% (2020 commencing cohort), declining across the period.[D6] These rates sit at or above the financial services training package average across the same years (60% for 2018; 57% for 2020).

Student outcomes data for the current Certificate IV sits above the financial services training package completer average across all four indicators. Student outcomes data places employment-related main reason for training at 95%, achieved main reason wholly or partly at 89%, and employed or in further study after training at 97%.[D7] Relevance of training to work, drawn from employed completers only, sits at 80%.[D7] Each of the four indicators sits above the financial services training package completer average.[D7]

The Diploma of Credit Management is occupation-ready for Credit or Loans Officer and Debt Collector, with progression pathways into Investment Manager, Financial Counsellor (Community), Credit Risk Manager, Accountant (General), Finance Manager and Corporate Treasurer.[D11]

The Diploma of Credit Management has low market activity, with five enrolments in 2024[D5] and two RTOs holding the qualification on their scope, per the National Training Register.[D12] The immediately preceding superseded qualification (FNS51520) carried five enrolments in 2022 and zero in 2023.[D5]

Completion rates run well below the financial services training package average, although small cohort sizes limit the weight that can be placed on this. Four-year completion rates for the immediately preceding superseded qualification are not yet available. An earlier superseded qualification (FNS51515) returned completion rates of 16% (2016, 65 commencing), 29% (2017, 40 commencing) and 22% (2018, 40 commencing), all indicative only and well below the financial services training package average of 60% for 2018.[D6] Low completion in this earlier qualification may reflect cohort characteristics, qualification laddering into other finance qualifications, or delivery issues.

Student outcomes data for the current Diploma is suppressed across all indicators because of small sample size, leaving no measure of completer experience or post-training employment.[D7]

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is reshaping credit work. Routine assessment, collections and reporting tasks face substitution, while judgement, vulnerability assessment and customer dispute resolution are augmented. Reviews by ASIC of AI governance in financial services have identified credit licensees as a category where governance arrangements have lagged deployment, with risks including biased decision-making and inadequate oversight of automated lending and collections decisions.[22] The skills implication is for credit and loans workers to develop competence in working alongside automated tools, identifying when human judgement should override automated outputs, and operating within the governance frameworks employers are now building.

The credit industry is operating in a period of layered regulatory change, with three streams converging on workforce skill requirements. ASIC has signalled that digital regulatory reporting obligations may shift from voluntary to mandatory, while Treasury's open banking and Consumer Data Right rules continue to reshape how credit reporting and data sharing operate.[22,23] The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's (APRA) operational risk standard, *Prudential Standard CPS 230: Operational Risk Management*, in force from 1 July 2025, requires credit-active financial institutions to manage technology and third-party risks at a higher standard than previously applied.[2] All three qualifications in scope carry licensing requirements, and changes in the regulatory environment flow into the knowledge content the qualifications must keep current.[15,D12]

Identifying and responding to customer vulnerability and financial harm has become a more visible competency requirement in credit and collections work. Stakeholder feedback describes growing employer attention to forced debt, account manipulation and withholding of funds in collections and credit contact roles, with frontline workers expected to identify these patterns and refer appropriately.

Implications for action

Across the three VET qualifications, the evidence shows thin markets and small enrolment volumes, with no immediate content-driven case for change. Completion rates and student outcomes data are solid despite low enrolment volumes, while the skills and knowledge changes in this sector continue to evolve. Regulatory developments in operational risk, digital reporting and Consumer Data Right reform are likely to flow into knowledge content for credit qualifications as those reforms bed down.

Cluster 5: Finance and Mortgage Broking

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking · Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management

Higher education fields of education in scope: Banking, Finance and Related Fields

Active project: The Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking and the Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management are being updated through the FNS Update: Finance and Mortgage Broking Diploma and Certificate IV project.

Summary

Financial broking is one of the fastest-growing occupations in the finance sector, and its qualifications are growing in step. Employment nearly doubled over the decade to 2025.[D2] The relevant VET qualifications have seen enrolments climb steeply since 2022, making this the second most active qualification market in the FNS training package.[D5]

Growth has not removed the workforce supply pressure, because the occupation loses workers faster than the market expands. A supply gap of approximately 5,200 workers is projected to 2035, driven by attrition rather than weak demand. The workforce would need to replace more than a third of its current size over the next decade to remain stable.[D3]

The qualifications produce strong outcomes for completers, and the data points to why people enrol. Almost all completers train for work-related reasons, most achieve what they came for, and most are employed or studying afterwards.[D7] Licensing obligations and professional body membership requirements pull people into formal qualifications, which helps explain the enrolment surge.[24,25]

- The Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking is the entry qualification for finance brokers and has grown faster than any other in the FNS package. It is the common starting point for credit licensing and industry body membership.[D5,D11]
- The Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management records the strongest completer outcomes of the two qualifications.[D7] It supports brokers moving into business management and specialised broking.[D11]

Occupational demand

Financial Brokers are one of the strongest growth occupations in the finance sector, with employment close to doubling over the decade to 2025. Employment rose from approximately 29,000 in 2016 to 52,100 in 2025, growing every year across the period.[D2] This unit group covers finance brokers, including the mortgage broking workforce that is the focus here, alongside insurance brokers and commodities traders.

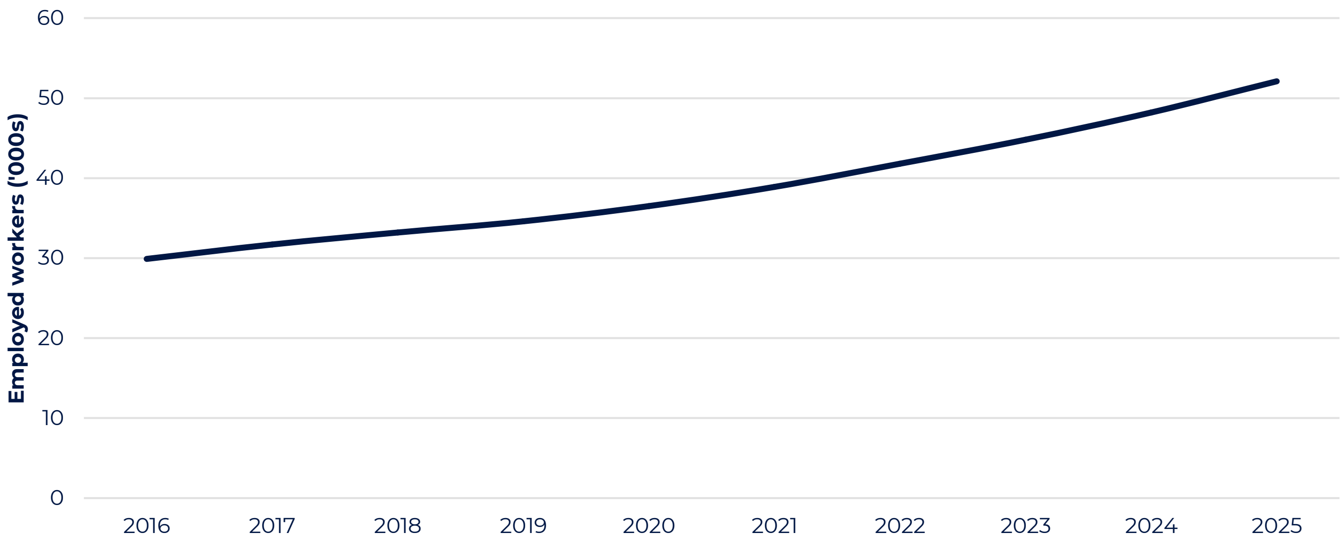

Figure 14: *Financial Brokers: employment, 2016-2025*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

The occupation faces a supply gap of approximately 5,200 to 2035.[D3] Demand is projected to reach approximately 57,000 by 2035 against projected supply of approximately 52,000.[D3] The gap is driven by attrition, not by any weakness in demand. Total attrition over 2026 to 2035 is projected at approximately 18,800 workers, equal to 36% of the 2025 workforce.[D3] The occupation needs to replace more than a third of its current size over the decade simply to hold its position, on top of meeting demand growth.

VET is the largest single supply channel into the occupation, but its lead is narrowing. VET was the highest qualification held by 44% of the workforce in 2025, ahead of higher education at 39%.[D2] The VET share has eased back from 46% in 2016 while the higher education share has risen from 31%, with the two channels converging.[D2]

Generative AI exposure scores place financial brokers among occupations where generative AI predominantly supports the work. The AI automation exposure score is low at 0.47 and the augmentation score is high at 0.75,[D4] a judgement-led profile: AI speeds research and processing while advice and client relationships stay with the broker. The work concentrates on judgement, client interaction, and the assessment of individual financial circumstances, which AI tools can support but cannot perform in full.

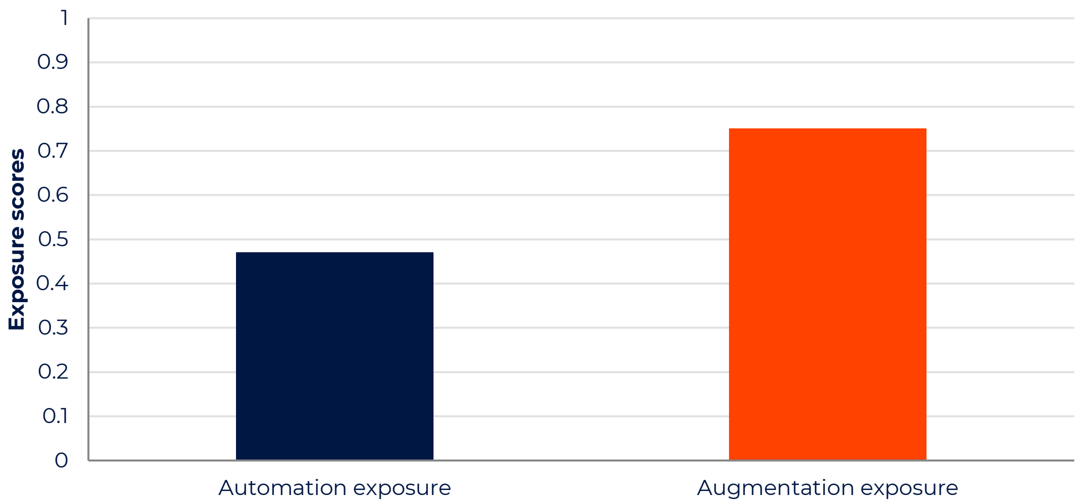

Figure 15: *Financial Brokers: generative AI exposure scores*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Whether this exposure translates into higher productivity and into workforce changes is unclear. Broker output is bounded by the volume of lending in the market, so if each broker can process more clients and total lending volume does not rise to match, higher productivity could change the number of brokers the market needs. The effect on employment will depend on how lending demand moves alongside productivity, and the evidence does not settle the direction.

Education and training trends

This section covers two VET qualifications, the Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking and the Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management, and the higher education field of education in Banking, Finance and Related Fields.

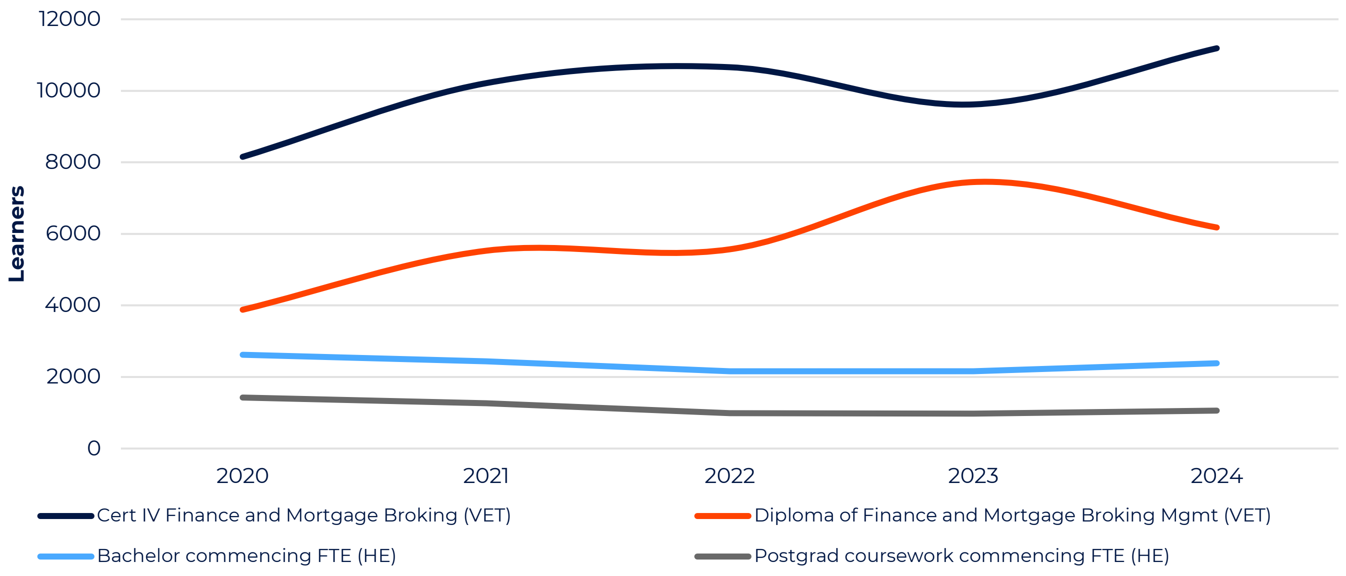

Figure 16: *Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking: VET and higher education enrolments, 2022 to 2024*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking

The Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking is the entry qualification for the occupation. It is the qualification finance brokers complete to meet credit licensing obligations and to gain membership of an industry body, and the Training to Occupation Pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for finance broker, with progression toward capital markets specialist roles.[D11]

Enrolments have grown faster than any other qualification in the FNS training package. The current qualification recorded 6,230 enrolments in 2022, rising to 11,175 in 2024, while enrolments in the superseded version fell away to near zero as the cohort transitioned.[D5] Delivery is spread across 28 RTOs holding the qualification on their scope.[D12] A market of this size, with enrolments climbing steeply and delivery distributed across more than two dozen providers, indicates a healthy and competitive qualification market with broad learner access.

No four-year completion rate is available for the qualification or its superseded version.[D6] This reflects the recent introduction of the current qualification and small commencing cohorts in the superseded version, so the completion dimension cannot be assessed.

Student outcomes data for completers is strong against the training package benchmark. Almost all completers (95%) trained for employment-related reasons, well above the FNS training package average of 81%.[D7] Most (90%) wholly or partly achieved their main reason for training, above the package average of 84%.[D7] A high proportion (91%) were employed or in further study after training, above the package average of 86%.[D7] Of those employed after training, 74% found their training highly or somewhat relevant to their work, close to the package average of 76%.[D7] The relevance figure is the one indicator where the qualification sits at, rather than above, the benchmark.

Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management

The Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management is the higher-level qualification for the occupation, supporting brokers moving into business management and specialised broking. The Training to Occupation Pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for finance broker and for financial and insurance brokers, with specialised training toward insurance broking and progression pathways into management roles including finance manager, credit risk manager, and financial institution manager.[D11]

Enrolments have grown sharply. The current qualification recorded 1,470 enrolments in 2022, rising to 6,160 in 2024, while the superseded version fell to near zero over the same period.[D5] Delivery is spread across 24 RTOs holding the qualification on their scope.[D12] The market is smaller than the Certificate IV but follows the same steep upward path, and a provider base of this size supports good learner access for a management-level qualification. No four-year completion rate is available for the qualification or its superseded version.[D6]

Student outcomes data for completers is strong across every indicator. Almost all completers (95%) trained for employment-related reasons, well above the package average of 81%.[D7] A high proportion (94%) wholly or partly achieved their main reason for training, above the package average of 84%.[D7] Most (91%) were employed or in further study after training, above the package average of 86%.[D7] Of those employed after training, 84% found their training highly or somewhat relevant, well above the package average of 76%.[D7] The relevance result for this qualification is notably stronger than for the Certificate IV.

Higher education context

The higher education field of education in Banking, Finance and Related Fields feeds the broader finance workforce rather than broking specifically, and its pattern differs from the VET qualifications. Full-time equivalent commencements in bachelor degrees were broadly flat to declining, moving from 5,098 in 2016 to 4,504 in 2024, with domestic commencements easing and international commencements falling.[D8] Postgraduate coursework commencements grew over the same period, from 3,951 to 5,346, driven almost entirely by international demand, which rose from 2,885 to 4,285 while domestic commencements stayed flat.[D8] As the VET qualifications grow and the bachelor pipeline softens, VET is taking on a larger share of supply into broking roles.

Skills and knowledge changes

The mortgage broking workforce is professionalising, and qualification expectations are rising with it. The Mortgage Finance Professional Australia designation launched in 2025 as the first professional recognition for brokers in Australia, sitting at a higher education level and signalling an industry push toward higher standards.[24]

Most brokers already hold a diploma as their highest qualification, and a large majority hold qualifications at or above diploma level, so the qualification market is being pulled upward by industry expectations as much as by regulation.[25] Industry body feedback describes skills and knowledge requirements in professional standards, ethics, client-centred service, and adaptation to industry change.

Regulation continues to be a significant driver of skill and knowledge requirements in finance and mortgage broking. Brokers operate within Australia's credit licensing framework and are subject to the Best Interests Duty, which requires them to act in the best interests of consumers when providing credit assistance.[26] Competency and training requirements are administered through ASIC's licensing regime and associated regulatory guidance rather than through specific qualifications prescribed directly in legislation.[26] As a result, there is not always a direct correspondence between regulated occupational requirements and individual vocational qualifications, making qualification-to-regulation mapping more complex.[26]

Generative AI is changing the broker workflow. The exposure scores discussed earlier place broking in the category where generative AI accelerates routine document handling and information gathering while the judgement and client-relationship work that defines the role continues to require people. The skill implication is fluency with AI-assisted tools alongside the established competencies in lending assessment, compliance, and client advice.

Implications for action

There is an active training product development process underway for the Certificate IV in Finance and Mortgage Broking and the Diploma of Finance and Mortgage Broking Management. The steep enrolment growth, strong completer outcomes, the professionalisation of the workforce, and continuing regulatory and AI-driven change in the role are all relevant to the design of the updated qualifications.

Cluster 6: Financial Retail Services

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate I in Basic Financial Literacy · Certificate II in Financial Services · Certificate III in Financial Services · Certificate IV in Financial Services · Diploma of Financial Markets · Diploma of Financial Services · Advanced Diploma of Financial Licensing Management · Advanced Diploma of Paraplanning

Higher education fields of education in scope: Banking, Finance and Related Fields

Summary

The growing occupations in finance retail services are supplied almost entirely through university degrees, not VET. Financial Investment Advisers and Managers, Financial Dealers and Finance Managers each draw two-thirds or more of their workforce from higher education, and the VET qualifications with real workforce traction are the Certificate III in Financial Services and the Advanced Diploma of Paraplanning.

The education and training profile in Financial Retail Services divides into four distinct purposes:

- The Certificate I, II and III in Financial Services build basic financial capability and entry-level skills. Financial literacy is a core capability for the Australian population in its own right, so a qualification serving that purpose is valuable whether or not it leads directly to employment.
- The Certificate IV and Diploma of Financial Services support broad financial services roles and carry licensing. Both are small, and the Diploma is delivered by only a handful of providers.
- The Diploma of Financial Markets targets dealing and markets roles. It has no providers and no enrolments.
- The Advanced Diploma of Paraplanning supports paraplanning and is the only specialist qualification here with sustained enrolment; the Advanced Diploma of Financial Licensing Management is dormant.

Occupational demand

The occupations covered here are financial dealers, financial investment advisers and managers, finance managers, and bank workers. The first two map directly to the qualifications in scope; the latter two are reported for context because they draw on the same training and sit alongside the direct occupations in the financial services workforce.

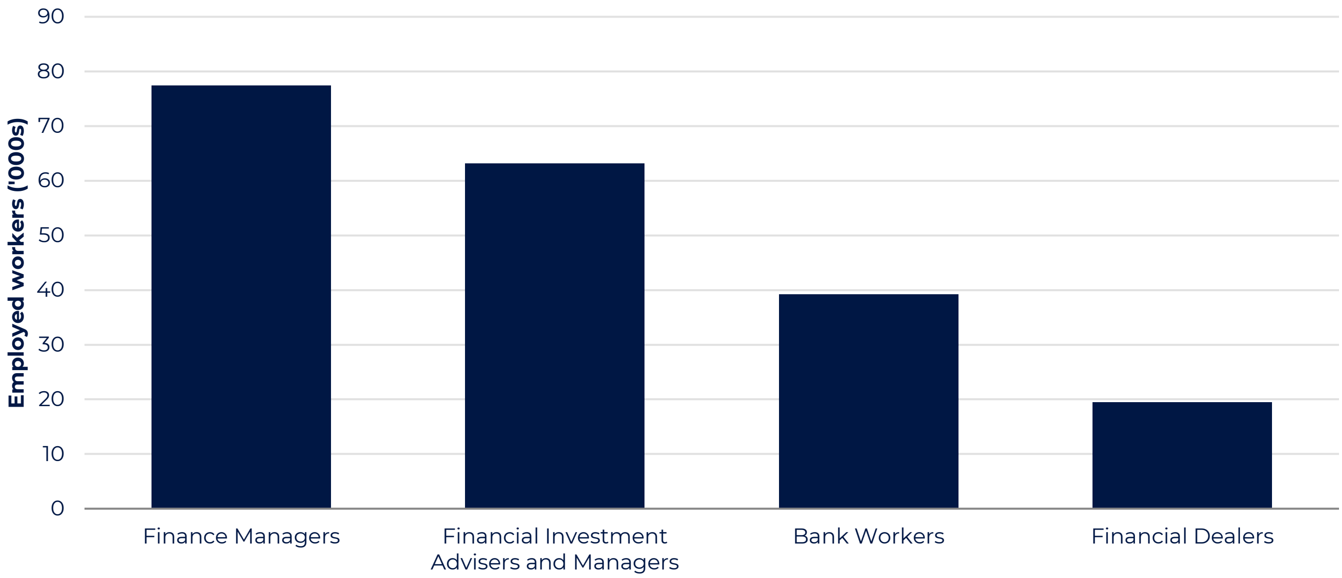

Figure 17: *Financial Retail Services occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Financial Investment Advisers and Managers are the largest directly-mapped occupation and carry the clearest supply pressure in this part of the finance sector. Employment grew from approximately 47,900 in 2016 to 63,200 in 2025.[D2] The occupation faces a supply gap of approximately 11,300 to 2035, with projected attrition of approximately 23,300 workers over the decade to 2035, equal to 36% of the current workforce.[D3] This is the occupation most affected by the contraction in financial advice: the number of registered financial advisers fell from around 26,000 in 2019 to roughly 15,000 by early 2025 after professional standards reforms, and the Delivering Better Financial Outcomes reforms and a separate review of adviser education standards are now the main levers being used to rebuild the pipeline.[4,27]

Higher education is the dominant supply channel for this occupation: 68% of the workforce holds a higher education qualification as its highest credential, against a VET share of 24%.[D2] The occupation was listed as in shortage in 2024, with the shortage attributed to a suitability gap rather than a lack of applicants, and was removed from the shortage list in 2025.[D3]

Generative AI automation exposure sits at 0.48 and augmentation exposure at 0.74.[D4] Advisory work concentrates in judgement, interpretation and client relationships, so current AI tools can speed up research and document preparation without substituting for the reasoning a client pays for.

Financial Dealers are a smaller occupation where the transactional core of the work is highly exposed to AI automation. Employment grew modestly from approximately 17,000 in 2016 to 19,500 in 2025.[D2] The occupation faces a supply gap of approximately 4,700 to 2035, with projected attrition of approximately 5,100 workers, equal to 25% of the current workforce, the lowest attrition rate of the four occupations here.[D3]

Higher education accounts for 71% of the workforce as highest qualification held, against a VET share of 16%, the lowest VET share of the four.[D2] The occupation is moderately male dominated,[D9] with a female share of 31%.[D2] Generative AI automation exposure is 0.69 and augmentation is 0.77.[D4] Both scores are high: the transactional dealing tasks at the centre of the role are exposed to current tools, while the interpretive and relational parts are supported. The likely effect is a shift in the task mix, with demand concentrating on the augmented part of the role.

Finance Managers are the largest occupation reported here and the only one projected to move into surplus. Employment grew from approximately 54,400 in 2016 to 77,400 in 2025.[D2] Projected supply outstrips demand by approximately 15,600 to 2035, a surplus, even though attrition is high at approximately 36,000 workers over the decade, equal to 47% of the current workforce.[D3]

The strong supply position reflects a deep higher education pipeline: 68% of the workforce holds a higher education qualification as its highest credential, against a VET share of 22%.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced,[D9] with a female share of 50%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.46 and augmentation is 0.75.[D4] As with advisers, the work concentrates in judgement and oversight, so AI is more likely to raise the volume and speed of analysis the role produces.

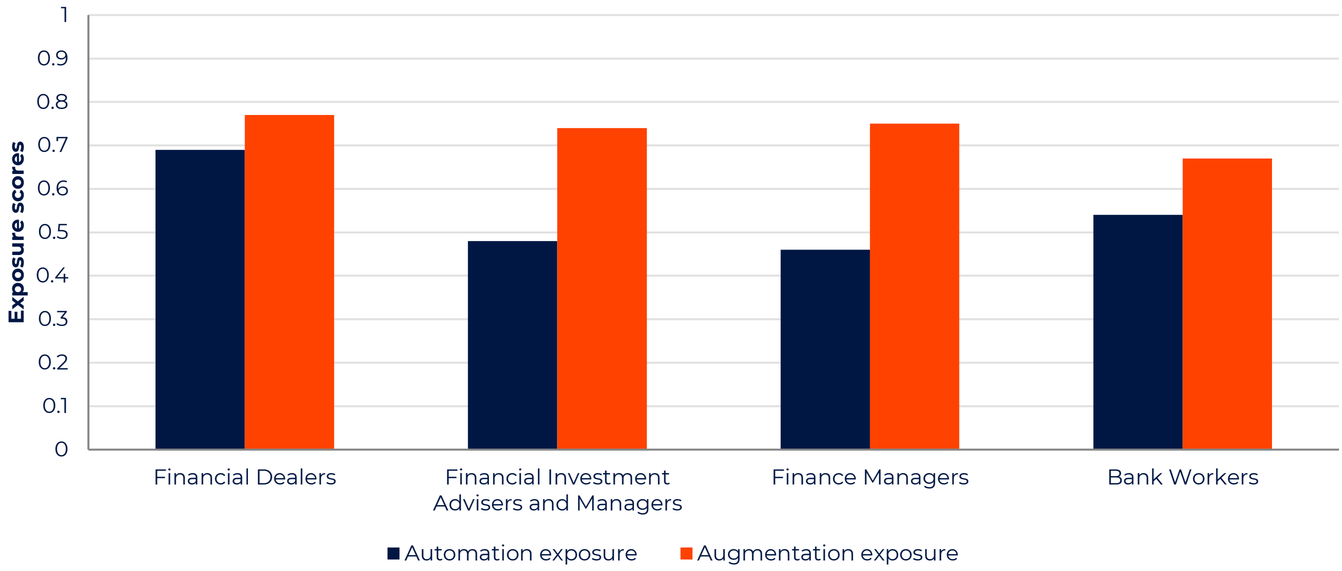

Figure 18: *Financial Retail Services occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Bank Workers are the only occupation here in decline. Employment fell from approximately 54,000 in 2016 to 39,200 in 2025, a drop of around a third.[D2] Despite the fall, projected demand still exceeds supply, producing a supply gap of approximately 8,200 to 2035 on projected attrition of approximately 10,400 workers, more than quarter of the current workforce.[D3]

The decline reflects branch closures and the shift to digital banking.[18] The occupation has the lowest higher education share of the four, at 44%, with a VET share of 22%, leaving a larger group whose highest qualification is below the tertiary level.[D2] It is moderately female dominated,[D9] with a female share of 65%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.54 and augmentation is 0.67.[D4] The role mixes routine transactional service with customer interaction, so AI is reshaping the work toward the service and problem-solving tasks that remain as routine transactions move to self-service channels.

Education and training trends

This section covers eight VET qualifications, from the Certificate I in Basic Financial Literacy through to two Advanced Diplomas, alongside the higher education field of Banking, Finance and Related Fields. The qualifications fall into four groups by purpose: foundational financial literacy, financial services generalist, financial markets specialism, and financial licensing and advice.

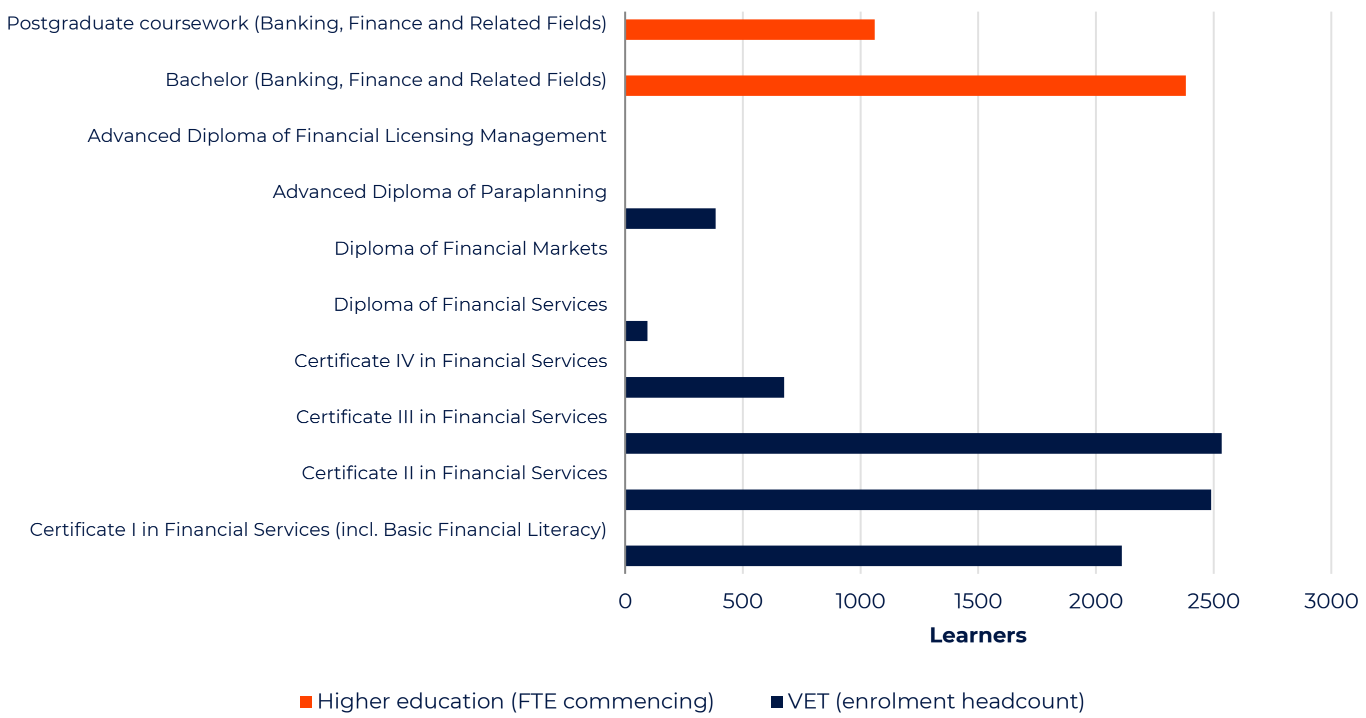

Figure 19: *Financial Retail Services: VET and higher education enrolments, 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Foundational financial literacy

The Certificate I in Basic Financial Literacy serves financial capability rather than workforce entry, and its enrolments have eased over time. Counting the current and superseded qualifications together, enrolments fell from 3,675 in 2020 to 2,110 in 2024, with a dip in the transition year as delivery moved to the current qualification.[D5] 50 RTOs hold the qualification on their scope according to the National Training Register, a broad delivery base consistent with use across adult and community education and school settings.[D12] The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 91% for the 2020 commencing cohort, well above the financial services training package average of 57%.[D6]

Student outcomes confirm the qualification's purpose. Only 25% of completers gave an employment-related reason as their main motivation for training, the lowest of any qualification in this group; most enrolled for study-related or personal reasons.[D7] Of those who completed, 84% achieved their main reason for training and 67% were employed or in further study afterwards.[D7] Among employed completers, 53% found the training highly or somewhat relevant to their work, against a training package average of 76%.[D7] A financial literacy qualification should deliver exactly this: core capability for the whole population, regardless of career path.

The Certificate II in Financial Services has grown steadily and functions as a general entry or pathway credential. Counting current and superseded qualifications together, enrolments rose from 450 in 2020 to 2,490 in 2024.[D5] 59 RTOs hold the qualification on their scope, the widest delivery base in this part of the finance sector.[D12] The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 84% for the 2020 commencing cohort, above the training package average.[D6]

Employment was the main motivation for 29% of completers, and 77% were employed or in further study after training, but only 34% of employed completers rated the training highly or somewhat relevant to their work, the lowest relevance figure of any qualification here.[D7] Strong completion alongside low workforce relevance points to a qualification used as a general entry or laddering credential rather than a direct route into a specific financial services role.

The Certificate III in Financial Services is the qualification in this group with both volume and strong workforce outcomes. Counting current and superseded qualifications together, enrolments grew from a negligible base in 2020 to a peak of 4,475 in 2023, easing to 2,535 in 2024.[D5] 21 RTOs hold the current qualification on their scope, a narrower and more specialised delivery base than the lower certificates, and the qualification carries licensing requirements.[D12] No four-year completion rate is yet available for the current qualification, as the cohort has not completed the four-year tracking cycle.[D6]

Student outcomes for this qualification are strong across every indicator and sit above the training package average. Employment was the main motivation for 92% of completers, 92% achieved their main reason for training, 93% were employed or in further study afterwards, and 85% of employed completers found the training highly or somewhat relevant to their work.[D7] Training to occupation pathways data confirms the qualification as occupation-ready for accounts clerk roles, with progression pathways into a range of financial services and advice occupations.[D11] This is the foundational qualification that connects to employment.

Financial services generalist

The Certificate IV in Financial Services produces capable graduates, though many learners do not complete. Counting current and superseded qualifications together, enrolments moved from 485 in 2020 to a peak of 790 in 2023, easing to 675 in 2024.[D5] 14 RTOs hold the qualification on their scope, a thin delivery base.[D12] The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 39% for the 2020 commencing cohort, well below the training package average of 57%.[D6]

The low completion rate is most likely a feature of a working cohort studying part-time and laddering between qualifications rather than a content problem, because those who do complete leave with the skills and knowledge the role requires: 89% trained for employment reasons, 95% were employed or in further study afterwards, and 89% of employed completers found the training relevant to their work.[D7] Training to occupation pathways data lists the qualification as occupation-ready for bank officer roles.[D11]

The Diploma of Financial Services is a small, thinly delivered qualification. Counting current and superseded qualifications together, enrolments reached 95 in 2024, up from a near-zero base earlier in the period.[D5] Only six RTOs hold the qualification on their scope, and the licensing requirement attached to it narrows its use further.[D12] No four-year completion rate is available.[D6]

Student outcomes are strong on a small completer base, with 89% training for employment, 95% employed or in further study afterwards, and 96% of employed completers rating the training relevant.[D7] Set against a workforce of more than 60,000 financial investment advisers and managers, the enrolment volume confirms the VET diploma plays a minor role in supplying this occupation, which is fed mainly through higher education.

Financial markets specialism

The Diploma of Financial Markets is dormant. No RTO holds the qualification on its scope, and there have been no enrolments across the period to 2024 under either the current or superseded qualification.[D5,D12] No completion rate or student outcomes data exists. A qualification with no providers and no enrolments cannot supply the financial dealer workforce it nominally targets, and its continued listing may be a question for future training product review.

Financial licensing and advice

The Advanced Diploma of Paraplanning is the only specialist qualification in this part of the finance sector with sustained enrolment. Enrolments ran between 385 and 500 a year across 2022 to 2024, reaching 385 in 2024.[D5] Three RTOs hold the qualification on their scope, and it carries licensing requirements and maps to the financial investment adviser occupation.[D12] No four-year completion rate is yet available.[D6]

Student outcomes are sound, with 90% of completers training for employment reasons and 97% employed or in further study afterwards; the achieved-main-reason figure of 76% and the relevance figure of 74% are based on small samples and should be treated as indicative.[D7] Training to occupation pathways data confirms the qualification as occupation-ready for paraplanner roles, with a progression pathway into financial advising.[D11] Paraplanning supports the adviser workforce by handling research and advice preparation, which makes it the one VET qualification here with a clear and active link to the growing advice occupation.

The Advanced Diploma of Financial Licensing Management is dormant. No RTOs hold the qualification on scope,[D12] and there have been no enrolments to 2024.[D5] As with the Diploma of Financial Markets, its continued listing is a potential future training product question.

Higher education context

Higher education, not VET, is the main formal supply channel for the senior occupations in this part of the finance sector. Commencing full-time equivalent bachelor enrolments in Banking, Finance and Related Fields were broadly flat over the decade, moving from 5,098 in 2016 to 4,504 in 2024, with the domestic component steady at around 2,300 and the international component easing from 2,323 to 2,122.[D8] Postgraduate coursework commencements grew over the same period, from 3,951 to 5,346 full-time equivalent, but this growth is almost entirely international: international postgraduate commencements rose from 2,885 to 4,285, while the domestic figure held at around 1,000.[D8] A flat domestic bachelor pipeline feeding occupations that depend on it for two-thirds of their workforce is the supply signal worth watching in this part of the finance sector.

Skills and knowledge changes

Regulatory reform is the dominant driver of changing skill requirements across financial advice and dealing.[3,4] The *Delivering Better Financial Outcomes* reforms are reshaping how advice is documented, charged for and delivered, with changes to statements of advice, fee consent arrangements and the scope of advice that superannuation funds can provide.[4] A separate review of financial adviser education standards, with consultation closing in April 2026, is intended to widen the entry pipeline into the adviser workforce.[27] These reforms change the knowledge advisers and paraplanners need, particularly around consent, disclosure and the boundaries of scoped advice, and they sit upstream of any VET qualification that feeds advice and paraplanning roles.

AI governance is becoming a standard requirement for financial services workers rather than a specialist concern. The financial services regulator has identified a governance gap, finding that many licensees deploy AI without adequate oversight, and the prudential standard on operational risk management, in effect from July 2025, brings AI supply chains and model risk within formal risk obligations for banks, insurers and superannuation funds.[2,22] Stakeholder evidence corroborates the direction: the FSO Workforce Roadshows raised the disclosure and attribution of AI-generated advice as a live compliance issue in financial services. For the occupations here, this points to a growing need for capability in supervising AI tools, validating their outputs and meeting disclosure obligations, layered on top of existing advisory and dealing skills.

Finance employers report that they do not see VET qualifications as a credible source of capability, which constrains the role these qualifications can play. Industry body and employer feedback captured through stakeholder consultation describes VET qualifications in financial services as misunderstood and undervalued. This also points to growing senior interest in accredited learning and a shift of training expectation away from internal onboarding toward external pipelines.

Implications for action

The qualifications that draw significant enrolment teach foundational financial literacy and entry-level skills, while the growing occupations are supplied through higher education and professional registration. The VET qualifications with a genuine and active workforce link are the Certificate III in Financial Services and the Advanced Diploma of Paraplanning.

No current project is currently underway for these qualifications, and the evidence does not indicate the need for one. The priority is to track these trends through successive workforce planning cycles: the financial adviser education reforms, the Certificate III and paraplanning enrolment trends, the persistently low Certificate IV completion rate, and any movement in the two dormant qualifications.

Cluster 7: Financial Risk Management

VET qualifications in scope: Advanced Diploma of Integrated Risk Management

Higher education fields of education in scope: Banking, Finance and Related Fields

Summary

Financial risk management capability is in rising demand across banking, insurance and superannuation, but the one VET qualification built for it has almost no market. The Advanced Diploma of Integrated Risk Management is held on scope by a single RTO, and enrolments have sat at or near zero for five years.

The workforce closest to this qualification is small, growing, and projected to stay in surplus. Risk roles sit within two broader occupations, finance managers and the group covering auditors, company secretaries and corporate treasurers. Both have grown steadily since 2016, and both carry workforce projections showing supply ahead of demand to 2035.

Regulation and AI are reshaping what risk practitioners need to know. A new operational risk standard now applies across all prudentially regulated financial institutions,[2] and banks are building AI governance onto existing risk frameworks.

Occupational demand

The Advanced Diploma of Integrated Risk Management has no single occupation mapped to it. Risk roles are spread across two broader occupations: finance managers, and the group covering auditors, company secretaries and corporate treasurers. Both are used here as the closest available workforce signal, with the understanding that neither is specific to risk management.

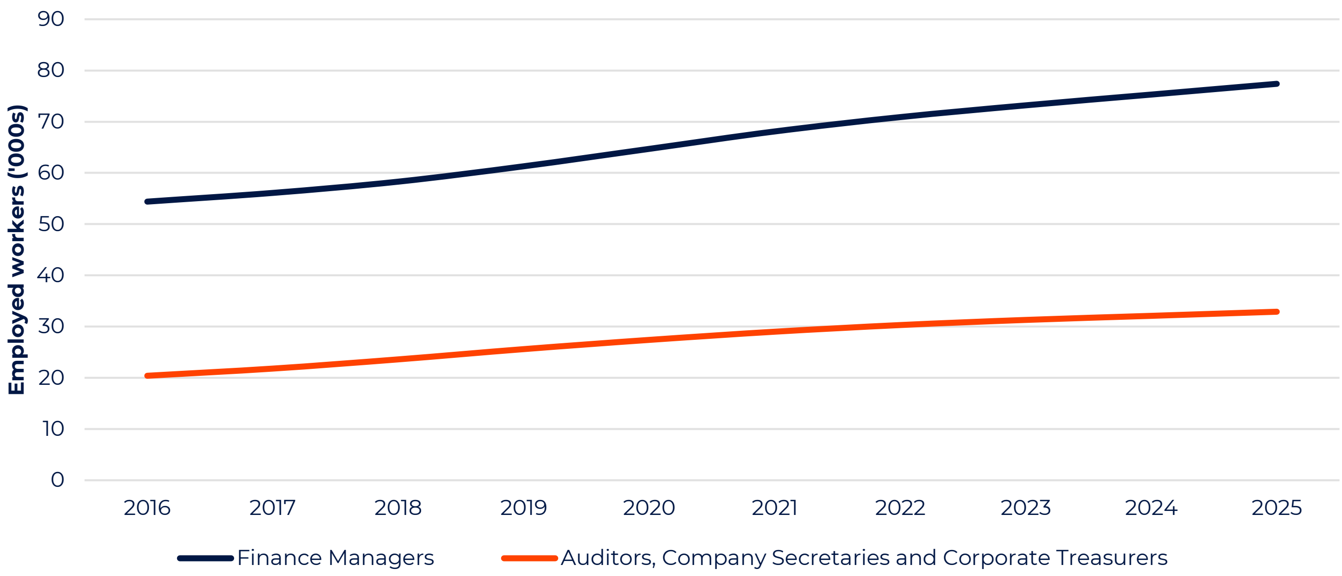

Figure 20: *Finance Managers and Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers: employment, 2016–2025*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers have grown by two-thirds in a decade and remain in national shortage. Employment rose from approximately 20,400 in 2016 to 32,900 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections to 2035 show demand reaching approximately 36,600 against supply of approximately 46,200, a surplus of approximately 9,600.[D3] The shortage and the projected surplus sit together because the shortage reflects current recruitment difficulty rather than a long-run shortfall.

This group has appeared on the Occupational Shortage List in both 2024 and 2025, with the shortage driver classified as uncertain in both years.[D10] Higher education is the dominant entry route: 70% of the workforce hold a higher education qualification as their highest qualification in 2025, up from 63% in 2016, while the share holding VET as their highest qualification fell.[D2]

Generative AI exposure scores place this group at 0.45 for automation and 0.74 for augmentation.[D4] This pattern points to work concentrated in judgement, interpretation and stakeholder interaction, where AI tools can speed up outputs but cannot replace the reasoning behind them, so the likely effect is a shift in the role and outputs.

Finance Managers are the larger group and are projected to move further into surplus. Employment grew from approximately 54,400 in 2016 to 77,400 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections to 2035 show demand reaching approximately 93,000 against supply of approximately 108,600, a surplus of approximately 15,600.[D3]

Attrition is projected to remove approximately 36,000 workers over the decade to 2035, equivalent to 47% of the 2025 workforce, but new supply more than replaces them.[D3] As with the audit group, higher education is the primary entry route: 68% hold higher education as their highest qualification in 2025, up from 62% in 2016, against a VET share of 22%.[D2]

Generative AI exposure scores sit at 0.46 for automation and 0.75 for augmentation[D4], the same judgement-led pattern, with the same implication that the role is likely to change with AI tool use.

Education and training trends

This section covers one VET qualification, the Advanced Diploma of Integrated Risk Management, and one higher education field, Banking, Finance and Related Fields.

The Advanced Diploma of Integrated Risk Management has almost no presence in the training market. It is designed for people moving into integrated and operational risk roles and confirmed training-to-occupation data shows it as occupation-ready for credit risk manager roles, with progression pathways into internal auditor, corporate treasurer, finance manager and related roles, several of which carry their own licensing or registration requirements.[D11]

The qualification is held on scope by one RTO on the National Training Register.[D12] Enrolments across the current qualification and its superseded versions have been negligible since 2020, recording single-digit or suppressed counts in every year, including only around five enrolments in the current qualification across the period.[D5]

No four-year completion rate is available for any version, because the commencing cohorts are too small to report.[D6] Student outcomes data for the qualification is suppressed across every indicator, so completer motivations, achievement, destinations and the relevance of training to work cannot be analysed.[D7]

A market this small cannot support meaningful learner access, and the absence of outcomes data means the qualification's performance cannot be assessed from the VET evidence base.

Higher education supply in this field is steady at undergraduate level and growing at postgraduate level, driven by international students. Domestic bachelor commencements in Banking, Finance and Related Fields were broadly flat over the decade, at approximately 2,497 full-time equivalent commencing students in 2016 and approximately 2,382 in 2024, with international bachelor commencements easing slightly.[D8]

Postgraduate coursework commencements grew over the same period, from approximately 3,951 to approximately 5,346 full-time equivalent students, with international enrolments accounting for almost all of that growth, rising from approximately 2,885 to approximately 4,285.[D8] Read alongside the qualification mix of the related occupations, this confirms that the supply of risk-capable workers runs mainly through higher education rather than VET.

Skills and knowledge changes

A new operational risk standard has reset baseline expectations for risk capability across the financial sector. *Prudential Standard CPS 230 (Operational Risk Management)* came into force on 1 July 2025 and applies to all prudentially regulated banks, insurers and superannuation funds, consolidating earlier outsourcing and business-continuity requirements into a single operational resilience framework.[2]

Targeted amendments covering non-traditional service providers take effect from 1 July 2026.[2] The standard requires regulated entities to identify critical operations, set tolerance levels for disruption, and manage service-provider risk, which raises the practical skill requirement for staff working in operational and integrated risk roles. The regulator's published priorities for 2025 to 2026 reinforce the same direction, naming cyber resilience, climate risk and operational risk as supervision focuses.[28]

Banks are extending risk frameworks to cover AI, which adds governance and oversight skills to the risk role. One bank's public account of its AI adoption sets out AI-specific governance forums and commits to building AI oversight onto its existing risk management frameworks rather than treating it separately.[29] Employer feedback points the same way, describing risk management capability as increasingly central in banking workforces and pointing to gaps around AI and digital tools where governance and practical implementation remain the constraint. This indicates that cross-sector evidence has not yet settled the direction.

The expansion of AML/CTF obligations beyond traditional reporting entities is also increasing demand for governance, risk and assurance capability. Compliance oversight, risk assessment, internal controls and reporting processes are core components of modern AML/CTF programs and align closely with the responsibilities of auditors, company secretaries, corporate treasurers and risk professionals.[5] As newly regulated professions implement AML/CTF obligations, demand for expertise in risk governance and compliance assurance is likely to extend further into legal, accounting and professional services environments.

This capability area is discussed further in the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing cluster.

Implications for action

Demand for risk-management capability is rising under the new operational risk standard and the move to bring AI inside bank risk frameworks, while the one VET qualification built for these roles has almost no enrolments and no usable outcomes data. That gap, between a growing skill area and a declining qualification, needs tracking: whether risk capability is being met through higher education, employer programs and professional bodies, or whether a redesigned VET product has a role. The current evidence is not sufficient to settle that and indicates a need for ongoing monitoring.

Cluster 8: Insurance

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in General Insurance · Certificate IV in Life Insurance · Certificate IV in Insurance Broking · Diploma of General Insurance · Diploma of Insurance Broking · Diploma of Loss Adjusting · Certificate III in Personal Injury Management · Certificate IV in Personal Injury Management · Diploma of Personal Injury and Disability Insurance Management

Higher education fields of education in scope: Banking, Finance and Related Fields

Active project: The Insurance Needs and Gaps Analysis has recently been completed for the insurance and personal injury management qualifications covered in this section.

Summary

Insurance work is growing across all three of its core occupations,[D2] but none is in shortage and demand is broadly matched by supply to 2035.[D3] Insurance Clerks, Insurance Agents, and the investigator and loss-adjusting workforce all added workers over the past decade. Only Insurance Agents face a meaningful supply gap, at approximately 3,100 to 2035.

This workforce faces its sharpest pressure in how the work itself is changing. Two of the three occupations show high augmentation exposure and medium automation exposure by current generative AI tools,[D4] with that exposure pointing to a shift in the task mix. Regulatory and structural change is moving faster than the qualifications that support these roles.

The qualification set is fragmented and, in places, barely operational. Nine qualifications span general insurance, life insurance, broking, loss adjusting, and personal injury management, several with only one or two RTOs delivering them. One qualification, the Certificate IV in Insurance Broking, has no provider.

- The general insurance Certificate IV and Diploma produce strong completer outcomes, but provision is thin and enrolments are recovering from a low base. They prepare workers for claims, underwriting, and agency roles.
- A single life insurance Certificate IV serves a sub-sector that is changing shape, as standalone life products are absorbed into general insurers.
- The Diploma of Insurance Broking is the best performing qualification market in this section, while the Certificate IV beneath it has no provider with the qualification on scope.
- A single Diploma of Loss Adjusting supports a small, specialised and growing occupation with strong augmentation exposure.
- Three personal injury management qualifications support claims and rehabilitation roles reshaped by workers compensation reform,[30,31,32]but provision is thin.

Occupational demand

The three occupations covered here are Insurance Clerks, Insurance Agents, and the combined occupation of Insurance Investigators, Loss Adjusters and Risk Surveyors. The chart below shows their employment size in 2025.

Insurance, Money Market and Statistical Clerks form the largest occupation in this cluster and one of its more generative AI automation-exposed clerical workforces. Employment reached 41,000 in 2025, up from approximately 29,500 in 2016, a steady decade of growth.[D2] Workforce projections show demand rising to approximately 43,800 by 2035 against supply of approximately 43,100, leaving demand and supply broadly in balance.[D3] Attrition is projected to remove approximately 10,600 workers between 2026 and 2035, around 26% of the 2025 workforce, which new entrants are expected to replace.[D3]

VET and higher education each account for around a third of this workforce as the highest qualification held, a split with no single dominant supply channel.[D2] The occupation is moderately female dominated,[D9] with women making up 75% of workers.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores are moderate to high on both measures, at 0.68 for automation and 0.74 for augmentation[D4], meaning routine claims and policy processing is exposed to substitution while assessment judgement is supported. This pattern indicates that the routine transactional tasks at the core of the role, such as processing and data entry, are exposed to substitution, while the interpretive and customer-facing tasks are supported by augmentation. The likely effect is a shift in the task mix toward workers who can operate utilising AI tools in their work.

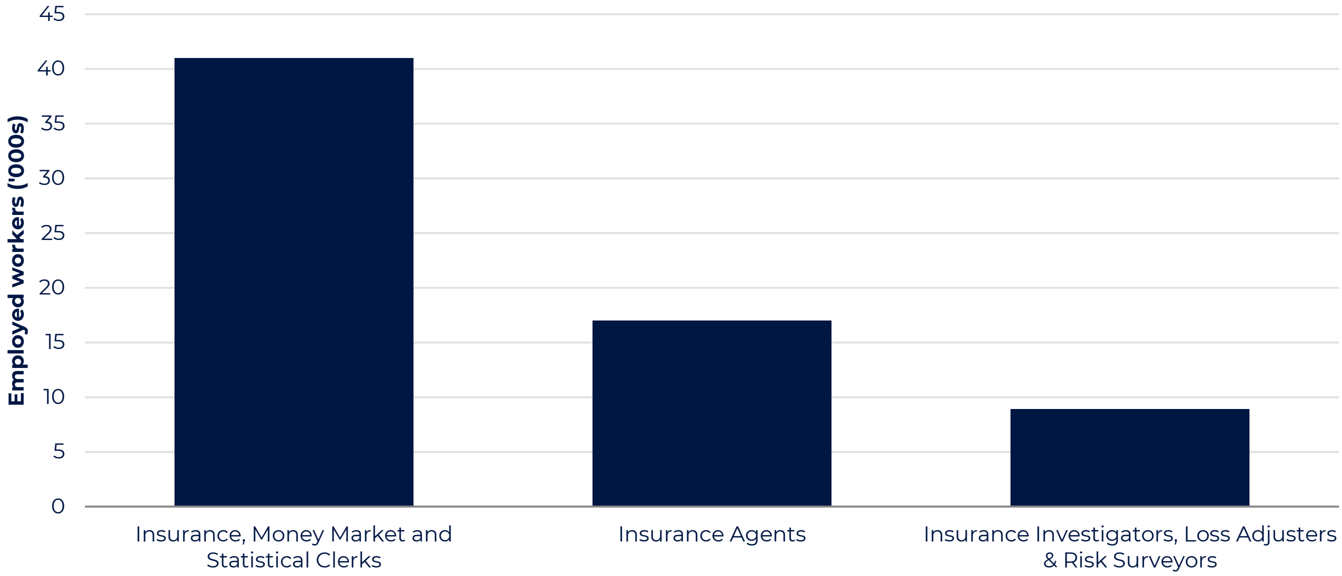

Figure 21: *Insurance occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Insurance Agents carry the only meaningful supply gap in this section, at approximately 3,100 to 2035. Employment grew from approximately 10,800 in 2016 to 17,000 in 2025.[D2] Demand is projected to reach approximately 17,100 by 2035, while supply reaches only approximately 14,100.[D3] The gap reflects demand growth outpacing supply rather than attrition alone, with projected attrition of approximately 4,000 workers, around 25% of the 2025 workforce, over the same period.[D3]

Higher education is the highest qualification held for 33% of this workforce and VET for 35%, a near-even split.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced,[D9] with women at 57%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.62 and augmentation exposure 0.73;[D4] routine quoting and administration are exposed while advice and relationship work are likely to be supported. As with Insurance Clerks, this points to a task-mix shift: transactional sales and processing tasks face substitution pressure, while advisory and relationship tasks are augmented, concentrating demand on workers who can work effectively alongside these tools.

Insurance Investigators, Loss Adjusters and Risk Surveyors form a small, specialised workforce built around judgement and assessment. Employment grew from approximately 5,500 in 2016 to 8,900 in 2025.[D2] Demand is projected to reach approximately 8,500 by 2035 against supply of approximately 8,100, leaving demand and supply broadly in balance.[D3] Projected attrition of approximately 3,200 workers represents around 37% of the 2025 workforce, the highest attrition share of the three occupations, which the supply projection expects new entrants to offset.[D3]

VET is the highest qualification held for 49% of this workforce, well above the 32% holding higher education, making it the most VET-reliant of the three occupations.[D2] It is moderately male dominated,[D9] with women at 41%.[D2] The 2025 workforce share has moved toward gender balance since the segregation scale rating was set on 2021 data.[D9]

Generative AI exposure differs from the other two occupations: automation exposure is low at 0.44 while augmentation exposure is high at 0.73[D4], a profile of judgement-intensive investigative work that generative AI supports rather than replaces. This profile is characteristic of work concentrated in assessment, investigation, and judgement, where tools can accelerate analysis and reporting but cannot replace the reasoning that gives the assessment its value. The practical effect is that experienced practitioners can handle more work, which may raise output expectations without reducing the need for workers.

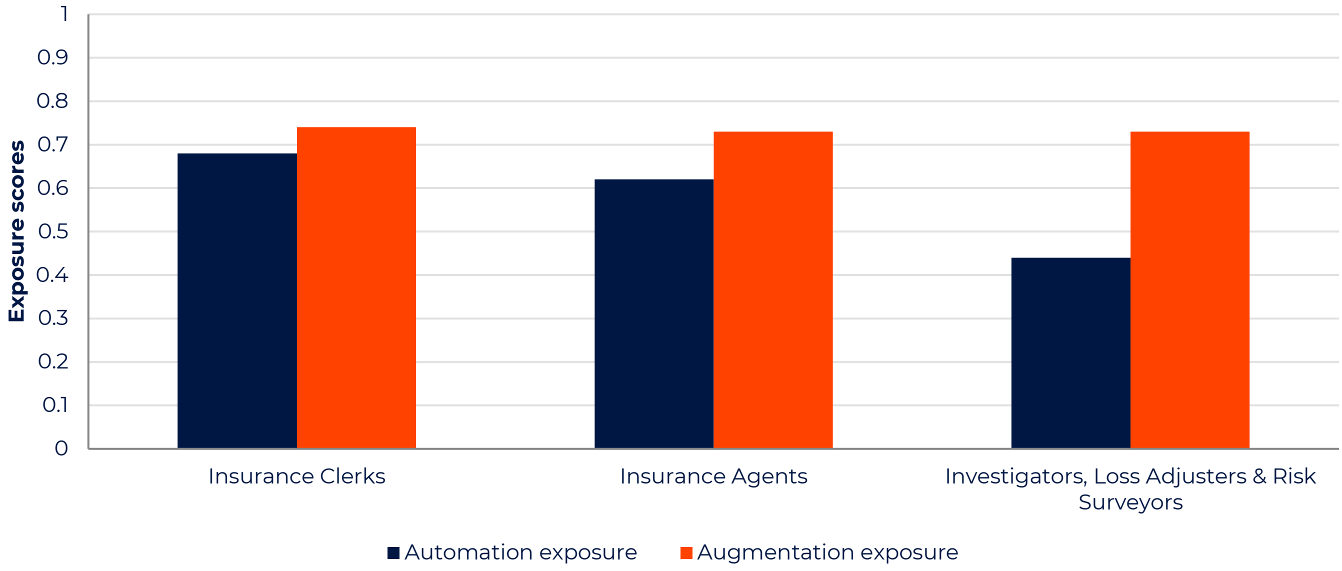

Figure 22: *Insurance occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers the Certificate IV in General Insurance, Certificate IV in Life Insurance, Certificate IV in Insurance Broking, Diploma of General Insurance, Diploma of Insurance Broking, Diploma of Loss Adjusting, and the three personal injury management qualifications: the Certificate III in Personal Injury Management, Certificate IV in Personal Injury Management, and Diploma of Personal Injury and Disability Insurance Management. The higher education field in scope is Banking, Finance and Related Fields. Qualifications are grouped by sub-theme and run from lowest to highest AQF level within each.

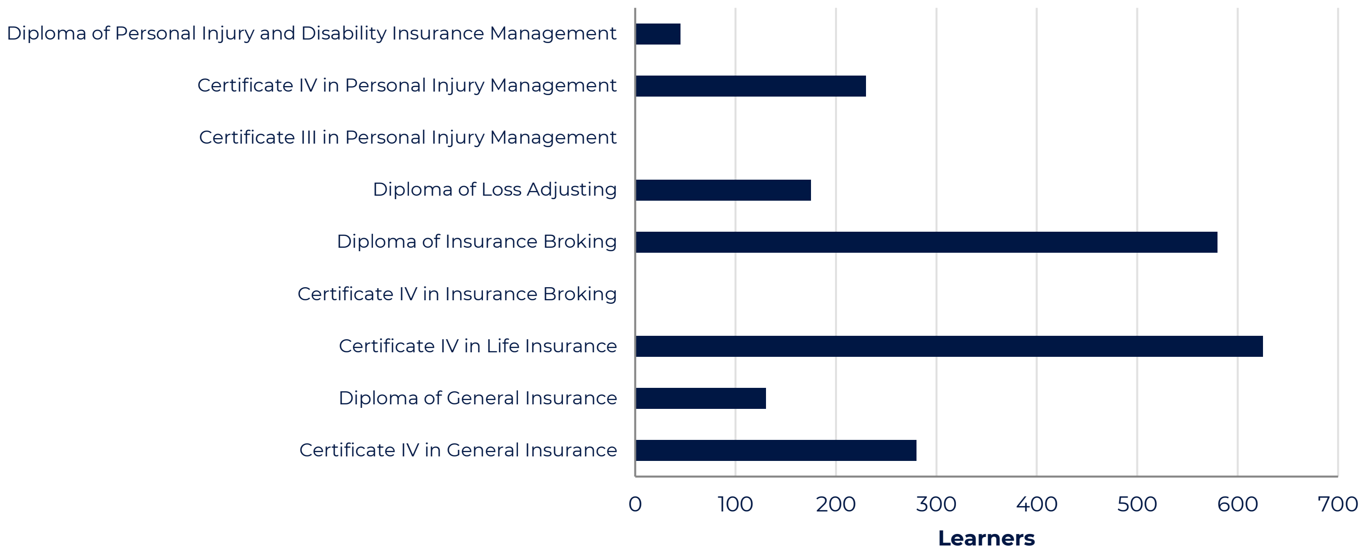

Figure 23: *Insurance: VET and higher education enrolments, 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Enrolments across these qualifications are low relative to the size of the workforce they serve. The insurance occupations employ more than 65,000 people between them. However, combined annual enrolments across all nine qualifications numbered in the low thousands in 2024, and several qualifications drew fewer than 200 learners each.[D5] Most are recovering from a low base rather than sustaining established volumes, with the larger 2024 cohorts following years of minimal or suppressed enrolment.[D5]

Provision is concentrated among very few providers, and in places it has effectively disappeared. Most qualifications in this section are held on scope by one to five RTOs, and one, the Certificate IV in Insurance Broking, has none.[D12,D6] Thin provider markets leave learners with limited choice and leave qualifications exposed if a single provider withdraws, particularly for the qualifications that depend on one RTO. For an insurance workforce of this size, the delivery base is narrow.

Where outcomes data is available, completers report strong results. Across the qualifications with reportable data, most learners enrolled for employment-related reasons, achieved what they came for, and moved into work or further study, with employment-related motivation, achievement, and post-training employment all sitting above the FNS training package averages.[D7] The qualifications appear to work well for those who complete them; the constraint is the scale and stability of provision, not the experience of completers.

General insurance

The Certificate IV in General Insurance prepares workers for claims, underwriting support, and agency roles, and the Diploma extends that preparation toward risk and supervisory work. According to the National Training Register, 5 RTOs hold the Certificate IV on their scope and 1 holds the Diploma.[D12,D6] This is thin provision for an occupation employing more than 40,000 people, and the single Diploma provider points to a fragile market at the higher AQF level.

Enrolments in the Certificate IV recovered to 280 in 2024, up from 85 in 2023, after a period in which the superseded version drew only modest numbers.[D5] The Diploma recorded 130 enrolments in 2024, its first substantial cohort in the period.[D5]

A four-year completion rate for the current Certificate IV is not yet available, as the qualification is too recent.[D12,D6] The Diploma's superseded version returned a four-year completion rate of 42% for the 2020 commencing cohort, below the FNS training package average of 57% for that year, though this rate rests on fewer than 50 commencements and should be treated as indicative only.[D12,D6]

Student outcomes for the Certificate IV are strong against the training package.[D7] Most completers enrolled for employment-related reasons, at 95% against a training package average of 81%. Of those, 93% achieved their main reason for training, against an average of 84%. Almost all completers, 99%, were employed or in further study after completing. Among those employed, 91% found their training relevant to their work, against a training package average of 76%; this last figure is drawn only from employed completers and is not directly comparable with the other measures, which use a wider base.

Life insurance

The Certificate IV in Life Insurance serves a sub-sector that is changing shape, as standalone life insurance becomes less viable and general insurers absorb life products. Three RTOs hold the qualification on their scope.[D12,D6] Industry body feedback describes life insurance becoming increasingly unprofitable as a standalone line, with general insurers incorporating life products and roles in claims, underwriting, and advice requiring broader capability across insurance lines.

Enrolments grew sharply to 625 in 2024, up from 220 in 2023, the strongest growth of any qualification in this section.[D5] The superseded version returned a four-year completion rate of 50% for the 2020 commencing cohort, below the FNS training package average, again on fewer than 50 commencements and indicative only.[D12,D6]

Student outcomes are strong.[D7] Of completers, 96% enrolled for employment-related reasons and 91% achieved their main reason for training, both above the training package average. All completers were employed or in further study afterward, and 94% of those employed found their training relevant.

Insurance broking

The Diploma of Insurance Broking is the healthiest qualification market in this section, while the Certificate IV beneath it has no provider with the qualification on scope. Five RTOs hold the Diploma on their scope; no RTO holds the Certificate IV.[D12,D6] A current, licensed qualification with no provider is effectively unavailable to learners, and the broking pathway therefore runs through the Diploma alone.

The Diploma recorded 580 enrolments in 2024, the largest single-qualification cohort in this section, building steadily from 120 in 2022 and 190 in 2023.[D5] Its superseded version returned a four-year completion rate of 88% for the 2020 commencing cohort, well above the FNS training package average of 57% and based on a substantial cohort of 730 commencements.[D12,D6] This is the one qualification in the section whose completion rate carries analytical weight, and it is a strong result.

Student outcomes match the strong completion picture.[D7] Of completers, 89% enrolled for employment-related reasons and 97% achieved their main reason for training. Almost all, 99%, were employed or in further study afterward, and 98% of those employed found their training relevant, the highest relevance figure in the section.

Loss adjusting

The Diploma of Loss Adjusting supports a small, specialised, growing occupation, and its provision is correspondingly narrow. Two RTOs hold the qualification on their scope.[D12,D6] This is consistent with the size of the loss-adjusting workforce, but it leaves the qualification exposed if either provider withdraws.

Enrolments reached 175 in 2024, the qualification's only substantial cohort in the period.[D5] The superseded version returned a four-year completion rate of 64% for the 2020 commencing cohort, above the FNS training package average, though on fewer than 50 commencements and indicative only.[D12,D6] Student outcomes for the current qualification are suppressed due to small sample size and cannot be reported.[D7]

Personal injury management

Three qualifications support personal injury and disability claims management, a field reshaped by workers compensation reform, but their provision is thin. The Certificate III, Certificate IV, and Diploma are each held on scope by a small number of RTOs: 1, 4, and 1 respectively.[D12,D6] Personal injury management has no occupation of its own in the standard occupation classification, so it cannot be sized directly; the workers sit within the Insurance Clerks and Insurance Agents occupations described above, and workforce data cannot be attributed to personal injury management specifically.

The Certificate III recorded no enrolments across the 2020 to 2024 period and has a single provider, indicating a qualification that is not functioning in the market.[D5] The Certificate IV is the most active of the three, growing to 230 enrolments in 2024 from 70 in 2022.[D5] The Diploma drew 45 enrolments in 2024 against a single provider, a thin market.[D5]

Completion rates are available only for the superseded versions and rest on small cohorts.[D12,D6] The Certificate IV returned 53% for the 2020 commencing cohort and the Diploma 44%, both below the FNS training package average and both indicative only. Student outcomes for the Certificate IV and Diploma are strong against the training package, with employment-related motivation at 95% and 92%, and training relevance among employed completers at 94% for both; the Certificate III has no student outcomes data.[D7] The pathways data confirms the Certificate IV as occupation-ready for insurance agent roles, with progression toward rehabilitation and work health and safety roles, while the Certificate III offers progression pathways only and no occupation-ready outcome, consistent with its position as an entry qualification.[D11]

Higher education context

Higher education and VET each supply around a third of the insurance workforce as the highest qualification held, with the investigator and loss-adjusting occupation drawing more heavily on VET.[D2] The relevant higher education field, Banking, Finance and Related Fields, is broad and not specific to insurance, so it functions as a shared pipeline across several finance sector occupations rather than a dedicated insurance channel.

Skills and knowledge changes

AI is reshaping the task mix in insurance roles while leaving overall headcount demand broadly intact. Across the three occupations, generative AI exposure scores point to a consistent pattern: transactional work, such as processing, data entry, and routine sales, faces substitution pressure, while interpretive, investigative, and relationship work is augmented. For Insurance Clerks and Insurance Agents, both highly exposed on automation and augmentation, this means demand concentrating on workers who can operate the augmented part of the role. For investigators and loss adjusters, where automation exposure is low, but augmentation is high, the effect is that tools accelerate analysis without displacing the judgement at the centre of the work. Industry body feedback pointed to demand for tools and capability that help insurance workers understand how AI changes their specific tasks.

Operational risk and prudential regulation are raising the capability bar across insurance roles. A prudential standard on operational risk management took effect on 1 July 2025 and applies to insurers alongside banks and superannuation funds.[2] It addresses risks including complex technology supply chains and the governance of automated systems, which increases demand for risk, compliance, and governance capability within insurance roles. This is a regulatory driver of skill change, and the qualifications in this section do not yet clearly reflect it.

Workers' compensation reform is reshaping the skills personal injury management roles require. Major reform of the New South Wales workers compensation scheme passed in two stages, in November 2025 and February 2026, introducing a 130-week cap on weekly benefits for primary psychological injury claims, a new bullying and harassment jurisdiction in the state industrial relations commission, and a phased increase in the impairment threshold for lump-sum and damages claims from 1 July 2026.[30] These changes alter how psychological injury claims are assessed, managed, and disputed, and they place new demands on claims, rehabilitation, and dispute-resolution capability. The reform is concentrated in one jurisdiction but signals a national direction, given rising psychological injury claims across schemes. The qualifications supporting this workforce will need to keep pace with the changed assessment and claims environment.

Climate and sustainability obligations are adding to the knowledge base insurance workers are expected to hold. Regulatory guidance on mandatory climate-related financial disclosure now applies to large insurers, requiring capability in climate risk assessment and disclosure.[33] Industry body feedback identified climate and insurance risk as a recurring theme in capability discussions.

Implications for action

A Needs and Gaps Analysis is already underway for the qualifications in this section, and workforce planning evidence supports that process. The analysis is the appropriate place to weigh the regulatory, structural, and provision findings set out in this section and determine what training product development, if any, should follow. This section directs that evidence to the analysis rather than pre-empting its conclusions.

Cluster 9: Superannuation and Personal Trustees

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Superannuation · Diploma of Superannuation · Certificate IV in Personal Trust Administration · Diploma of Personal Trusts

Summary

Superannuation sits under significant and accelerating regulatory change, and the sector needs to keep building the compliance, advice, and administration skills to manage that change.[34] Superannuation manages retirement savings for most working Australians, and personal trust administration handles estates and trusts within financial services. Reforms to advice, operational risk, and contribution payment are reshaping the work across both fields.

No occupation maps cleanly to either field, so the workforce picture is read through adjacent roles rather than measured directly. The occupations closest to superannuation work are growing,[D2] drawn mainly from higher education,[D8] and exposed to generative AI[D4] in ways that raise output expectations rather than cut headcount. Personal trust administration has no workforce data anchor.

The education and training picture divides along two lines:

- The Certificate IV and Diploma of Superannuation are the VET route into fund administration, but enrolments have thinned to the point where they no longer supply most of these skills.
- The Certificate IV in Personal Trust Administration and Diploma of Personal Trusts sit on a near-empty market. They cover trustee and estate administration within financial services.

Occupational demand

No occupation maps directly to superannuation or personal trust work, with superannuation administration, advice, and fund management spread across several occupations. Both superannuation VET qualifications map to Financial Investment Manager, which sits inside a broader occupation group.

Two adjacent occupations give the closest read on the workforce: Financial Investment Advisers and Managers, and Finance Managers. Both are used here for context only, since neither is specific to superannuation. Personal trust administration has no occupation with usable workforce data, and its qualification is tagged to Trust Officer, for which there is no clean occupational equivalent.

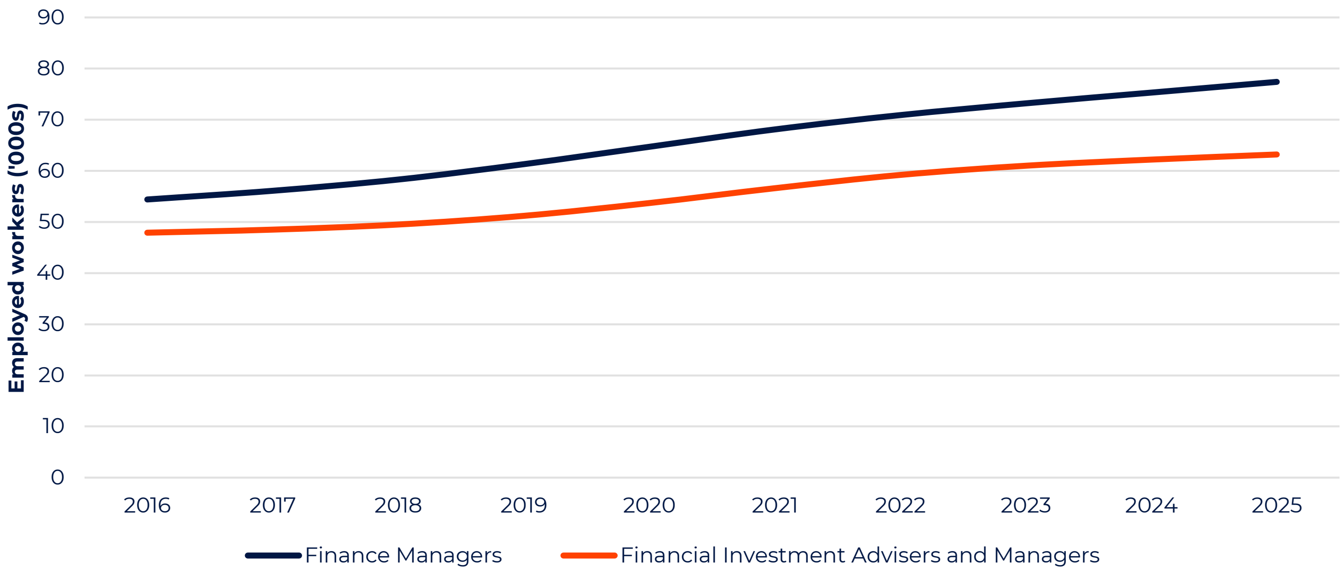

Figure 24: *Superannuation and Personal Trustees related occupations: employment, 2016–2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Financial Investment Advisers and Managers were in national shortage as recently as 2024, and the shortage has since lifted. Employment grew from approximately 47,900 in 2016 to 63,200 in 2025.[D2] The Occupational Shortage List recorded a national shortage in 2024 driven by a suitability gap, meaning enough people held the qualification but too few met employer requirements, and that shortage was removed in 2025.[D10]

Workforce projections point to a supply gap of approximately 11,300 by 2035, against demand of approximately 74,200 and supply of approximately 62,800.[D3] The gap is driven mainly by attrition: the occupation is projected to lose approximately 23,300 workers between 2026 and 2035, equal to 36% of the 2025 workforce.[D3]

Higher education is the main qualification route, holding 68% of the workforce in 2025 against a VET share of 24%, and the VET share has fallen steadily from 33% over the decade.[D2] The occupation is moderately male dominated,[D9] with women making up 40% of workers.[D2] The 2025 workforce share has moved toward gender balance since the segregation scale rating was set on 2021 data.[D9]

Generative AI exposure scores place the occupation at 0.48 for automation and 0.74 for augmentation,[D4] a judgement-intensive profile. AI tools can speed up analysis and reporting, but the interpretation and client judgement at the core of the work resist substitution, so a likely effect is higher output expectations rather than lower headcount.

Finance Managers are growing strongly and projected to move into surplus, the opposite of the supply pressure seen across most finance occupations. Employment rose from approximately 54,400 in 2016 to 77,400 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching approximately 93,000 by 2035 against supply of approximately 108,600, a surplus of approximately 15,600.[D3]

The surplus sits alongside heavy turnover. The occupation is projected to lose approximately 36,000 workers between 2026 and 2035, or 47% of the 2025 workforce, with new entrants more than replacing them.[D3]

Higher education holds 68% of the workforce as the highest qualification, against a VET share of 22%.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced,[D9] with women at 53%.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores are 0.46 for automation and 0.75 for augmentation,[D4] again a judgement-intensive profile where generative AI raises the volume and speed of analysis without displacing the decision-making the role exists to do.

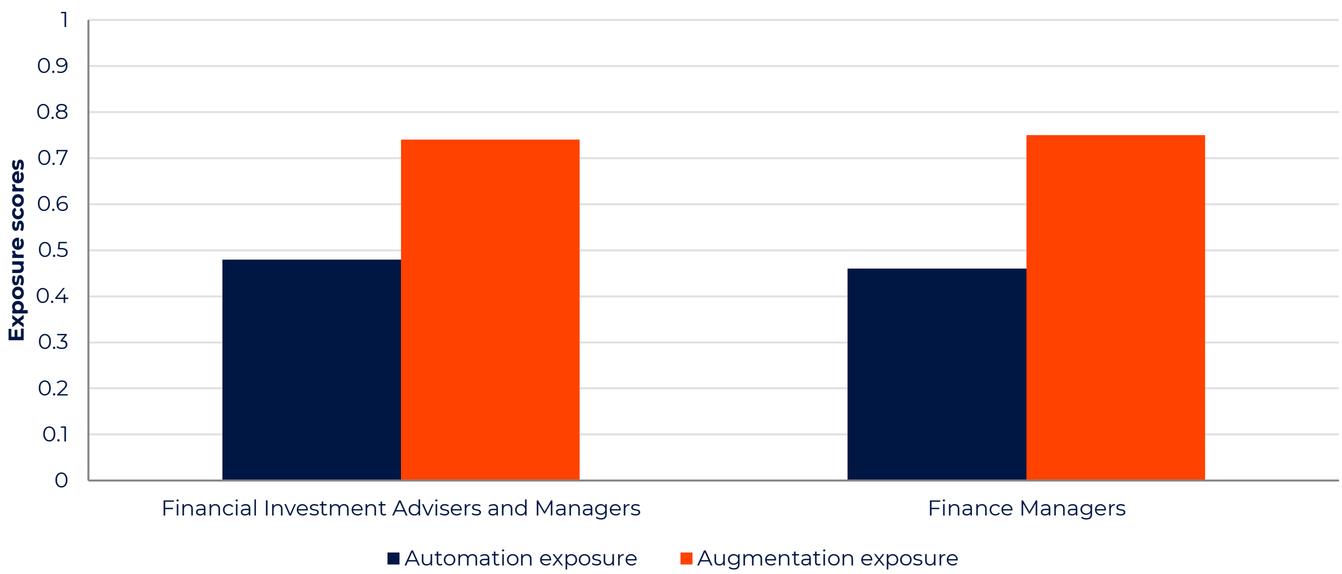

Figure 25: *Superannuation and Personal Trustees: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers four VET qualifications: the Certificate IV in Superannuation, the Diploma of Superannuation, the Certificate IV in Personal Trust Administration, and the Diploma of Personal Trusts. No higher education field of education maps specifically to these qualifications, so higher education is not discussed here. The qualifications fall into two groups, superannuation and personal trust administration, and both describe a near-empty market.

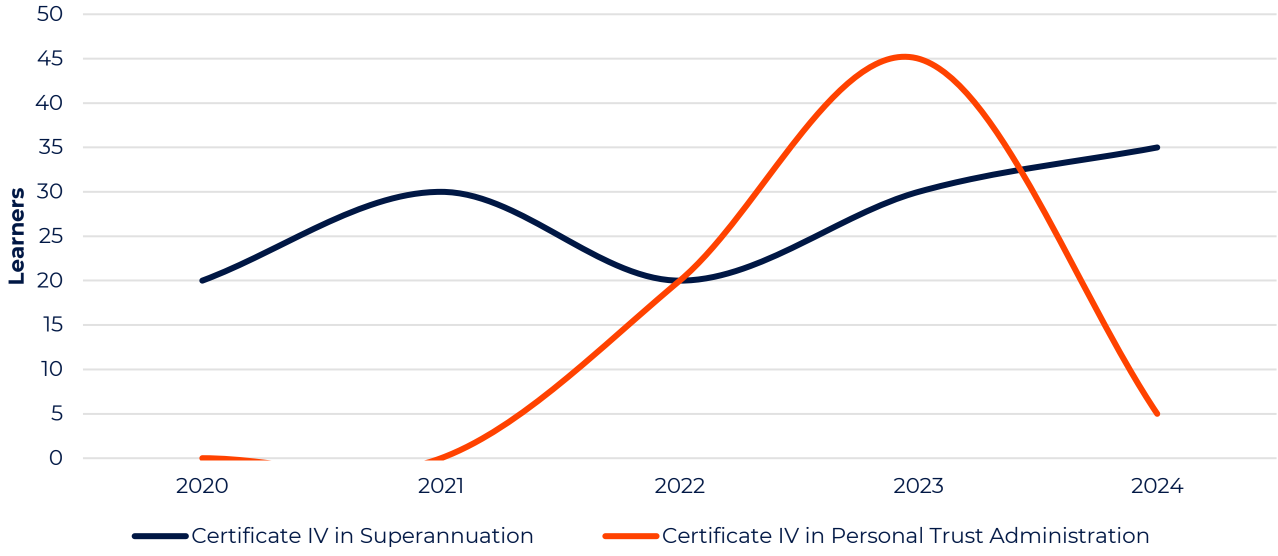

Figure 26: *Superannuation and Personal Trustees: VET enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Superannuation qualifications

The Certificate IV in Superannuation prepares workers for fund administration and member-facing roles, and the **Diploma of Superannuation** covers more advanced fund and investment administration. Both are licensed qualifications, meaning they align to a regulated function: operating a registrable superannuation entity requires a licence from the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) under the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993*,[35] while financial product advice is regulated by ASIC.[34] One training provider holds the Certificate IV on its scope, according to the National Training Register, and no provider currently holds the Diploma.[D12]

Enrolments in the Certificate IV sat at around 35 in 2024, up from suppressed or very low counts earlier in the decade, while the Diploma recorded no enrolments across the five years to 2024.[D5] One provider and a few dozen enrolments describe a market that has all but closed: learners in most of the country have no provider to enrol with, and the single active provider carries the entire national pipeline for the Certificate IV.

Completion data is available only for the superseded version of the Certificate IV and rests on a very small base.[D6] The 2020 commencing cohort recorded a four-year completion rate of 42%, below the VET average of around 57% for that year, but the cohort numbered fewer than 50 commencements and the figure should be read as indicative only. No completion rate is available for the Diploma.

Student outcomes data exists for both current superannuation qualifications but rests on very small samples with wide margins of error, so the figures are indicative only and no finding is built on them. Completers reported employment as their main reason for training and high rates of achieving that reason, employment or further study after training, and relevance of training to work, but the margins of error are wider than the gaps between the figures, and they cannot be compared reliably against the financial services training package averages.[D7]

Personal trust qualifications

The Certificate IV in Personal Trust Administration covers trustee and estate administration work within financial services, and the **Diploma of Personal Trusts** covers more advanced trust administration. One training provider holds the Certificate IV on its scope, according to the National Training Register, and no provider holds the Diploma.[D12]

Enrolments in the Certificate IV moved between suppressed counts and a brief rise to 45 in 2023 before falling to 5 in 2024, while the Diploma recorded no enrolments across the period.[D5] The Certificate IV market is thin and volatile, and the Diploma is effectively a qualification on the books with no delivery behind it.

Completion data exists only for the superseded versions of both qualifications and on bases too small to interpret.[D6] No student outcomes data is available for either current qualification.[D7]

Skills and knowledge changes

Regulatory change is the requirement reshaping skills most directly in superannuation, though its weight falls unevenly across the workforce. Three reforms bear on the work, and they reach the fund-side roles covered by these qualifications to different degrees.

The reform with the broadest reach, Payday Super, lands mainly outside of direct superannuation.[6] Enacted in 2025 and commencing on 1 July 2026, it requires employers to pay superannuation guarantee contributions in line with each pay cycle rather than quarterly.[6] Most of the compliance and process burden falls on employers and payroll teams, whose work sits outside superannuation administration. For funds and administrators the effect is narrower but evidenced: higher contribution volumes, a tighter processing window as the allocation period drops from 20 business days to three, and more data validation and error handling under the updated contribution messaging standard.[6] This is an operational uplift in processing and reconciliation work, not a reshaping of the administration role itself.

The operational risk standard bears more directly on fund-side roles. In effect from 1 July 2025, it brings the management of complex technology supply chains and AI risks into the regulated obligations of superannuation funds.[2] Its explicit treatment of AI suggests fund roles will increasingly need skills in AI governance and oversight, extending beyond the use of AI tools.[2]

The advice reforms introduce a new category of adviser benchmarked to a VET qualification level, which places the VET system squarely in the future supply of superannuation advice skills. The Delivering Better Financial Outcomes reforms, flowing from the Quality of Advice Review, propose a New Class of Advisers able to give simple, limited advice through financial institutions including superannuation funds, with an education standard set at the level of a diploma.[4] The first tranche of these reforms is enacted and the second is in exposure draft.[4] This is the strongest available signal that VET has a defined future role in superannuation advice, even as the existing superannuation qualifications sit unused. Whether that role is met by the current qualifications, by new products, or by qualifications outside this field is not yet settled.

Generative AI is changing the surrounding finance occupations more than it is changing the named superannuation or trust roles, for which there is no occupation-specific exposure data. In the adjacent advice and management occupations, the exposure pattern points to generative AI accelerating analysis, reporting, and member communication while leaving the interpretation and judgement of the work intact.

No evidence points to changing skill or knowledge requirements in personal trust administration. The field is small, the qualifications are near-dormant, and neither the data nor the qualitative record describes emerging skill demand.

Implications for action

The evidence indicates further monitoring of this cluster for the 2027 Workforce Plan. The advice reforms point to future roles for diploma-level VET in superannuation advice. Resolving whether the existing qualifications, new products, or qualifications elsewhere should meet that role needs intelligence the current evidence base does not contain, including direct consultation with funds, administrators, and the relevant professional bodies.

For personal trust administration, the evidence is thin. There is no workforce data anchor, no stakeholder feedback, and a near-empty qualification market. Further monitoring is needed to determine whether a workforce skills need exists, and whether VET qualifications are the right instrument to meet it.

Cluster 10: Sustainable Finance

VET qualifications in scope: none currently mapped

Higher education fields of education in scope: Accounting · Banking, Finance and Related Fields

Active project: Training products to support sustainable finance and climate-related financial disclosures are being developed through the FNS Update: Sustainable Finance Disclosures project.

Summary

A mandatory reporting regime has turned climate disclosure from a voluntary activity into a legal obligation, and the skills to meet it do not yet exist in accredited training.[1] Large entities began reporting under the new climate disclosure standard for financial years starting on or after 1 January 2025, with medium and smaller entities phased in through 2026 and 2027. Preparing these disclosures calls for carbon accounting, scenario analysis, and assurance skills that are now being built into Financial Services and related qualifications.

The skills sit across established finance and accounting jobs rather than in a role or qualification of their own. Preparing and assuring sustainability reports draws on accountants, auditors, finance managers, and investment professionals, all covered in other sections. The demand signal is consistent across regulation, regulator consultation, employer feedback, and industry frameworks. Stakeholder feedback points to capability gaps among accountants, bookkeepers, and finance-adjacent workers as reporting obligations widen.

The education and training picture for the occupations that carry this work:

- Accountants and auditors carry most of the disclosure work. Preparing and assuring sustainability reports falls largely to accounting and audit roles, both of which are growing. Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers have been in national shortage in each of the past two years.
- The accounting graduate pipeline is contracting. Domestic full-time equivalent commencements in accounting bachelor degrees fell by roughly a third over the past decade, which narrows the channel feeding the occupations expected to absorb new disclosure work.

Where the work sits

No occupation in the standard classification is dedicated to sustainable finance. The work is absorbed by four existing roles: Finance Managers, Accountants, Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers, and Financial Investment Advisers and Managers. Each is analysed in full in its home section, so the points below cover only what bears on sustainability disclosure capability.

Accountants are the largest group expected to carry climate disclosure work, and the occupation is growing. Employment reached 214,200 in 2025, up from approximately 186,200 in 2016,[D2] and around 80% of the workforce holds a bachelor degree or higher as their highest qualification.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores of 0.54 for automation and 0.73 for augmentation[D4] indicate potential for tools to accelerate routine preparation while disclosure reasoning stays with practitioners. Full treatment is in the Accounting section.

Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers prepare and assure sustainability reports, and this is the only one of the four roles in current shortage. The occupation has appeared on the national shortage list in each of the past two years, with the shortage attributed to an uncertain driver.[D10] That existing shortage means near-term capacity to take on new assurance obligations is already stretched. Full treatment is in the Financial Risk Management section.

Finance Managers set the governance and strategy framing that climate disclosure now requires. The disclosure standard requires board and executive oversight of climate risk, which places part of the capability demand at this level.[1] Full treatment is in the Financial Risk Management section.

Financial Investment Advisers and Managers apply sustainability information to investment decisions, and this is the only one of the four roles facing a supply shortfall. Workforce projections show a supply gap of approximately 11,300 to 2035.[D3] The occupation was removed from the national shortage list in 2025, having been listed in 2024 with the shortage attributed to a suitability gap, meaning candidates were available but did not meet employer requirements.[D10] Full treatment is in the Superannuation and Personal Trustees section.

The higher education pipeline feeding these occupations is narrowing. Domestic full-time equivalent bachelor enrolments declined from approximately 4,500 in 2019 to approximately 3,200 in 2024.[D8] The occupations expected to take on disclosure work are drawing on a smaller graduate intake than a decade ago, which sharpens the case for building disclosure capability into existing workers rather than relying on new graduates to bring it.

Skills and knowledge changes

A new legal obligation, not a market trend, is driving demand for sustainable finance skills. Amendments to the Corporations Act passed in 2024 now require in-scope entities to prepare climate-related financial disclosures,[36] reported against the climate disclosure standard issued by the national accounting standards setter.[34] Reporting began for the largest entities for financial years commencing on or after 1 January 2025, with medium entities following from 1 July 2026 and smaller entities from 1 July 2027.[34] The corporate regulator has published guidance on how the regime applies.[33] Because the obligation is mandatory and phased, the population of businesses needing these skills widens each year through 2027.

The disclosure task requires technical skills that current Financial Services qualifications do not cover, but these are being actively built for use. A compliant report means measuring greenhouse gas emissions, including the value-chain emissions that phase in after the first year, running climate scenario analysis to test business resilience, and preparing disclosures to a standard that will require external assurance over time.[34] Professional body guidance for accountants sets out what these tasks demand in practice.[37] The corporate regulator's consultation with finance-sector bodies identified a need for capacity building across bookkeepers, accountants, and finance-adjacent workers as reporting requirements develop, which corroborates the gap that the regulatory text implies.

Stakeholder feedback shows demand but the requirements are not yet well understood at the workplace level. Across the FSO Workforce Roadshows, sustainability and environmental, social and governance skills were raised more often than any other Finance topic in this analysis. Employers described demand from small businesses for sustainability skills, named climate policy and sustainability as an emerging area, and in several cases said they did not yet know what sustainability reporting would require of them.

Industry capability frameworks are filling the gap ahead of accredited training, which signals both the urgency and the shape of the need. Sector bodies have published a sustainable finance taxonomy, a multi-year sustainable finance action plan backed by major financial institutions, and a capability framework, alongside guidance materials for finance professionals.[38,39] These voluntary frameworks indicate the skills industry expects, and their existence ahead of any accredited offering shows employers are not waiting for the training system to respond.

A second knowledge area sits alongside disclosure. Some stakeholder feedback pointed to business sustainability practice, the operational and management side of running a more sustainable organisation, rather than financial disclosure. Feedback noted that demand of this kind currently maps to the Business Services (BSB) training package and may need to be reflected in business qualifications. This is an adjacent capability area rather than part of the financial disclosure task, and it sits more naturally within the business sector analysis.

AI-enabled reporting tools are entering disclosure work, but the judgement they support stays with practitioners. The occupations carrying disclosure work all sit in the judgement-led pattern of generative AI exposure, with high augmentation scores and lower automation scores. AI tools can speed data gathering and drafting, but decisions about what is material, how to frame a scenario, and whether a disclosure is defensible remain professional judgements. Regulatory guidance on AI governance in financial services and on operational risk management adds a further layer of skill demand around using these tools responsibly.[2,13,D10]

Implications for action

Training product development to meet this need is already underway, with consultation beginning in 2026. Evidence gathered through this analysis will be directed to that process rather than used to pre-empt its scope.

The business sustainability capability raised in stakeholder feedback, distinct from financial disclosure, is not addressed by the current disclosure-focused development and may warrant separate consideration of where, if anywhere, it belongs in the training system.

Technology

Technology has been the fastest growing of the FTB sectors, and higher education now supplies most workers. The information technology occupations expanded by about two-thirds over the decade to 2025. As they grew, the workforce composition shifted to higher education qualifications: 60% to 83% of higher-skilled technology occupations are supplied by higher education qualification holders. The VET system retains meaningful share in a narrowing set of roles, chiefly technology support.[D2]

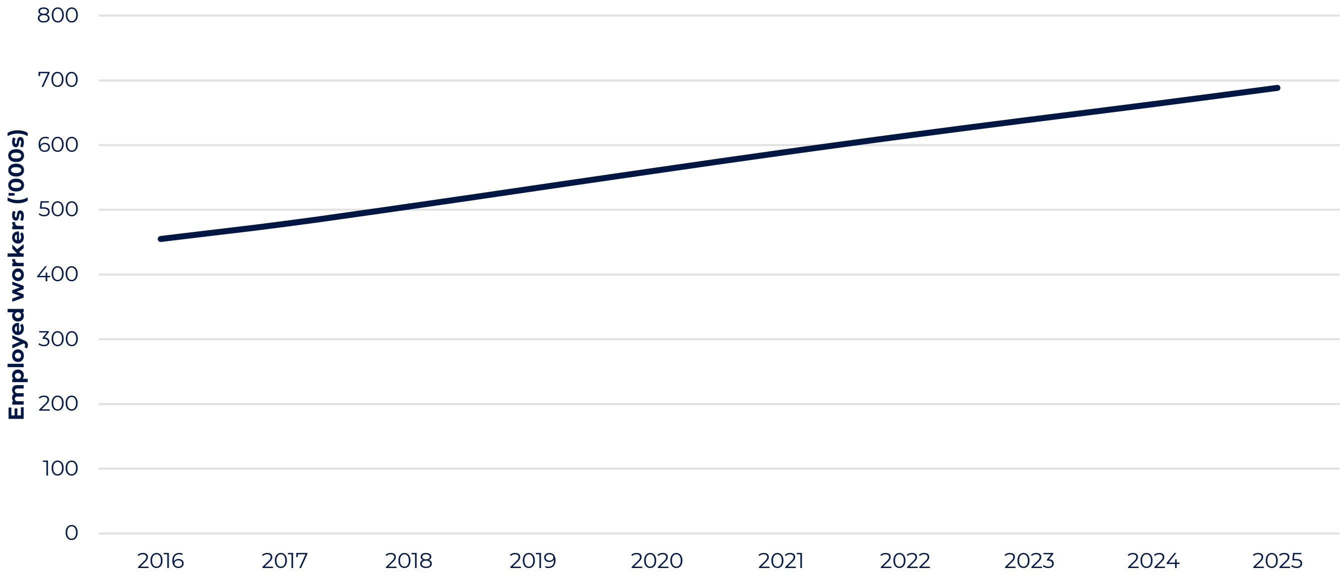

Figure 27: *Technology sector workforce, employment 2016 to 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Projected workforce growth is uneven across technology occupations: demand is forecast to keep rising overall, but several occupations are projected to be in surplus by 2035. Infrastructure and security roles, including Network Professionals and Database, Systems and Security Specialists, are forecast to have the largest supply gaps. Specialist developer, analyst and test engineering roles are projected to move into surplus.[D2,D3] Of note, as of 2025, Software Programmers are no longer in shortage in any state or territory.[D10]

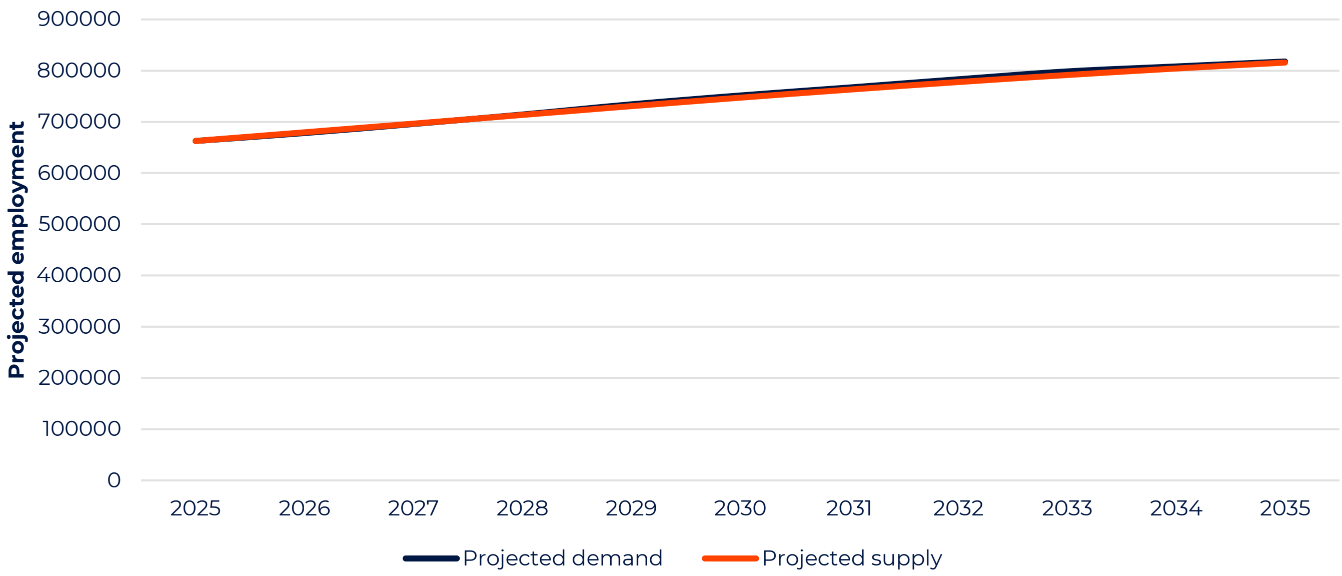

Figure 28: *Technology sector projected workforce demand and supply, 2025 to 2035.*

Source: Future Skills Organisation and Oxford Economics Australia 2026, projections data.[D3]

Note: figures are trend-based projections to 2035 and do not incorporate the effect of AI-driven task change.

Technology is the most uniformly generative AI augmentation-exposed workforce covered by this report. Generative AI augmentation exposure scores range from medium to high at 0.58 to 0.77; automation scores are lower for some occupations but range from low to medium at 0.38 to 0.63.[D4] For most roles this means the work is being reshaped. At entry level, the routine coding and diagnostic tasks that have defined early-career roles are the tasks most exposed to automation, with consequences for how people enter and progress in technology work.

Cyber security and AI specialist work sit inside existing occupations, and the data cannot differentiate them from broader technology roles. Neither cyber security roles nor the roles that build and maintain AI systems have their own occupation codes in the existing national workforce data. Both are distributed across the broader programming and systems occupations, so their size and demand cannot be determined, and the evidence relies on labour market intelligence. During consultations, FSO stakeholders report that specialist capability in both fields is typically built on an existing technical career or reached by sideways entry from an adjacent field, rather than through a direct entry-level route.

Telecommunications are restructuring from network construction toward design, maintenance and wireless work. Employment is moving away from physical network build toward engineering, maintenance and wireless systems. Two of its occupations are growing and two are contracting, and the trades workforce remains in national shortage. A regulatory currency problem runs through the qualifications, with new cabling rules,[40] updated standards[41] and a renamed industry body[42] all requiring training product updates.

VET enrolments in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) training package have moved between roughly 46,000 and 60,000 a year since 2020, dipping in 2022 before recovering to about 58,000 in 2024. The higher education pipeline has grown strongly over the same period, with commencing full-time equivalent study in computing and information systems rising from about 16,000 in 2020 to about 22,000 in 2024, so the gap between the two channels has widened in higher education's favour.[D5,D8]

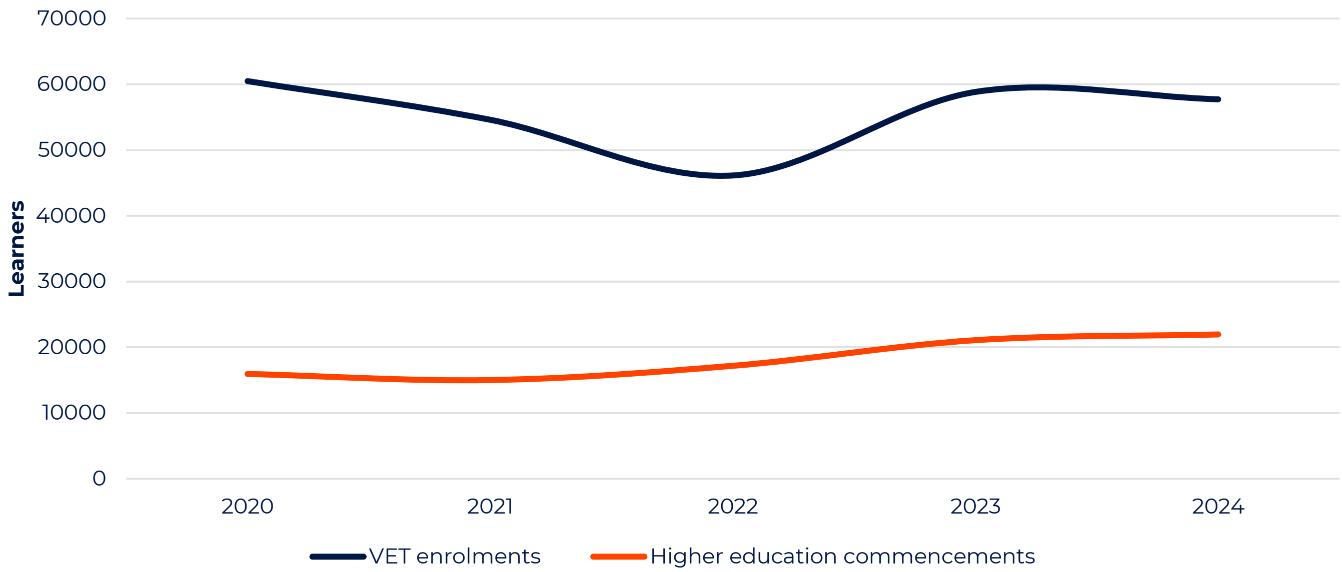

Figure 29: *Technology sector training, VET enrolments and higher education commencements, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Note: VET figures are enrolment headcount; the higher education figure is total commencing bachelor full-time equivalent enrolments.

Technology graduates can be slow to move into full-time work. About 79% of those who complete a VET qualification in this sector are employed or in further study afterwards.[D7] Higher education graduates in computing and information systems face a slower start: about 68% of those seeking full-time work had found it around four months after finishing in 2024, down from 74% a year earlier.[D8] The two figures come from different surveys on different bases and timeframes, and are best read as parallel indicators rather than a direct comparison.

Connecting to the wider evidence base: The sector trends summarised here are detailed in the sections that follow, and the underlying workforce and training data is available to explore in the Workforce Dashboards. The main report places these technology findings alongside those for finance and business in the national picture.

Active projects

All elements of the ICT training package are under current review:

- The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Training Package is undergoing a comprehensive review and update through a Training Product Development project, along with specialist artificial intelligence and specialist cyber security skills projects.
- The telecommunications technology qualifications are being updated through a Training Product Development project also underway.

Cluster 1: Information technology

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate II in Applied Digital Technologies · Certificate III in Information Technology · Certificate IV in Information Technology · Diploma of Information Technology · Advanced Diploma of Information Technology

Higher education fields of education in scope: Computing and Information Systems (bachelor and postgraduate)

Active projects: The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Training Package is undergoing a comprehensive review and update through the ICT Training Package Update: Modernisation project, along with specialist artificial intelligence and specialist cyber security skills projects.

Summary

The information technology workforce now draws most of its supply from higher education, and the occupations that still rely on VET are the ones with the highest generative AI automation exposure. Software and Applications Programmers, ICT Managers and ICT Business and Systems Analysts now draw between 66% and 83% of their workers from higher education.[D2] The one occupation where VET holds a meaningful share, ICT Support Technicians, sits in the exposure profile where work is most exposed to automation.

Information technology occupations grew 58% over the decade, faster than any other part of the FTB workforce, and the workforce projections show continued growth to 2035.[D2,D3] Software and Applications Programmers alone moved from approximately 103,500 to 199,700 workers, the largest single occupational expansion across the three sectors.[D2]

Workforce projections concentrate the supply gaps to 2035 in infrastructure, network and security work, while developer and analyst roles move into projected surplus. Generative AI exposure runs across every technology occupation, with augmentation scores between 0.64 and 0.77.[D4]

The VET qualifications serve distinct purposes:

- The Certificate II in Applied Digital Technologies builds core digital capability and prepares learners for work that uses digital tools, with occupation-ready outcomes limited to data-entry and word-processing roles.[D11]
- The Certificate III in Information Technology draws the most enrolments but has the narrowest occupational outcome. It drew 17,260 enrolments in 2024 but maps to a single occupation-ready role, and fewer than half of employed completers find their training relevant to their work.[D5,D7]
- The Certificate IV in Information Technology offers specialisation pathways within the one credential and carries cyber security, advanced networking, cloud and programming as elective specialisations.
- The Diploma of Information Technology has broad occupational reach. It is held on scope by 244 registered training organisations and opens eight occupation-ready roles, the widest VET outcome set below the Advanced Diploma.[D12,D11]
- The Advanced Diploma of Information Technology produces the strongest completer outcomes in the qualification set and produces the highest student outcomes on every measure and opens eleven occupation-ready roles.[D7,D11]

Cyber security capability is built through specialisations within the Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma rather than through dedicated qualifications. Stakeholder feedback describes specialist cyber security roles as requiring prior experience rather than entry-level training, which concentrates demand in mid-career workers.

Roles that build and deploy AI systems do not yet have their own occupational or qualification identifiers. The AI specialist workforce is distributed across Software and Applications Programmers and Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists, so its size cannot be measured directly from official data.

Occupational demand

The information technology occupations have grown faster than almost any others in the FTB sectors,[D2] but within projections to 2035 demands is split.[D3] Developer and analyst roles are projected to move toward surplus on the strength of the higher education pipeline; infrastructure, network and security roles carry the largest projected supply gaps.

Within this section, occupations are grouped by the kind of work they do. Within each group they appear in descending order of workforce size. Two streams that cross the occupation boundaries, cyber security and AI specialist roles, are treated separately at the end of the section, because the occupation data does not isolate them.

Nine of the occupations in information technology are male dominated. Two occupations break this pattern: Graphic and Web Designers, and Illustrators, and ICT Trainers, both gender balanced.[D2,D9]

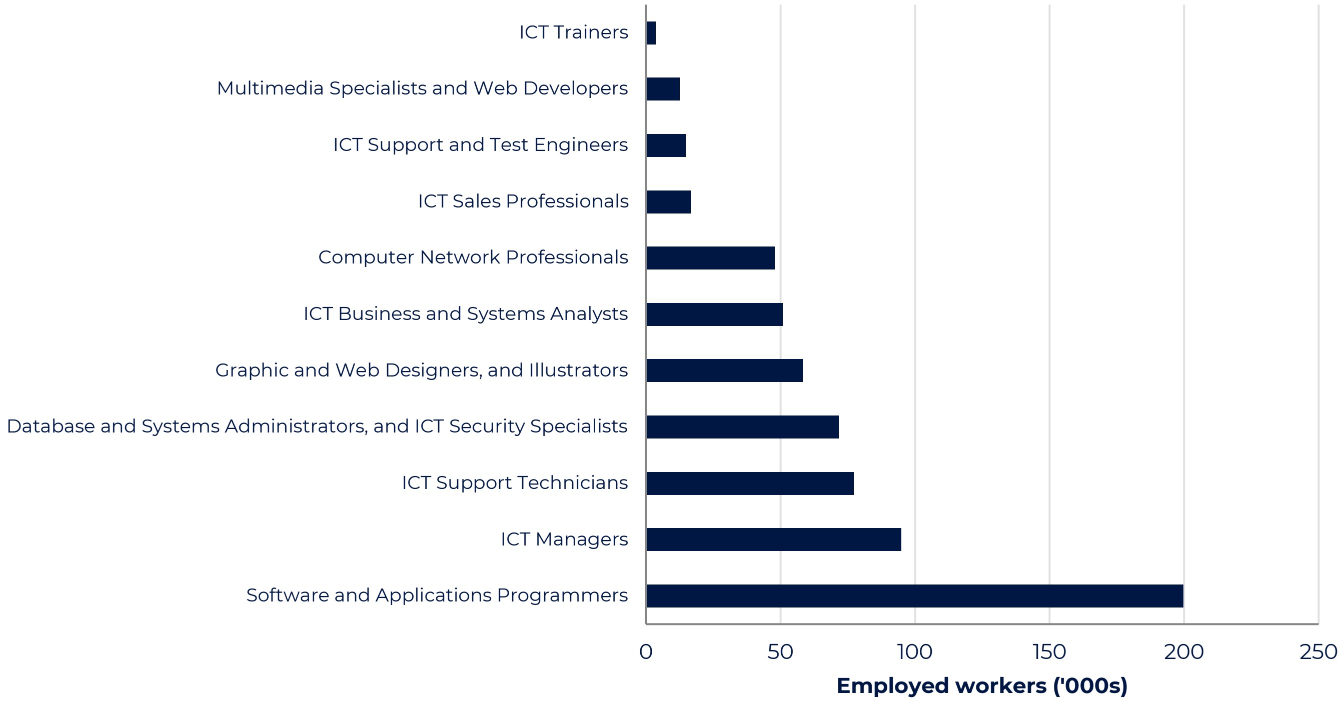

Figure 30: *2025 employment across information technology occupations*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Develop software

Software and Applications Programmers grew by 93% over the decade, from approximately 103,500 to 199,700 workers.[D2] This is one of the largest occupational expansions across the FTB sectors. Workforce projections show demand growth continuing to 2035 but at a slower pace, reaching approximately 235,700; on current supply trajectories the occupation moves into a surplus of approximately 10,500.[D3]

The supply position reflects the higher education pipeline rather than weakening demand. 83% of the workforce hold higher education as their highest qualification, up from 77% in 2016, while the VET share has fallen to 9%.[D2]

The occupation was listed in shortage in the 2024 Occupational Shortage List, with a suitability gap as the driver, and was removed from the list in 2025.[D10] The removal has occurred after several consecutive years of shortage, and is consistent with both the supply trajectory and stakeholder feedback from the FSO Workforce Roadshows describing software developers as currently in over-supply.

Software and Applications Programmers carry the highest generative AI exposure of any technology occupation: augmentation at 0.77 and automation at 0.63.[D4] Coding itself is among the clearest tasks that current AI tools augment, with productivity gains reported in software development, debugging and the reduction of rework. The exposure that matters for training is at the entry level: the routine tasks that early-career developers have historically built experience on are the ones most open to automation, which raises a question for how the qualifications build judgement when AI handles the first draft of the work.

Multimedia Specialists and Web Developers grew modestly from approximately 11,100 in 2016 to 12,600 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections show demand of approximately 17,100 by 2035 against supply of approximately 13,500, a gap of approximately 3,600.[D3] Higher education accounts for the majority of supply. AI augmentation exposure is 0.76 against automation of 0.44,[D4] a profile in which generative AI tools accelerate content and front-end production while design and integration judgement remains a human task.

Run and secure infrastructure

Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists carry the largest absolute supply gap in technology by 2035. The workforce expanded from approximately 41,000 in 2016 to 71,700 in 2025, a 75% increase.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching approximately 85,400 by 2035 against supply of approximately 67,400, a gap of approximately 18,000.[D3] The gap is driven by demand growth rather than attrition, and on current supply projections it widens over the decade.

Higher education accounts for 59% of supply, up from 50% in 2016, with the VET share at 25%.[D2] The occupation contains both database and systems administration work and ICT security specialist roles; the cyber security analysis below treats the security component separately.

AI augmentation exposure is 0.71 against automation of 0.48.[D4] AI tools accelerate configuration, monitoring and response work without substituting for the architectural and security judgement at the core of the role.

Computer Network Professionals grew from approximately 29,900 in 2016 to 47,900 in 2025, a 60% expansion.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching approximately 56,400 by 2035 against supply of approximately 42,600, a gap of approximately 13,700, the second-largest in technology.[D3] The gap is driven primarily by demand growth: networks underpin cloud migration, hybrid-work infrastructure and the connectivity that AI workloads require, and the demand pipeline continues to grow.

Higher education accounts for 62% of supply, with the VET share at 25%.[D2] This occupation is the most male dominated in this section[D9] at 18% female.[D2] AI augmentation exposure is 0.71 against automation of 0.45.[D4] AI tools accelerate diagnostic and configuration work, while decisions on network architecture, security posture and capacity planning continue to require human judgement.

ICT Support Technicians grew from approximately 55,900 in 2016 to 77,300 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections show demand rising to approximately 87,800 by 2035 against supply of approximately 80,300, a gap of approximately 7,500.[D3] This is the largest gap among technology occupations whose supply includes a substantial VET contribution.

The qualification mix is more balanced than for most technology occupations: 46% hold higher education and 31% hold VET qualifications as their highest credential, with the higher education share rising over the decade.[D2] AI augmentation exposure of 0.69 sits with automation of 0.53,[D4] a profile in which routine diagnostic and ticketing work is exposed to substitution while customer-facing troubleshooting is augmented. The occupation that VET most directly supplies is also the one where tasks are most exposed to generative AI automation.

Analyse, manage and sell

ICT Business and Systems Analysts grew from approximately 29,000 in 2016 to 50,800 in 2025, a 75% expansion.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching approximately 64,700 by 2035 against supply of approximately 71,900, a surplus of approximately 7,200.[D3] Higher education dominates the qualification mix at 74%, with the VET share at 16%.[D2]

AI augmentation exposure of 0.77 is the equal-highest across technology, with automation at 0.58.[D4] AI tools deliver speed gains in requirements documentation, process mapping and specification work, while the stakeholder management that converts those artefacts into delivered systems remains a human activity.

ICT Managers grew from approximately 57,800 in 2016 to 94,800 in 2025, a 64% expansion.[D2] Workforce projections show demand approaching 112,800 by 2035 with supply tracking demand closely, leaving a surplus of approximately 1,900.[D3] The occupation is majority higher education at 66%, up from 59% in 2016, with the VET share falling to 22%.[D2] AI augmentation exposure is high at 0.70 against low automation of 0.38.[D4] AI tools accelerate analytical and planning outputs but do not substitute for management judgement.

ICT Sales Professionals grew from approximately 14,700 in 2016 to 16,600 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections show growth to approximately 21,200 by 2035 against supply of approximately 28,600, a surplus of approximately 7,400.[D3] The qualification mix has shifted substantially: higher education rose from 46% in 2016 to 56% in 2025, while the VET share fell to 22%.[D2] This is the largest qualification-mix shift among the smaller technology occupations and points to market-based drivers of increased qualification levels rather than a shift in the underpinning skill and knowledge requirements of the role.

AI augmentation exposure is 0.72, automation 0.58.[D4] AI tools may accelerate the technical specification and proposal work that translates customer requirements into product configurations, while the consultative work that closes a sale is augmented.

ICT Support and Test Engineers grew from approximately 8,200 in 2016 to 14,800 in 2025, more than doubling.[D2] Workforce projections show supply of approximately 38,200 against demand of approximately 19,500 by 2035, a surplus of approximately 18,600, the largest proportional surplus in technology.[D3] Generative AI augmentation exposure is 0.75 against automation of 0.57.[D4]

ICT Trainers grew modestly at approximately 2,900 in 2016 and 3,600 in 2025.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced.[D9] AI augmentation exposure is 0.75 against automation of 0.58,[D4] indicating a role where human-based tasks are supported by AI tools.

Design

Graphic and Web Designers, and Illustrators numbered 58,300 in 2025, growing modestly from approximately 55,700 in 2016.[D2] Workforce projections show demand of approximately 66,200 by 2035 against supply of approximately 64,600, a gap of approximately 1,700.[D3] Higher education dominates the qualification mix at 61%.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced[D9] at 53% female,[D2] one of two in this section to break the male-dominated pattern.

Generative AI augmentation exposure of 0.64 against automation of 0.49[D4] sits at the lower end of the technology occupations. Current generative AI tools accelerate concept development and asset production, while the design judgement that distinguishes a brief well executed from one poorly executed is augmented rather than substituted.

Cyber security

Seven cyber-specific roles sit across two of the occupations above and cannot be cleanly separated from the workforce data. Cyber Security Engineer and Penetration Tester sit within Software and Applications Programmers. Cyber Governance, Risk and Compliance Specialist, Cyber Security Advice and Assessment Specialist, Cyber Security Analyst, Cyber Security Architect and Cyber Security Operations Coordinator sit within Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists.

Neither occupation that contains the cyber roles is listed in shortage in the 2025 Occupational Shortage List.[D10] The four-digit data masks a tighter picture at the role level. Labour market intelligence identifies Cyber Governance, Risk and Compliance Specialist, Cyber Security Architect and Cyber Security Operations Coordinator as facing elevated vacancies and reduced supply, with an average of 621 new job advertisements a month between September 2024 and September 2025.[43]

Stakeholder feedback in the FSO Workforce Roadshows and employer consultation describes specialist cyber security roles as requiring industry experience rather than entry-level training. Demand for cyber security workers concentrates in mid-career rather than entry-level roles, which means qualification design needs to account for an entry pattern in which cyber capability is added to an existing technical career rather than built from the start.

An estimated 54,000 additional skilled cyber security operations and management workers will be needed by 2030, including both specialist roles and roles where cyber capability is integrated into broader work.[43] The Australian Cyber Security Strategy 2023 to 2030 identifies cyber workforce growth as a national priority.[44]

AI specialist

No occupation currently identifies AI specialist roles, and AI specialists are distributed across Software and Applications Programmers and Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists. The roles that build, deploy and maintain AI systems, including machine learning engineering, applied AI engineering and AI solution architecture, do not have separate identifiers in the occupational classification.

This makes the AI specialist workforce impossible to size directly from official data, so the evidence relies on external labour market analysis. Demand for AI skills in Australian job advertisements has grown sharply, with elevated demand for cloud and machine learning capability, prompt engineering and applied AI skills.[45] Australia needs an estimated 312,000 additional technology workers by 2030, of which a substantial share is in AI-related roles.[43]

The distinction that matters for training product design is between AI use and AI specialist work. Every technology occupation is exposed to AI tools that augment existing work. AI specialist work builds, configures and maintains the AI systems that other occupations use. The two have different prerequisites, different qualification entry points and different labour market signals.

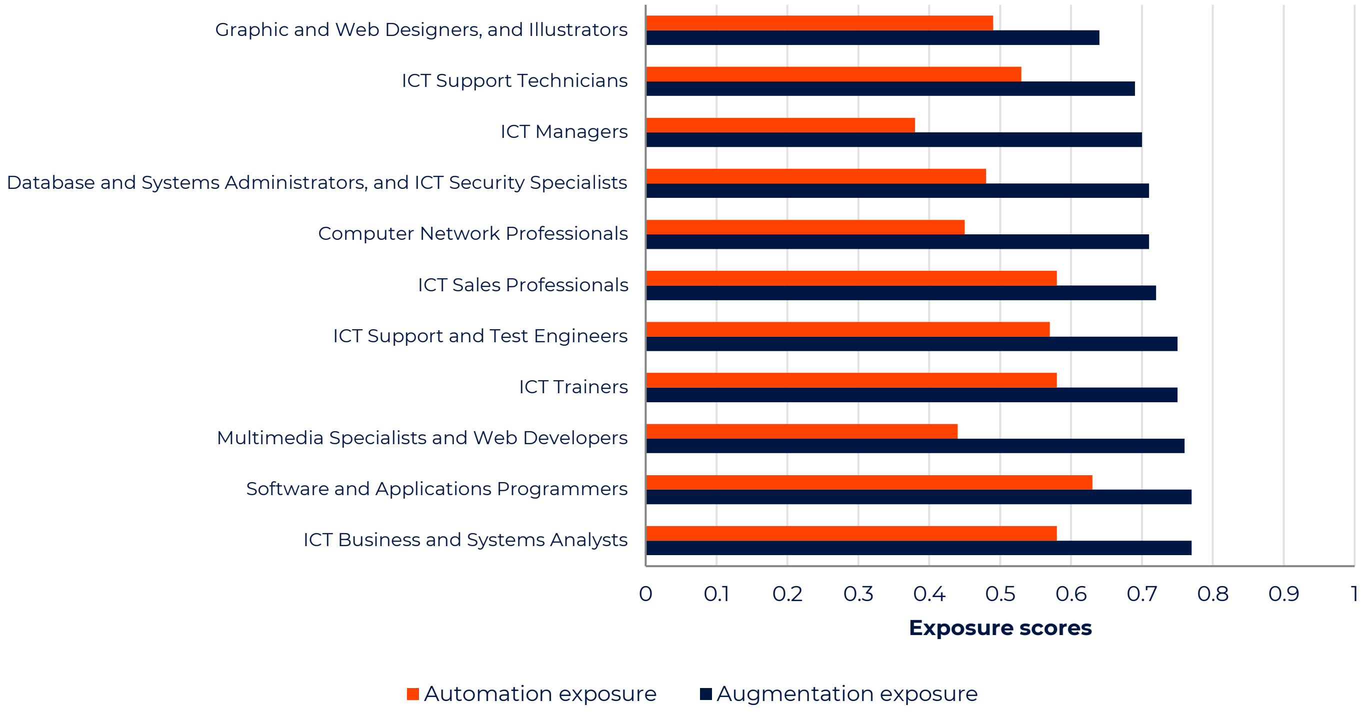

Figure 31: *Generative AI exposure scores across information technology occupations*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

Five VET qualifications and the higher education field of Computing and Information Systems supply the information technology workforce. The VET qualifications are the Certificate II in Applied Digital Technologies, Certificate III in Information Technology, Certificate IV in Information Technology, Diploma of Information Technology, and Advanced Diploma of Information Technology. The higher education field covers bachelor and postgraduate degrees in Computing and Information Systems.

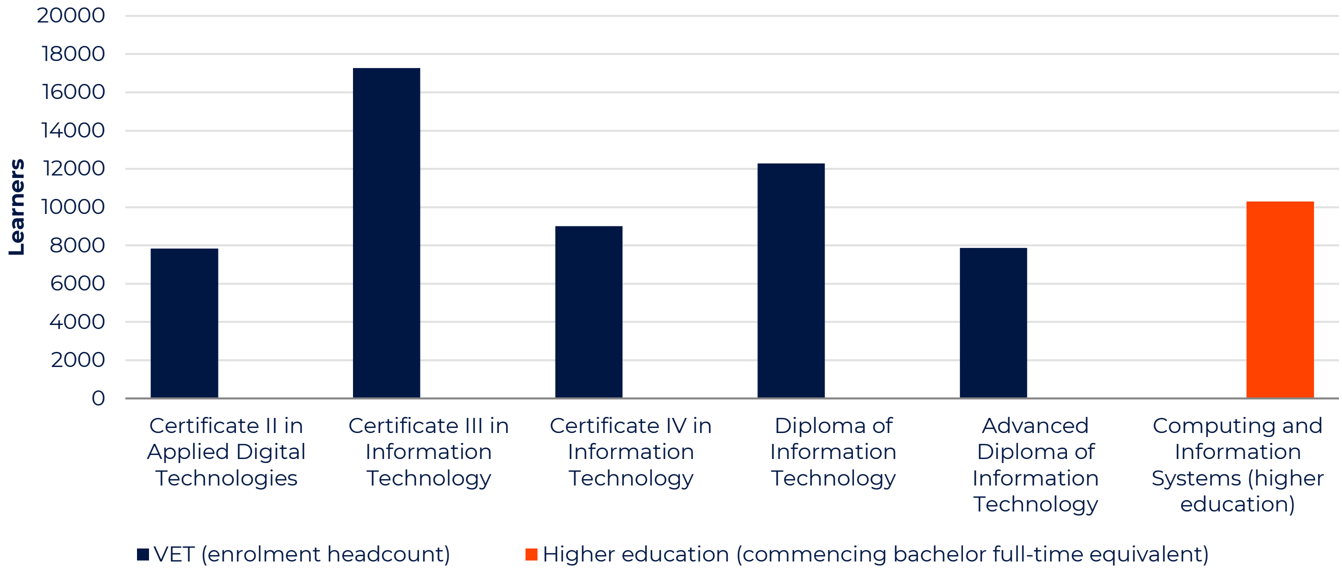

Figure 32: *2024 enrolments across information technology qualifications and higher education*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

How entry-level demand maps to training

FSO's Learning Pathways into Technology Careers provide an evidence-base for understanding roles in the information technology sector and their related learning pathways.[46] Using a skills-led analysis of more than 40,000 technology job advertisements, the project identifies nine entry-level pathways and 34 entry-level roles, and finds that most of the skills employers ask for at entry level are not reflected in the qualifications that feed those roles. The analysis maps entry-level demand to the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA)[44], and reports that 70% of the skills employers most often ask for at entry level do not appear in the standard skill profiles attached to the matching occupations.[46] The single most demanded skill across advertisements, stakeholder relationship management, is also identified as the largest gap against current training.[46]

This evidence sits at a different level from the workforce data above. It describes 34 entry-level roles defined at a finer grain than the 11 occupations used throughout this section, drawn from a newer occupational classification, and it covers entry-level work only.[46] It does not replace the occupational picture; it sharpens the entry-level part of it. Read against the VET qualifications, it gives a demand-side reason for a pattern the student outcomes data shows from the supply side: graduates of the lower-level qualifications find work, but often not in the roles the qualifications were designed for.

The analysis also reports a level mismatch. Employer demand concentrates at SFIA Levels 3 to 5, while the qualifications that feed entry-level technology roles are weighted toward Levels 2 to 4.[46] Employers describe wanting applied, independent capability from the first day rather than closely supervised beginners.[46] The same analysis assigns an AI-impact profile to each of the 34 roles: most are reshaped or supported by AI rather than replaced by it, and the human-judgement skills within every role, including stakeholder management and ethical reasoning, are the most resistant to automation.[46]

Certificate II in Applied Digital Technologies (ICT20120)

The Certificate II in Applied Digital Technologies sits at the foundation tier of the ICT Training Package, with 120 RTOs holding it on their scope.[D12] It is designed to develop digital capability for learners preparing for work that uses digital technologies, rather than as specialist technology preparation. The National Training Register records broadly distributed delivery rather than concentrated specialist provision, with learners able to access this training with relative ease.

Enrolment grew between 2021 and 2022 as the qualification replaced its superseded version, reaching 7,840 in 2024.[D5] Completion rates are not yet available for the current qualification; the superseded Certificate II in Information, Digital Media and Technology recorded a four-year completion rate of 49% for the 2020 commencing cohort, close to the national VET average of 51%.[D6]

The training-to-occupation pathway data identifies two occupation-ready outcomes: Data Entry Operator and Word Processing Operator.[D11] It draws strong enrolment volumes, but its formal occupational outcomes are limited to administrative data-handling roles. Stakeholder feedback in the FSO Workforce Roadshows describes core digital capability as content that belongs cross-industry rather than as specialist technology training.

Student outcomes data shows 35% of completers undertook the training for employment-related reasons, 36% for study-related reasons, and 29% for personal development.[D7] Of completers, 78% achieved their main reason for training wholly or partly, and 69% were employed or in further study afterward. Of the employed sub-sample, 37% described their training as highly or somewhat relevant to their work, the weakest relevance score of any technology qualification in this section and well below the technology training package average of 55%.[D7] The combination of broad enrolment, narrow occupational outcomes and weak relevance is consistent with the qualification working as core digital capability training rather than as specialist technology preparation.

Certificate III in Information Technology (ICT30120)

The Certificate III in Information Technology is the largest technology qualification by enrolment, but its training-to-occupation pathway is narrower than the enrolment volume implies. It is designed to prepare learners for entry-level technology support roles, with 133 RTOs holding it on their scope.[D12]

Enrolment grew sharply after release, reaching 17,260 in 2024 and overtaking the superseded Certificate III in Information, Digital Media and Technology as the entry point to the ICT Training Package.[D5] Completion rates for the superseded version were 29% for the 2020 commencing cohort, well below the national VET average of 51%.[D6]

The training-to-occupation pathway data identifies one occupation-ready outcome: ICT Customer Support Officer.[D11] The remaining mapped occupations are progression pathways requiring further study. This is the narrowest occupational outcome of any of the three Certificate III's in the ICT Training Package, and the destination data for the superseded qualification corroborates the constraint: between 6% and 9% of 2016 to 2019 completer cohorts entered the intended ICT Support Technician occupation for that qualification in their first year after training.[D13]

Student outcomes data shows 58% of completers undertook training for employment-related reasons.[D7] 73% achieved their main reason wholly or partly, and 77% were employed or in further study afterward. Among employed completers, 43% described their training as highly or somewhat relevant to their work.[D7] That relevance score is weak: even where completers find work, fewer than half find that work draws meaningfully on what they learned. With the occupational destination data, the picture is of a qualification whose graduates find work but not in the field they trained for. The entry-level demand analysis points to the same gap from the demand side.

Certificate IV in Information Technology (ICT40120)

The Certificate IV in Information Technology carries cyber security, advanced networking, cloud and programming as specialisations within a single qualification, each drawing on different elective sets. It is designed for learners pursuing technical specialist roles after foundation preparation or industry entry, with 107 RTOs holding it on scope.[D12]

Enrolment in 2024 was 9,000, up from 1,700 in 2021 as the qualification replaced its superseded version.[D5] Completion rates for the superseded Certificate IV in Information Technology were 26% for the 2020 cohort, the lowest of any technology qualification in this section and well below the national VET average.[D6]

The training-to-occupation pathway data identifies four occupation-ready outcomes: ICT Sales Representative, ICT Hardware Technician, ICT Customer Support Officer, and ICT and Telecommunications Technicians not elsewhere classified.[D11] Cyber security is a named specialisation but has no corresponding occupation-ready outcome, consistent with stakeholder feedback that specialist cyber security roles require experience rather than entry-level training. The FSO Workforce Roadshows raised concerns that cyber security graduates of the Certificate IV are not securing cyber security roles after completion.

Student outcomes data shows 82% of completers undertook training for employment-related reasons, the second highest in the section.[D7] 71% achieved their main reason wholly or partly, and 86% were employed or in further study afterward. Among employed completers, 63% described their training as highly or somewhat relevant to their work, stronger than the Certificate III but weaker than the Diploma and Advanced Diploma.[D7] The occupational destination data shows 8% to 10% of 2016 to 2020 completer cohorts of the superseded Certificate IV entered the intended ICT Support Technician occupation in their first year after training.[D13]

Diploma of Information Technology (ICT50220)

The Diploma of Information Technology is the most broadly delivered technology qualification, with 244 RTOs holding it on scope.[D12] It carries advanced networking, cloud architecture, cyber security, database and data management, programming, systems analysis and web development among its specialisations. It is the strongest occupational-outcome qualification in the ICT Training Package below the Advanced Diploma.

Enrolment reached 12,290 in 2024, with steady growth since 2021.[D5] Completion rates for the superseded Diploma of Information Technology were 41% for the 2020 commencing cohort, below the national VET average but stronger than the lower-level qualifications in this section.[D6]

The training-to-occupation pathway data identifies eight occupation-ready outcomes including Database Administrator, Systems Administrator, Network Administrator, Web Developer and ICT Hardware Technician.[D11] Progression pathways include Cyber Security Architect and Cyber Governance, Risk and Compliance Specialist among 15 named options.

Student outcomes data shows 80% of completers undertook training for employment-related reasons.[D7] 68% achieved their main reason wholly or partly, and 82% were employed or in further study afterward. Among employed completers, 60% described their training as highly or somewhat relevant to their work.[D7]

The occupational destination data complicates the picture. Between 1% and 2% of 2016 to 2019 completer cohorts of the superseded Diploma entered the intended occupation in their first year after training, the lowest occupational match of any qualification in this section despite the strong relevance score and broad occupation-ready outcomes.[D13] The qualification appears to work as a stepping stone to higher education rather than as a terminal VET credential for the intended occupations.

Advanced Diploma of Information Technology (ICT60220)

The Advanced Diploma of Information Technology is the strongest qualification in this section on every student outcome measure, with 238 RTOs holding it on scope.[D12] It operates as a higher-level specialist credential and supports articulation into bachelor degrees. It carries cyber security, network security, telecommunications, project management and business analysis among its specialisations.

Enrolment grew rapidly to 7,875 in 2024 from 1,140 in 2021 as the qualification replaced its superseded version and the superseded Advanced Diploma of Network Security.[D5] Completion rates for the superseded Advanced Diploma of Information Technology were 60% for the 2020 commencing cohort, and for the superseded Advanced Diploma of Network Security 68%, both above the national VET average and substantially stronger than the Certificate III and Certificate IV in Information Technology.[D6]

The training-to-occupation pathway data identifies eleven occupation-ready outcomes including ICT Managers not elsewhere classified, ICT Service Delivery Manager, Telecommunications Engineer and Database Administrator.[D11] Progression pathways include Cyber Security Analyst, Data Scientist, Cloud Architect, Software Engineer and Solution Architect.

Student outcomes data shows 85% of completers undertook training for employment-related reasons, the highest in this section.[D7] 76% achieved their main reason wholly or partly, 84% were employed or in further study afterward, and 83% of employed completers described their training as highly or somewhat relevant to their work, the strongest relevance score in this section and well above the technology training package average of 55%.[D7]

Higher education: Computing and Information Systems

Higher education is the largest supply channel for nearly every technology occupation, and its volume has more than tripled over the past 15 years. Bachelor commencements in Computing and Information Systems grew from 11,478 in 2010 to 35,170 in 2024.[D8] International students accounted for approximately 60% of bachelor commencements in 2024, up from 45% in 2010. Computer Science is the largest sub-field, growing in domestic full-time-equivalent terms from 2,668 commencements in 2010 to 5,881 in 2024.[D8]

Domestic bachelor completions grew from 2,920 in 2010 to 6,537 in 2024, while international completions grew from 3,523 to 6,993 over the same period.[D8] Annual completions now exceed 13,500, the pipeline that is moving Software and Applications Programmers from shortage into surplus.

Short-term graduate employment outcomes for Computing and Information Systems bachelor graduates are weaker than for Engineering and the all-fields average: 68% were employed full-time within four months of completion in 2024, against 86% for Engineering and an all-fields average of 74%.[D8] Medium-term outcomes recover: three years after graduation, 93% are employed.[D8] The pattern is consistent with a labour market that absorbs technology graduates but takes time to do so, with consequences for graduates entering the parts of the occupation set that have moved into surplus.

Employment outcomes for the two training channels are read as parallel indicators, not a like-for-like comparison. VET completers and higher education graduates are surveyed on different bases and over different timeframes: the VET figure is a completer survey, the higher education figure a graduate survey. Across the technology qualifications, the strongest VET relevance score reaches 83% for the Advanced Diploma, while higher education employment reaches 93% three years after.[D7,D8] The two cannot be divided into a ratio, but both point to a workforce that higher education supplies in larger numbers and into which VET graduates enter unevenly depending on the qualification.

Higher education postgraduate programmes in Computing and Information Systems include the Master of Cyber Security at several institutions, such as the University of Queensland and the University of Sydney.[47,48] These are typically the entry point to specialist cyber security roles, consistent with stakeholder feedback that cyber security capability is built on top of an existing technical career rather than as an entry-level pathway.

Skills and knowledge changes

The skills and knowledge changes affecting the information technology workforce run in three streams. Generative AI is the dominant one and the only stream that touches every occupation. Cyber security capability is changing along regulatory, technical and behavioural dimensions. Data protection and AI governance regulation is shaping what technology specialists need to know about the compliance environment their work sits in.

Generative AI capability

Exposure to generative AI is more uniform across the information technology workforce than in almost any other group of occupations: every occupation in this section has moderate to high augmentation exposure. Augmentation scores across the occupations in this section range from 0.64 to 0.77.[D4] Software and Applications Programmers stand apart as the one occupation where the routine portion of the work is exposed to automation at the same time as the interpretive portion is augmented. For every other occupation, AI tools reshape how the work is done rather than displacing it.

Stakeholder feedback corroborates the scale of the change and points to the gap between exposure and capability. The FSO Workforce Roadshows raised AI use in cyber security at the governance level, including the data protection implications of using third-party AI tools with sensitive material. The Roadshows emphasised AI and cyber capability for small and medium enterprises, where capability investment trails larger employers. Industry body feedback in employer consultation noted that training packages and formal qualifications struggle to stay current in AI, cyber and digital capability, with one employer describing the need for a constant volume of AI training and continual content refresh as technologies change.

The entry-level demand analysis adds a specific finding to this picture: across 34 entry-level technology roles, the human-judgement skills, including stakeholder management and ethical reasoning, are the capabilities most resistant to automation, and they are the capabilities current qualifications cover poorly.[46]

The capability problem operates at two layers. Generalist AI capability, using AI tools effectively in any occupation, is broader than the ICT Training Package and is being developed through cross-industry routes including the BSB Training Package. Specialist AI capability, building and maintaining AI systems, sits within the ICT Training Package and is treated below.

Cyber security

Cyber security capability requirements are changing along three dimensions: regulatory framework, technical areas, and the communication and teamwork skills that turn technical work into organisational outcomes. The regulatory framework has tightened through the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme, amendments to the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act, and the Australian Cyber Security Strategy 2023 to 2030.[44] These generate specific knowledge requirements for qualifications addressing cyber security, particularly for governance and compliance roles.

The technical areas have expanded with cloud adoption, the industrial and Internet of Things environments, and AI integrated into both attacker and defender tooling. The FSO Workforce Roadshows described attacker use of AI to generate more convincing phishing, and the corresponding need for cyber awareness training. Security operations now run against AI-assisted attack tooling.

Stakeholder feedback consistently reports that the communication and teamwork skills cyber roles require are undervalued in current qualifications. The FSO Workforce Roadshows noted that the communication and teamwork skills cyber specialists need are often missing from training products, and industry body feedback echoed this. This is a content currency issue: qualifications that treat cyber security roles as solely technical produce graduates who can pass a technical assessment but cannot operate in a security team.

AI specialist

AI specialist capability is distinct from general AI use, and the ICT Training Package update is addressing the qualification implications of that distinction. AI specialists build, deploy, train and maintain AI systems: machine learning engineering, applied AI engineering, retrieval-augmented generation, agentic AI workflows, and AI safety work. This differs from AI use, where a worker in any occupation applies a generative AI tool to existing work.

The labour market signal for AI specialists is concentrated demand at mid-career and above. The FSO Workforce Roadshows and employer consultation describe AI specialist roles as requiring substantive prior programming and data capability rather than entry-level training, and the active Training Package update treats this as a design constraint. The skill content required at AI specialist level, including agentic AI, retrieval-augmented generation, multimodal AI and prompt engineering at engineering scale, did not exist in the previous Training Package and needs to be built into the new qualifications.

Regulatory and policy context

Beyond cyber security regulation, the information technology workforce is shaped by data protection regulation, including the Privacy Act and its proposed reforms, and by AI governance frameworks under development by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.[49,50] Knowledge of the regulatory framework operating in the sector of application is increasingly required in specialist technology roles, particularly cyber security governance, risk and compliance roles where the regulatory context determines acceptable practice.

Implications for action

The five VET qualifications, the specialist cyber security skills and specialist AI all sit within active ICT Training Product Development projects, which each commenced in May 2025. The evidence in this section feeds that process and does not pre-empt its findings.

The entry-level demand evidence gives the updates a specific, externally validated input. A separate analysis of more than 40,000 job advertisements, produced to inform technology training product development, identifies where current qualifications sit below employer-demanded capability, it identified stakeholder relationship management as the largest single skill gap, and assigns an AI-impact profile to each entry-level role.[46] That evidence is already informing the update.

Two further items are important for noting in ongoing work. The first is pace: the FSO Workforce Roadshows raised concern that the 2027 completion timeline for the ICT Training Package update is late given how fast AI and cyber demand is reshaping the work. The second is the employability skills evidence for cyber security roles: stakeholder feedback, employer consultation and the entry-level demand analysis point the same way, that communication, teamwork and stakeholder-engagement capability are core to technology work, not peripheral, and the redesigned qualifications can treat them as such.

Cluster 2: Telecommunications

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate II in Telecommunications Network Build and Operation · Certificate II in Telecommunications Technology · Certificate III in Telecommunications Network Build and Operation · Certificate III in Telecommunications Technology · Certificate IV in Telecommunications Network Design · Certificate IV in Telecommunications Engineering Technology

Higher education fields of education in scope: Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Technology.

Active project: The telecommunications technology qualifications are being updated through the ICT Update: Telecommunications Technology Qualifications project underway.

Summary

The telecommunications workforce is restructuring faster than its training products have followed. Employment is moving away from physical network construction toward maintenance, wireless systems and higher-skill engineering roles. The qualification set built for an earlier era is thin in places and with some limited accredited delivery.

Two occupations are growing and two are shrinking, and the split tracks the shift from build to design. Telecommunications Engineering Professionals and Electronics Engineers have both grown over the past decade and face supply shortfalls to 2035. Telecommunications Trades Workers and Telecommunications Technical Specialists have both contracted, though Trades Workers remain in national shortage because attrition is removing workers faster than the workforce is shrinking.

Accredited training sits alongside a large body of skilling that happens outside the formal system. Carriers, vendors and private providers deliver enterprise and non-accredited programs for fast-moving technologies, and stakeholders report this is where much current skilling occurs.

- The qualifications that supply the telecommunications trades workforce are thinly delivered. Cabling, network build and field installation sit with a small number of providers, and enrolments are low outside the main technology qualification.
- One maintenance qualification carries almost all the enrolment in the dedicated set, and its completers do well. The Certificate III in Telecommunications Technology is the volume qualification and produces strong completer outcomes.
- The two higher-skill design and engineering qualifications are split: one is delivered, the other is no longer delivered by any RTO. Both are Certificate IVs serving design and engineering roles, and industry still values the design skills the dormant qualification covers.

A regulatory currency issue runs through all of it: new cabling rules, updated standards and a changed industry registration body all require training-product updates.[40,41,42]

Occupational demand

The four occupations covered here are Telecommunications Trades Workers, Telecommunications Engineering Professionals, Electronics Engineers and Telecommunications Technical Specialists. Their combined employment in 2025 was just over 40,000.

The workforce is shifting from network construction toward maintenance, wireless systems and engineering: construction and field-build roles are contracting while maintenance, wireless and engineering roles grow, a pattern set out occupation by occupation below. This transition from wired to wireless, and the wind-down of the national broadband network build into ongoing maintenance, is the backdrop to those trends.

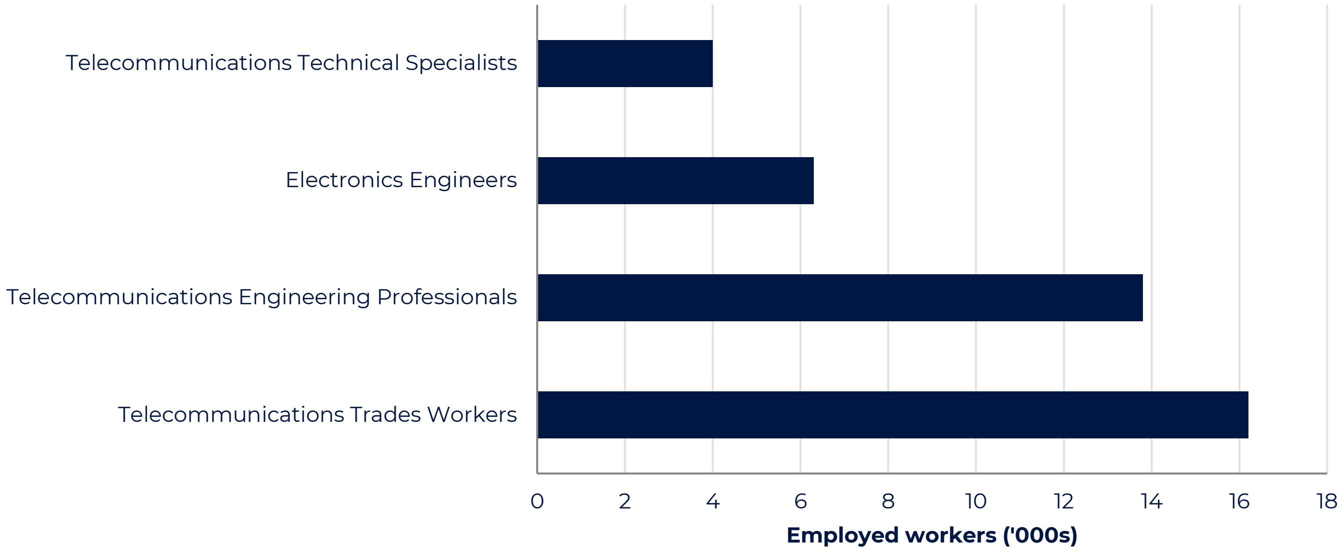

Figure 33: *2025 employment across telecommunications occupations ('000s)*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Telecommunications Trades Workers are the largest occupation covered here and the only one in national shortage, even as the workforce contracts. Employment fell to 16,200 in 2025 from approximately 23,300 in 2016, a decline of more than a quarter.[D2]

The shortage persists despite that contraction because the occupation loses workers steadily. Cumulative attrition to 2035 is projected at roughly a third of the current workforce, producing a supply gap of approximately 1,200 against rising demand.[D3] The gap is driven by this attrition rather than by demand growth. The occupation was listed in shortage in both 2024 and 2025.[D10]

VET is the main supply channel: 52% of the workforce holds a VET qualification as their highest qualification, against 23% for higher education, with the higher education share rising over the decade.[D2] The occupation is almost completely male dominated,[D9] at 4% female in 2025.[D2] Its AI automation and augmentation exposure scores are the lowest of the four occupations, at 0.24 and 0.58:[D4] the physical, on-site nature of cabling and field installation work limits direct exposure, and AI tools are reshaping how the work is dispatched and diagnosed rather than whether it is done by hand.

Telecommunications Engineering Professionals have grown over the decade and face the largest projected supply shortfall. Employment rose to 13,800 in 2025 from approximately 11,600 in 2016.[D2] The supply gap to 2035 is approximately 1,800, the widest in this group, reflecting sustained demand for network engineering capability as carriers invest in wireless and fixed-wireless infrastructure.[D3]

Higher education is the dominant qualification pathway, held by 71% of the workforce as their highest qualification against 20% for VET.[D2] The occupation is highly male dominated,[D9] with 20% female.[D2]

AI augmentation exposure is high at 0.72 and automation exposure moderate at 0.41.[D4] Network engineering tasks centre on design judgement, optimisation and problem diagnosis, which AI tools accelerate rather than replace. The effect is that engineers resolve more, faster, raising output expectations without reducing the need for the underlying expertise.

Electronics Engineers are a small but growing occupation that moved off the shortage list between 2024 and 2025. Employment was 6,300 in 2025, up modestly from approximately 5,500 in 2016.[D2] The supply gap to 2035 is approximately 400, the smallest in this group.[D3] A national shortage recorded in 2024, driven by a suitability gap, was not repeated in 2025.[D10]

This is the occupation with the most highly educated workforce covered here: 82% of the workforce holds a higher education qualification as their highest qualification, a share that rose over the decade, against 12% for VET.[D2] The occupation is highly male dominated,[D9] with 2025 data showing the occupation is 12% female.[D2] It also records the highest AI augmentation exposure of the four occupations, at 0.76, with low automation exposure at 0.34.[D4] Design and analysis tasks dominate the role, and AI tools support rather than substitute for them.

Telecommunications Technical Specialists are the only occupation covered here projected to move into surplus. Employment fell to 4,600 in 2025 from approximately 4,000 in 2016.[D2] Demand is projected to stay broadly flat while supply continues to enter, producing a surplus of approximately 1,100 by 2035.[D3]

The qualification mix is the most balanced of the four occupations: 51% of the workforce holds VET as their highest qualification and 34% higher education, with both channels contributing.[D2] The occupation is highly male dominated,[D9] at 11% female.[D2]

AI augmentation exposure is 0.69 and automation exposure 0.46, the highest automation exposure in this group.[D4] Planning, monitoring and technical-officer tasks carry more routine, transactional content than the engineering roles. That places a larger share of the role within reach of current automation tools, though the dominant effect remains augmentation.

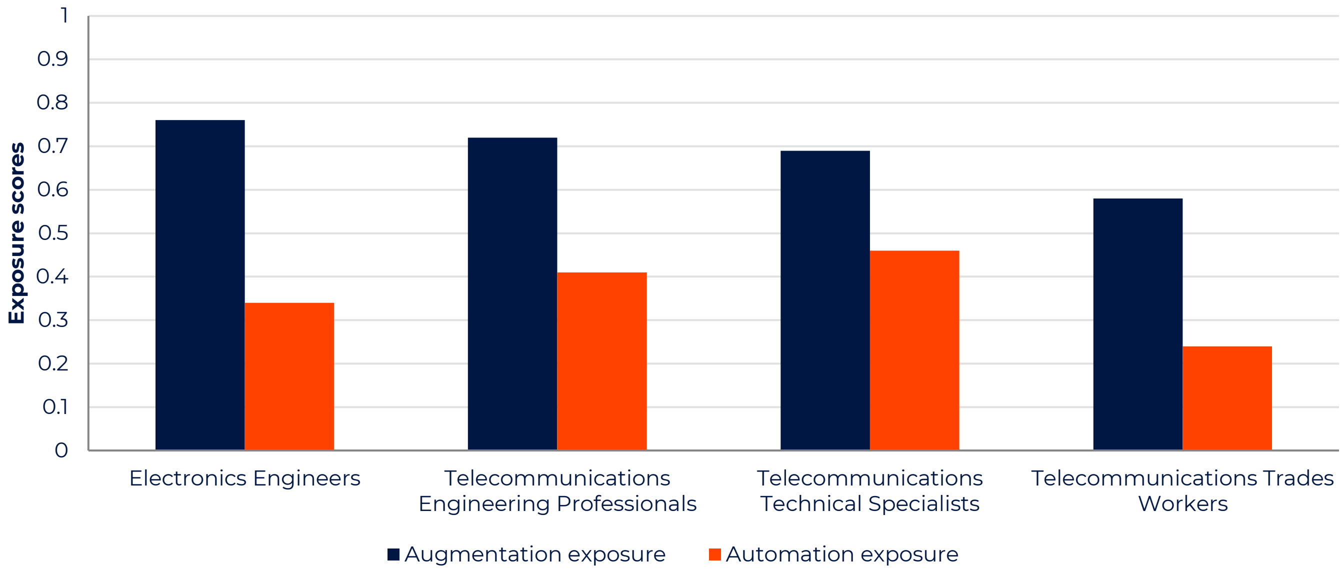

Figure 34: *Generative AI exposure scores across telecommunications occupations*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers the six dedicated telecommunications VET qualifications and the Electrical and Electronic Engineering higher education field.

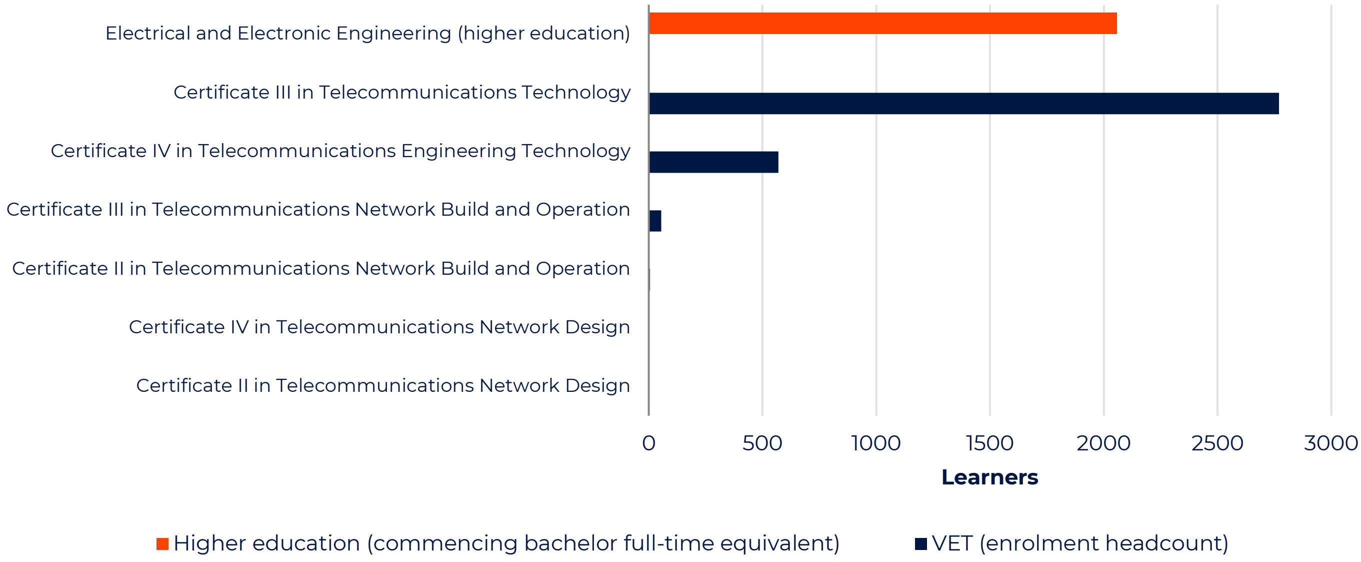

Figure 35: *2024 enrolments across telecommunications qualifications and higher education*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Network infrastructure and construction

The Certificate II and Certificate III in Telecommunications Network Build and Operation prepare workers for the infrastructure side of the industry: cabling, network construction, and field installation and maintenance. Delivery is thin. The National Training Register records three RTOs holding the Certificate II on their scope and seven holding the Certificate III.[D12]

Enrolments match that small footprint, with each qualification recording only tens of enrolments a year through to 2024. This is a narrow market: learner access depends on a small number of providers, and the volumes are well below what a healthy national qualification market would show.[D5]

Stakeholders report that the Certificate II level is being bypassed. Feedback indicates that learners increasingly enter directly at the Certificate III level, which aligns more closely with industry job roles and carries no prerequisite. The same feedback notes that Certificate II qualifications have served mainly as a school-based or pre-apprenticeship entry point rather than a direct route to work.

Telecommunications technology and maintenance

The Certificate III in Telecommunications Technology is the volume qualification of the dedicated set and the one most actively delivered. It prepares advanced technicians and technical officers to install, maintain and fault-find on converging voice, video and data networks.

The current qualification supersedes an earlier version that carried the enrolment activity. The superseded version recorded 2,770 enrolments in 2024, against single-digit and low-tens enrolments across the other dedicated qualifications.[D5] 20 RTOs hold the current qualification on their scope, a broader and healthier provider base than the infrastructure qualifications.[D12]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded version, measured on the 2020 commencing cohort, was 51%, sitting almost exactly on the national VET completion rate of 51% for that cohort.[D6] Completer outcomes, by contrast, are strong and well above the training package benchmark. Of those who completed, 95% gave employment-related reasons as their main motivation for training, far above the 62% average across information and communications technology qualifications.[D7] Almost all achieved their main reason for training, at 92% against the 75% benchmark.[D7] After training, 95% were employed or in further study, against 79% across the training package.[D7]

Among the employed completers, 87% found their training highly or somewhat relevant to their work, well above the 55% training package average. The relevance figure is drawn only from completers who were employed after training and is a sub-sample, not a measure across all completers; on that basis it points to a qualification closely matched to the work its graduates go on to do.[D7]

Training and occupation pathways data confirms the qualification produces occupation-ready outcomes for telecommunications technician and trades-assistant roles, with progression pathways into technical-officer, network-design and broadcast roles.[D11]

Network design and engineering

The Certificate IV in Telecommunications Engineering Technology and the Certificate IV in Telecommunications Network Design serve higher-skill design and engineering roles. The two qualifications sit in very different positions.

The Certificate IV in Telecommunications Engineering Technology is delivered, if modestly: five RTOs hold it on their scope, and it recorded 570 enrolments in 2024. Its four-year completion rate on the 2020 commencing cohort was 65%, above the national average, though this figure is based on a small cohort and should be treated as indicative.[D12,D6]

Completer outcomes are strong, with 96% employed or in further study after training and 80% finding their training relevant to their work, both well above the training package averages.[D7] The qualification produces occupation-ready outcomes for technical-officer and technician roles and progression into network design.[D7,D11]

The Certificate IV in Telecommunications Network Design has no current delivery within the National Training System: no RTO holds it on their scope, and it has recorded no qualification-level enrolments for several years. Its constituent units have been enrolled in through other qualifications, and stakeholders continue to describe the design skills it covers as valuable to industry.[D12]

The skills themselves are still being taught. Stakeholder feedback indicates network design capability is being built through enterprise and non-accredited programs delivered by carriers and private providers, outside the formal qualification.

Higher education context

The two engineering occupations covered in this section draw mainly from higher education, where the relevant field is Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Technology. Domestic full-time equivalent bachelor commencements in that field grew from approximately 1,680 in 2020 to 2,058 in 2024, a rising pipeline that supports the growing engineering occupations.[D8]

Skills and knowledge changes

Three forces are reshaping skill requirements in telecommunications work: regulatory change, the shift to wireless and emerging network technologies, and the steady embedding of AI into network operations.

Regulatory change is the most immediate and concrete pressure on training-product currency. The *Telecommunications (Cabling Provider) Rules 2025* commenced on 31 March 2025, replacing the 2014 rules and resetting the competency and registration requirements for the registered cabling workforce.[40,41] The cabling standards that training products reference were also updated, including the requirements for customer cabling products and the wiring rules, alongside a new types-of-cabling-work declaration and a new labelling instrument.[D3] The industry body that maintains the cabling standards changed its name from Communications Alliance to the Australian Telecommunications Alliance, which means training-product references to the standard-setting organisation are now out of date.[D10]

The registered cabling workforce is large and active: as at 30 June 2025, there were 74,957 registered cablers, with 1,973 newly registered in the preceding quarter.[D2] The telecommunications training product review identified a substantial set of cabling and compliance units requiring updates to reflect the new rules, standards and industry body, ranging from terminology corrections to major content revisions. This is a content currency issue with a clear and externally driven trigger.

A consistent set of new technologies is driving fresh skill demand across telecommunications work. These are optical fibre evolution, fixed-wireless and successive cellular generations, low earth orbit satellite communications, the Internet of Things, smart and converging building technologies, and power-over-ethernet and digital electricity systems.

New job roles are emerging around these technologies, including fibre optic and optical network technicians, wireless and satellite communications technicians, and roles connecting devices across the internet of things. Stakeholders consistently report that training packages take too long to develop and accredit to respond to these demands in time, and that skilling for emerging technologies is met instead by enterprise programs, vendor training and private non-accredited courses.

Generative AI is entering telecommunications work as augmentation of network and field operations rather than substitution. The generative AI exposure scores for all four occupations show augmentation above automation,[D4] and the international and industry evidence explains why: generative AI tools in telecommunications are concentrated in network optimisation, predictive maintenance, fault diagnosis, and the routing and dispatch of field technicians.

The 2025 assessment of the sector by the World Economic Forum frames AI as a support to the workforce rather than a replacement for it, automating routine diagnostic and scheduling tasks so that technicians and engineers can concentrate on complex work.[51]

For the trades and technical roles, the practical effect is a change in how work is allocated and diagnosed; for the engineering roles, it is faster resolution of design and optimisation problems. A skills-led analysis of more than 40,000 technology job advertisements reaches the same reading for entry-level telecommunications roles: across the discipline, network management and diagnostics are being reshaped by AI while physical installation, radio-frequency engineering and field work remain hands-on and in demand.[46]

A cross-cutting theme in the stakeholder evidence concerns licensing overlap with the electrotechnology trades. The FSO Workforce Roadshows and additional stakeholder feedback note that telecommunications and electrical trade licensing duplicate each other in places, and that learners move between the electrotechnology and telecommunications training packages through credit transfer and recognition of prior learning.

Stakeholders in Western Australia reported that telecommunications delivery in that state has shifted toward the electrotechnology training package, which signals a package-alignment issue that the qualifications update will need to consider.

Implications for action

An update to the telecommunications technology qualifications is already underway, and the evidence here points to the known issues it needs to resolve. The regulatory currency gap is the most immediate and best-defined input for the qualifications update. The new cabling rules, the updated standards and the changed industry registration body all require training-product revisions, and the trigger is external and clear.[40,41,42]

Structural challenges should also be considered within training product revisions: a thinly delivered qualification set, a network design qualification that is no longer delivered by any RTO, and skill sets that are not keeping pace with industry need. Carrier and RTO input can shape how the formal system responds to technologies currently being skilled outside it.

Business

With more than two million workers spread across every industry, the business workforce sits on both sides of the AI transition. Its clerical and administrative roles are among the roles with the highest generative AI automation exposure,[D4] while its managers are increasingly the ones expected to lead AI adoption, support affected workers, and govern how the technology is used. The exposure is concentrated in occupations like general clerks, receptionists, secretaries and keyboard operators, where the core tasks, data entry, scheduling, document handling and routine correspondence, are what current generative AI tools do most readily.

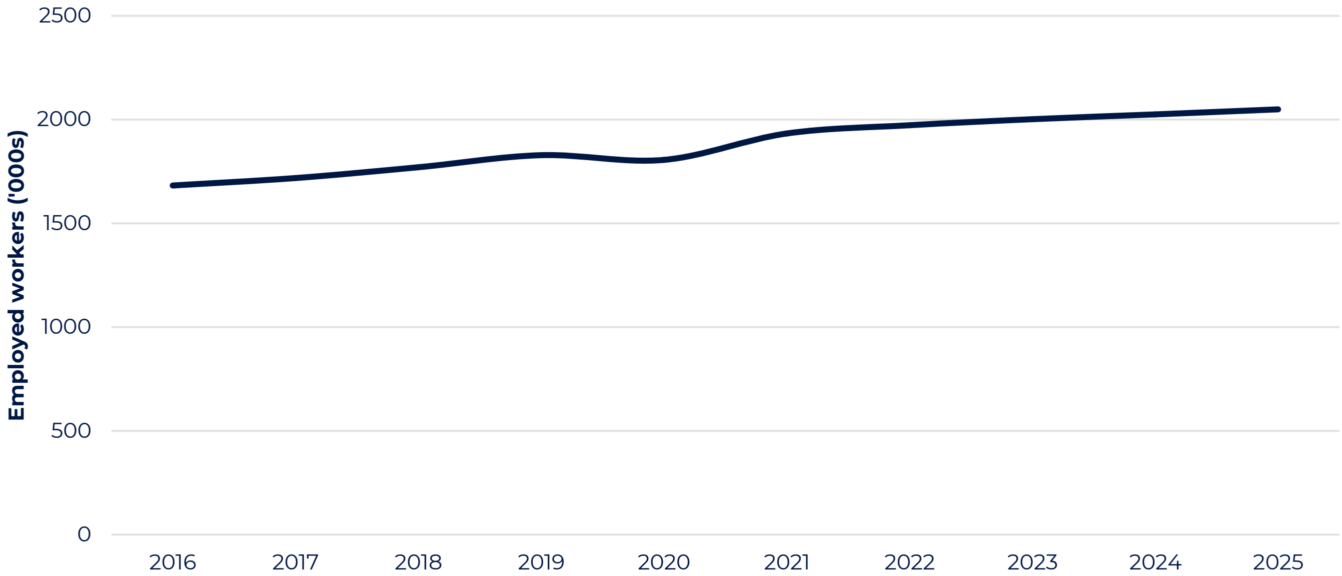

Figure 36: *Business sector workforce, employment 2016 to 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

The occupations with highest generative AI exposure are overwhelmingly held by women. Personal assistants, secretaries and receptionists are almost entirely female, and general clerks and office managers are heavily female dominated.[D9] Because the roles with the highest generative AI automation exposure are also the most female-dominated, the workforce effects of generative AI in this sector fall disproportionately on women. This pattern runs across the whole administrative grouping.[D2,D4]

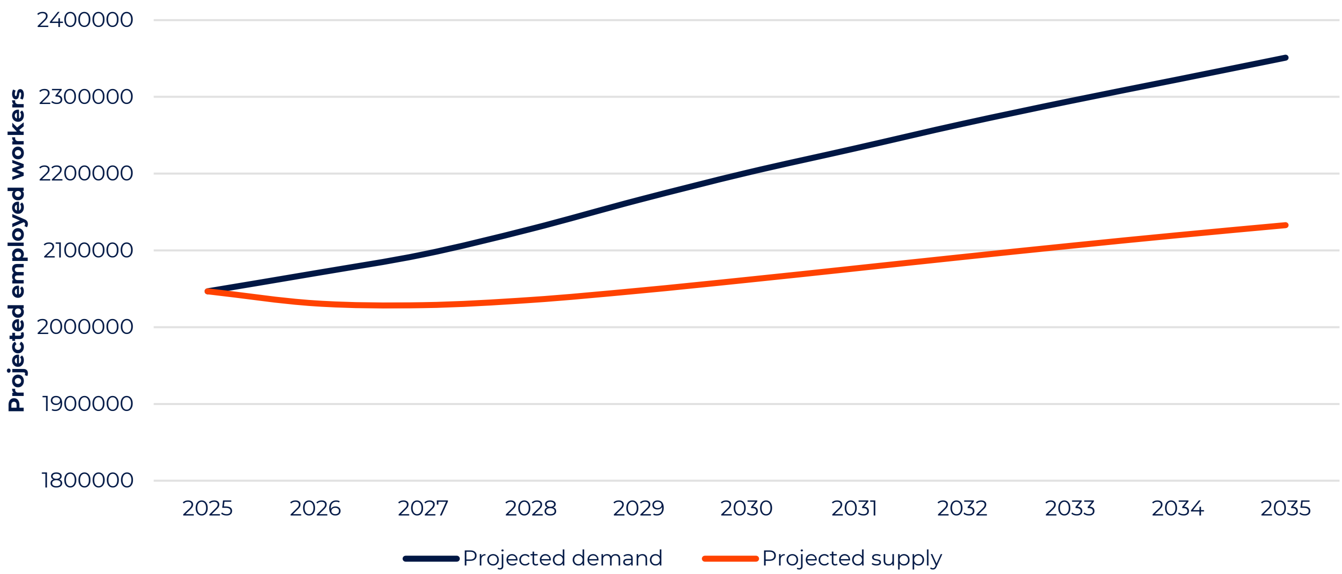

Figure 37: *Business sector projected workforce demand and supply, 2025 to 2035.*

Source: Future Skills Organisation and Oxford Economics Australia 2026, projections data.[D3]

Note: figures are trend-based projections to 2035 and do not incorporate the effect of AI-driven task change.

Strong management capability has become a national productivity question. Evidence linking better management practice to higher productivity[52,53] has moved people-management skills into the national productivity debate. Managing the adoption of AI is itself becoming a core management skill. Both shifts place new demands on the leadership, management and generalist business qualifications that build these capabilities.

The BSB training package covers a broad range from general workplace skills development to specialist roles. Annual enrolments in recent years range between 322,000 and 359,000 a year since 2020, currently at 330,000 in 2024. A single qualification, the Certificate III in Business, accounts for around 67,000 of those enrolments, the largest of any qualification across the three sectors.[D5]

Commencements in management and commerce bachelor degrees have held broadly flat over this period, moving between around 36,000 and 37,500 full-time equivalent students a year from 2020 to 2024.[D8]

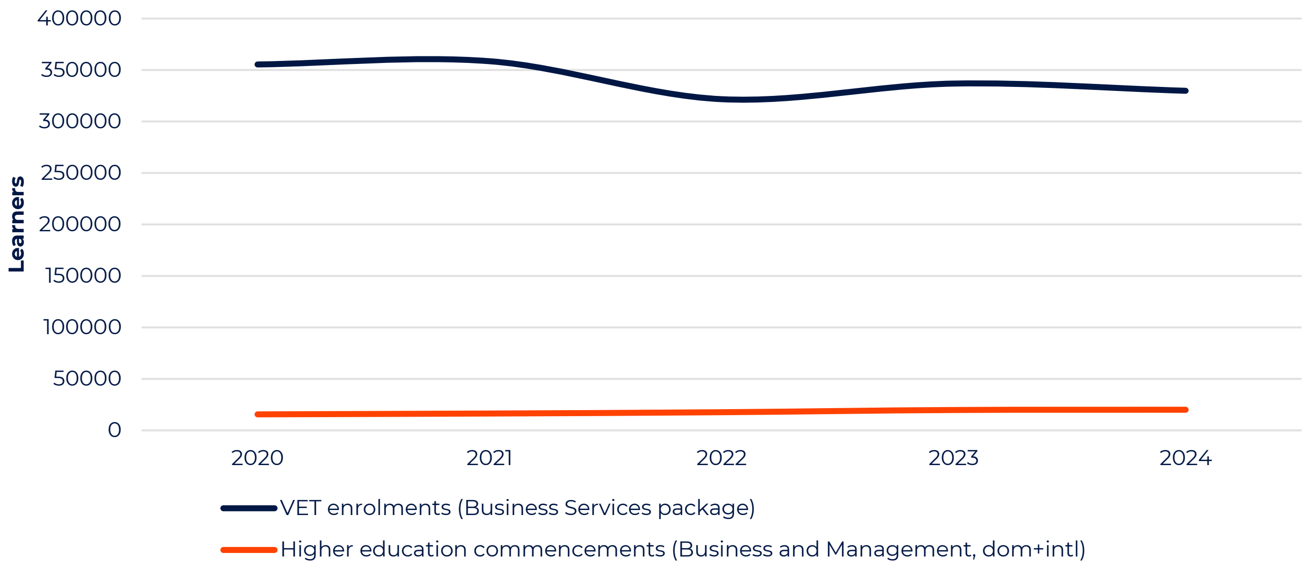

Figure 38: *Business sector training, VET enrolments and higher education commencements, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Note: VET figures are enrolment headcount; the higher education figure is total commencing bachelor full-time equivalent enrolments.

Both training channels lead to good employment outcomes. About 86% of those who complete a VET qualification in this sector are employed or in further study afterwards.[D7] Among higher education graduates in business and management, about 79% of those seeking full-time work had found it around four months after finishing in 2024.[D8] The two figures come from different surveys on different bases and timeframes, and are best read as parallel indicators rather than a direct comparison.

Connecting to the wider evidence base: The sector trends summarised here are detailed in the sections that follow, and the underlying workforce and training data is available to explore in the Workforce Dashboards. The main report places these business findings alongside those for finance and technology in the national picture.

Active projects

There are three current projects related to the BSB training package:

- The Generalist Skills Review is defining the generalist skills many of these qualifications carry.
- The BSB Update: Uplift Digital Capability is developing units of competency in digital, cyber security and AI capability.
- A new unit of competency on safe and respectful workplaces is also in development for the Certificate III in Work Health and Safety.

Cluster 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance

VET qualification in scope: Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance

Summary

The Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance prepares directors and senior staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations to govern under a distinct legal framework. It builds the board-level skills these organisations need: financial oversight, risk management, compliance with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*,[54] and accountability to both members and funding bodies. The qualification serves a community governance need, not a conventional occupational labour market.

The qualification supports governance roles that sit outside the standard occupation classification, so the analytical focus here is the training picture rather than employment projections. Board directors, secretaries and senior staff in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations carry legal and financial responsibility[54] for organisations that deliver land, housing, health, education and native title services across regional and remote Australia. Many of these directors serve on a voluntary, unpaid basis.

Learners can enrol to build capability for governance roles, including unpaid directorships, rather than to enter paid employment. More than a third undertake the training for personal reasons,[D7] more than double the rate across business qualifications generally, consistent with directors and aspiring directors strengthening their ability to govern community organisations.

- This is a small, specialist provider market: four RTOs hold the qualification on their scope,[D12] three of them Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. Delivery is concentrated and tied closely to community-controlled provision.
- Places are largely funded through a national director-support program restricted to current directors of registered corporations, which keeps cohorts small by design rather than by weak demand.[55]
- Recorded enrolments and completions are very small and mostly suppressed, so completion rates can only be read as indicative,[D5,D6] and may understate workforce development where directors leave the course having met their own goals.

Occupational demand

No single occupation maps to this qualification, and the legal and financial responsibility it builds is spread across board directors, secretaries and senior staff. These roles carry legal and financial responsibility for the organisation. The qualification also supports public servants who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boards of governance.[D12]

Directors hold cultural obligations to their community alongside legal and financial obligations to members, regulators and funding bodies.[56] That dual accountability is why the qualification exists as a distinct credential, separate from general business or management training. It also explains why many of these governance roles are filled by community members rather than professional managers: the people who fill them are often community members serving on the boards of organisations they belong to.

The need for formal training and skills development is steady and tied to the community-controlled sector, not to employment growth in any single occupation. Each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation needs directors who can meet its obligations under the governing legislation, and those obligations apply regardless of corporation size.[54]

Education and training trends

The Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Governance is designed for people who govern or help run Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations. It reflects the role of board members, board secretaries and senior staff, and applies as well to public servants working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boards. The current qualification took effect in January 2022 and brought together two earlier qualifications, a separate certificate and diploma, into a single certificate-level credential.

Four RTOs hold the qualification on their scope according to the National Training Register.[D12] Three of the four are Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and the fourth is a public provider. This is a thin and highly specialised provider market: delivery depends on a small number of organisations with the cultural standing and community relationships to reach the directors the qualification is built for. For learners, that concentration means access is closely tied to whether a community-controlled provider is delivering in their region in a given year.[D12]

Historical enrolments are very small. National training data shows only small, intermittent enrolments across the current and superseded qualification codes, in the order of 10 to 35 a year at their recent peak, with several years suppressed in the published data because cohorts fall below the reporting threshold. Almost all of those learners were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.[D5]

Delivery is funded through a national program that supports directors of registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations to gain the qualification, offering a limited number of supported places in 2025 and 2026. This activity is not yet available within the public data. Eligibility is restricted to current directors who have already completed a corporate governance workshop, and study runs through residential blocks over several months. This is a deliberately gated, capability-building pathway for people already in governance roles, not an open-market qualification competing for general enrolments. The small cohort size is a design feature of that model.[55]

Completion rates can only be read as indicative. The four-year completion rate for the superseded certificate sat at around 24% for the 2021 commencing cohort and around 14% for the 2022 cohort, both based on cohorts of 25 to 30 learners and both carrying a wide margin of error. The current qualification has too few completions to report a completion rate. With cohorts this small, completion percentages move sharply on one or two learners and should not be compared against the national VET average as if they were stable measures. FSO stakeholders working in this area note that completion can understate workforce development, because directors may leave a course having gained the specific governance skills they came for without finishing every unit.[D6]

Student outcomes for completers are strong. Pooled survey data for completers of the current qualification shows that 93% achieved their main reason for training, against 83% across business qualifications generally[D7], and 89% were employed or in further study after training, above the business qualification average of 86%. Of those employed afterwards, 81% found their training relevant to their work, broadly in line with the business average once the margin of error is allowed for. The pattern of motivation is the notable point: 63% enrolled for employment-related reasons and 34% for development reasons, where development accounts for only about 14% across business qualifications. That high share fits a qualification taken by people strengthening their capability for a governance role, including the directorships common in community-controlled organisations, instead of people seeking a new salaried job.[D7]

Skills and knowledge changes

The governance knowledge this qualification develops is anchored in a specific legal framework. The *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* sets the incorporation, reporting and director-duty requirements that registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations must meet, including the requirement that the majority of directors and members are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.[54] Keeping the qualification current depends on keeping its governance, compliance and risk content aligned with that Act and its regulations.

The regulator's current areas of focus show where director knowledge matters most in practice. Recent regulatory attention has centred on related-party benefits, the rules that require corporations to seek member approval before giving a benefit to a related party, and on the accountability of boards that are unable or unwilling to meet their responsibilities to members. These are the points where governance knowledge translates directly into compliance, and where directors most need a clear understanding of their duties. The qualification's value lies in equipping directors to handle exactly these obligations.[56]

Directors govern in what stakeholders describe as two worlds at once, carrying cultural obligations to community alongside formal legal and financial duties.[55] Risk management, financial oversight and an understanding of regulatory standards are core, but so is the ability to hold community accountability and statutory accountability together. This is a governance capability that general business and management qualifications are not designed to build.

Implications for action

Completer outcomes are strong, the qualification aligns to a clear legal framework,[54] and the merger of the earlier certificate and diploma into a single credential has consolidated the offering. The content-related watch point is regulatory: the governance, compliance and risk content needs to stay aligned with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and with the regulator's areas of compliance focus, so that directors are prepared for the obligations being actively enforced.

The qualification reaches very small numbers, depends on a handful of community-controlled providers, and relies on externally funded supported places to generate enrolments. Sector and consultation evidence points to interest in delivery models suited to these roles, including earn-while-you-learn approaches, regional engagement, and recognition of experience-based learning.

FSO’s forthcoming First Nations focus paper may address governance training and the access questions raised here, and the evidence in this section should be read alongside it.

Cluster 2: Audit

VET qualifications in scope: Diploma of Quality Auditing

Summary

The Diploma of Quality Auditing has stabilised on its current qualification and is performing well for learners. It trains people to audit management systems; the structured checks an organisation runs to confirm its own processes meet a defined standard. Enrolments have remained relatively stable since 2020[D5], and completers report better employment results than the BSB training package average on every measure collected.[D7]

The skill content of auditing is changing faster than the qualification has kept pace with. The international guidance standard (ISO 19011) that underpins auditor training is being revised to cover remote and hybrid auditing, digital evidence and AI, and a new climate disclosure assurance regime is reshaping assurance work.

Occupational demand

No occupation in the national classification system corresponds to quality auditing, which limits what can be said about workforce demand. The qualification prepares people for roles as quality assurance managers and internal auditors in the quality-auditing sense, checking that an organisation's own systems work as intended. These roles are scattered across the classification rather than gathered into one occupation. Stakeholders raised this same problem in consultation: without finer occupational data, the workforce picture for this kind of auditing remains opaque.

The nearest available proxy is a group dominated by financial rather than quality auditing and is presented here only as context. This proxy group, classified under Finance, brings together Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers. It employed 32,900 people in 2025, up from approximately 20,400 in 2016.[D2] Workforce projections point to a surplus of approximately 9,600 by 2035, with supply growing faster than demand even as demand continues to rise.[D3] Higher education is the most common highest qualification held, at around 70% in 2025, with VET the highest qualification for roughly 20%.[D2] The group is close to gender balanced, at just under half female.[D2]

This same proxy group is recorded as in shortage even as its supply is projected to move into surplus. It appeared on the national shortage list in both 2024 and 2025, with the cause classified as uncertain and unchanged between the two years.[D10] The shortage finding and the projected surplus both describe this same bundled group, and the two are not in conflict: a current recruitment difficulty can coexist with a longer supply outlook that turns positive.

Generative AI exposure scores show high augmentation at 0.74 and lower automation at 0.45,[D4] the pattern typical of work built on judgement and interpretation. Auditing of this kind weighs evidence and reaches a defensible conclusion, so AI tools can speed up assembling that evidence without replacing the reasoning that gives an audit its value. If this proxy pattern holds for quality auditors, the qualification's own shift toward risk-based, technology-literate auditing described above is a reasonable training response, though this remains an inference from an adjacent occupation rather than a direct measurement of quality-auditing work.

Education and training trends

One qualification is in scope: the Diploma of Quality Auditing. It teaches people to plan, lead and report audits of management systems against standards such as those for quality management,[57] and it is aimed at people moving into or already working in quality assurance and internal audit roles. The chart below shows enrolments over recent years.

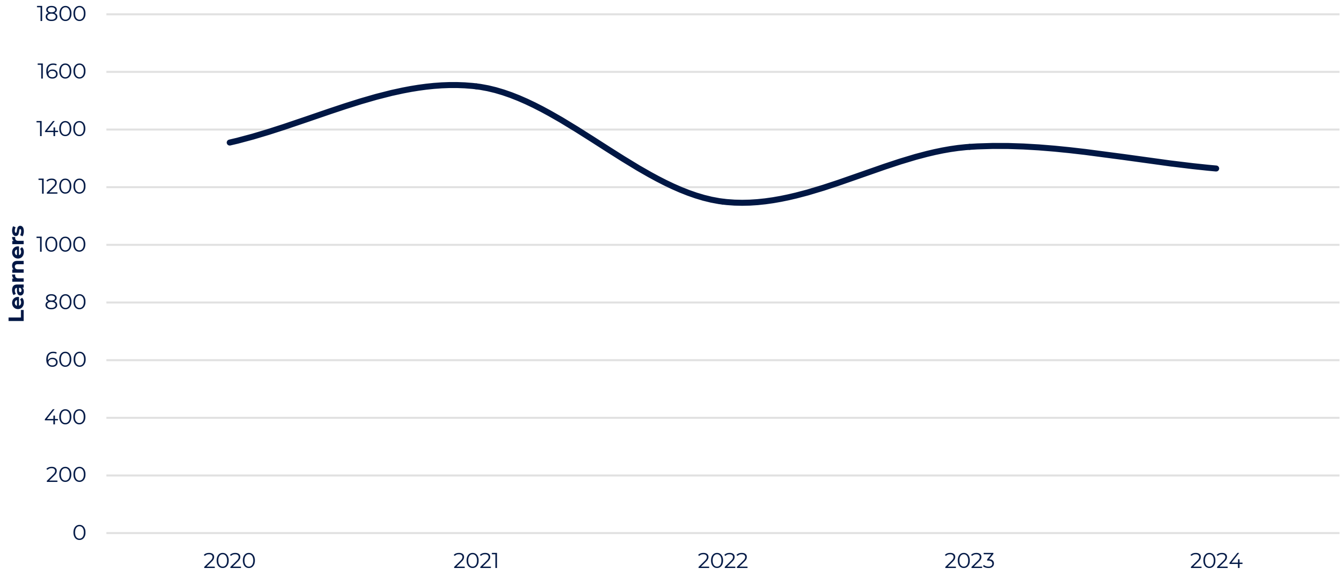

Figure 39: *Diploma of Quality Auditing: national enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Enrolments have remained stable between the current and superseded versions, moving from a combined total of 1,355 in 2020 to 1,340 in 2023 before easing slightly to 1,265 in 2024.[D5] Completions followed the same path, reaching 525 in 2024.[D5]

Delivery is spread across a moderate number of providers rather than concentrated in a few. 57 RTOs hold the qualification on their scope on the National Training Register.[D12] For a specialist diploma that is a reasonably broad provider base and combined with rising enrolments it points to steady learner access.

A reliable completion rate is not yet available for the current qualification, so the superseded version provides the best guide. For the superseded version, 64% of the 2020 commencing cohort finished within four years, above the national VET average of around 51% and above the Business Services average.[D6]

Completers report employment results well above the training package average. Most enrol for work-related reasons, at 92% against a Business Services average of 71%. Of those completers, 88% say they achieved their main reason for training, against an average of 83%. After finishing, 96% are employed or in further study, against an average of 86%. Among those employed, 93% found their training relevant to their work, against an average of 78%, noting this last figure is drawn only from employed completers rather than all of them.[D7] The consistency across all four measures points to a qualification serving its learners well.

A substantial share of completers moves on to further study, which fits a pattern of building qualifications over time rather than weak employment. Between roughly a third and a half undertake further VET. Linked administrative data shows that very few completers, around 3% to 5%, are recorded in the single occupation the qualification is matched to, but for a broad auditing qualification whose graduates work across many roles, a low match to one named occupation is expected and does not indicate a poor result.[D13]

Skills and knowledge changes

The international standard that underpins auditor training is being revised to reflect how auditing is now done. As set out above, this qualification's defined scope is to audit management systems against a standard, which is exactly the practice this international guidance governs. Management system auditing in Australia follows international guidance that sets out how audits are planned, conducted and reported, and how auditor competence is judged. A revision expected in 2026 strengthens risk-based auditing, formally recognises remote and hybrid auditing as normal practice, and expects auditors to be competent with digital tools and the limits of electronic evidence.[D13] It also brings AI into scope for the first time. These are direct changes to the knowledge base the qualification rests on.

Alongside that auditing-standard revision, a second and distinct driver is reshaping the field: a new climate disclosure assurance regime is expanding what assurance work involves and who is expected to do it. Australian auditing and assurance standards approved in January 2025 phase in assurance over the mandatory climate-related financial disclosures that large entities must now make under the *Corporations Act*, moving from limited to reasonable assurance for financial years from 1 July 2030.[57] The same standards bar internal auditors from providing direct assistance on sustainability assurance engagements, drawing a sharper line around who can do this work.[57] This creates new assurance skill requirements that sit alongside the current quality-auditing qualification.

Stakeholders describe assurance capability spreading beyond specialists into a wider set of roles. Feedback gathered through industry channels indicates that auditing and assurance skills, including assurance of AI systems, are increasingly expected across general business roles rather than confined to dedicated auditors. The same feedback raises concern that the non-accredited training market in this area is fragmented and hard for businesses to read.

Implications for action

The evidence points to a content-currency watch rather than action now. The qualification performs well for learners, but the international standard it rests on is being revised to cover remote and hybrid auditing, digital evidence and AI. The action is to track that revision and update content when it lands, not to change the qualification ahead of it.

The sustainability assurance skill needs overlap with the project currently underway. Use of those training products within quality auditing should be considered where relevant.

Cluster 3: Business

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate I in Workplace Skills · Certificate II in Workplace Skills · Certificate III in Business · Certificate IV in Business · Diploma of Business · Advanced Diploma of Business

Higher education fields of education in scope: Management and commerce

Active projects: The Generalist Skills Review is defining generalist skill, which will cover many related to the qualifications within Business. The BSB Update: Uplift Digital Capability project is developing general digital capability training products, also of high relevance to the qualifications within Business.

Summary

Business qualifications train people for the jobs most exposed to generative AI. The clerical and administrative roles these qualifications feed, including general clerks, receptionists and keyboard operators, sit among the highest in Australia for generative AI automation exposure. The tasks at the core of these jobs, such as data entry, scheduling, document handling and routine correspondence, are tasks that current generative AI tools perform most readily.

Routine clerical roles are contracting while management-adjacent roles face attrition-driven supply gaps. Routine clerical occupations such as secretaries, keyboard operators and switchboard operators are contracting, while management-adjacent roles such as office managers and the larger clerical occupations face supply gaps driven by workers leaving faster than new entrants arrive. The same automation pressure that erodes the routine roles reshapes the roles that remain.

These roles tend to be female dominated. Personal assistants, secretaries and receptionists are almost completely female, and general clerks and office managers are highly female occupied. The occupations with high generative AI automation exposure are overwhelmingly held by women.

The education and training picture:

- The Certificate I and Certificate II in Workplace Skills prepare learners for work, with the Certificate I being pre-vocational with strong pathways to the Certificate II, which sits at the foundation level for administrative work.
- The Certificate III in Business is the central business qualification. With around 67,000 enrolments in 2024, it is the single largest VET qualification in the FTB remit, delivered through a broad and competitive provider market.
- The Certificate IV in Business is designed for administrative work carrying greater autonomy than the Certificate III qualification. However, stakeholders report this qualification is increasingly being used by school students to secure early higher education entry rather than entering administrative work, raising questions about what these products are designed to do.
- The Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Business are senior level pathways for management roles, primarily used by learners who are employed and looking to develop advanced administrative and leadership skills.
- Higher education in the broad field is shrinking while VET demand holds. Domestic management and commerce bachelor commencements have fallen over the past five years, even as VET enrolments remain high. These two patterns are not in conflict: individual learners are using the VET credential as a stepping stone into higher education even as aggregate higher education commencements in the broader field decline for other reasons.

Occupational demand

The 13 occupations covered here form the clerical and administrative core of the Australian workforce. They range from large, growing roles employing hundreds of thousands of people to small, contracting roles employing only a few thousand.

Figure 40: *Business (clerical and administrative) occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

General Clerks are the largest occupation in Business and one of the largest in the country, at 292,000 in 2025.[D2] Employment grew from approximately 244,900 in 2016, a steady rise over the decade.[D2] The role faces a supply gap of approximately 43,000 to 2035, driven by attrition rather than demand growth: the occupation continues to expand, but loses experienced workers faster than new entrants replace them.[D3]

VET is the largest single qualification channel for General Clerks, with 37% of workers holding a VET qualification as their highest qualification against 23% holding a higher education qualification, and both shares rose over the decade.[D2] The occupation is highly female dominated,[D9] at 81%.[D2]

Generative AI automation exposure is 0.71 and augmentation exposure is 0.68,[D4] both moderate to high: the transactional tasks at the core of the role are exposed to substitution by current generative AI tools, while the interpretive and coordinating tasks are supported by augmentation, so the likely effect is a shift in the task mix toward workers who can operate in the augmented portion of the role.

Receptionists carry the largest supply gap of any occupation covered here, at approximately 49,800 to 2035.[D3] Employment reached 181,900 in 2025, up from approximately 174,500 in 2016.[D2] The gap is unusual: supply is projected to fall even as demand holds, so the shortfall reflects workers leaving the occupation rather than a surge in new demand.[D3]

VET is again the largest qualification channel for Receptionists, at 35% against a higher education share of 17%.[D2] The occupation is almost completely female dominated,[D9] at 89%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.66 and augmentation exposure is 0.67,[D4] placing the role alongside General Clerks among the higher-exposed occupations on both measures.

Office Managers show a different exposure pattern from the rest of the occupations in this cluster. Employment reached 139,700 in 2025, up from approximately 131,100 in 2016.[D2] The role faces a supply gap of approximately 39,500 to 2035, again driven by attrition rather than by demand growth.[D3]

VET holds the largest qualification share for Office Managers at 40%, with higher education at 22% and rising.[D2] The occupation is highly female dominated,[D9] at 81%.[D2] AI automation exposure sits at 0.46, well below the rest of the occupations covered here, while augmentation exposure is high at 0.70;[D4] the role concentrates on judgement, coordination and oversight, tasks that AI can accelerate rather than replaces, so the practical effect is that managers can handle more without a reduction in the need for the role itself.

Information Officers grew faster than most occupations covered here over the past decade, reaching 88,500 in 2025 from approximately 73,900 in 2016.[D2] The role faces a supply gap of approximately 34,000 to 2035.[D3]

VET is the largest qualification channel for Information Officers at 35%, with higher education close behind at 30% and rising sharply over the decade, the narrowest gap between the two channels of any occupation covered here.[D2] The occupation is moderately female dominated,[D9] at 64%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.66 and augmentation exposure is 0.70,[D4] indicating substantial change in how the role is performed: the information-handling and enquiry tasks at its core are exposed to both substitution and acceleration.

Secretaries recorded the sharpest decline of any occupation covered here, falling to 29,900 in 2025 from approximately 46,500 in 2016.[D2] This is a contraction of more than 40% over the decade, the steepest fall in the group, and supply is projected to fall further to 2035.[D3]

VET is the largest qualification channel for Secretaries at 30%, though the share is lower than for the larger clerical roles.[D2] The occupation is almost completely female dominated,[D9] at 94%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.67 and augmentation exposure is 0.69;[D4] the scheduling, correspondence and document-preparation tasks that define the role are those which current generative AI tools perform well, continuing the wave of digitisation which has occurred over the past decade and more.

Keyboard Operators show the highest generative AI automation exposure of any occupation covered here.[D4] Employment fell to 49,700 in 2025 from approximately 58,800 in 2016, and supply is projected to keep declining to 2035.[D2,D3]

AI augmentation exposure for Keyboard Operators is high at 0.76, but the automation exposure score of 0.81[D4] points to substitution as a significant pressure: the data entry and transcription tasks that define the role are the tasks current AI tools perform most readily. VET is the largest qualification channel at 32%.[D2] The occupation is female dominated,[D9] at 75%.[D2] The combination of the highest automation exposure in the group with a decade of falling employment indicates a significant risk for workforce demand in this occupation.

Personal Assistants remained stable over the decade, at 50,900 in 2025 from approximately 51,100 in 2016.[D2] Supply is projected to stay broadly flat to 2035, with demand and supply close to balance.[D3]

VET is the largest qualification channel for Personal Assistants at 43%, the highest VET share in the group, with higher education at 22% and rising.[D2] The occupation is almost completely female dominated,[D9] at 97%,[D2] the highest concentration of any occupation covered here. AI automation exposure is 0.63 and augmentation exposure is 0.69;[D4] the coordination and document tasks are likely exposed to substitution, while the relationship-management and judgement content of supporting a principal may be supported by augmentation.

Call or Contact Centre and Customer Service Managers are the only occupation covered here that is not female dominated, at 43%[D2] and gender balanced.[D9] Employment grew modestly over the decade, at 38,700 in 2025 against approximately 35,900 in 2016, with a small supply gap of approximately 7,300 to 2035.[D2,D3]

VET is the largest qualification channel for this occupation at 44%, with higher education at 31% and rising.[D2] AI automation exposure is moderate at 0.53 while augmentation exposure is high at 0.71,[D4] a pattern closer to Office Managers than to the clerical roles: the managerial and judgement-based content of the role limits substitution, while AI accelerates the analytical and oversight tasks.

Call or Contact Centre Workers may face pressure from generative AI, with automation exposure of 0.75 and augmentation exposure of 0.73.[D4] Employment fell to 28,800 in 2025 from approximately 32,500 in 2016, and supply is projected to remain near balance with demand to 2035.[D2,D3]

VET is the largest qualification channel for Call or Contact Centre Workers at 33%.[D2] The occupation is moderately female dominated,[D9] at 64%.[D2] The high automation exposure score reflects the scripted, transactional nature of much call-centre work, the part of the role most readily handled by current conversational AI tools, with human staff increasingly reserved for complex or escalated contact.

Other Miscellaneous Clerical and Administrative Workers grew modestly over the decade, reaching 24,200 in 2025 from approximately 20,400 in 2016.[D2] The role faces a small supply gap of approximately 6,300 to 2035.[D3] This occupation holds the highest higher education share of any covered here, at 40%, above its VET share of 37%, the only occupation in the group where higher education is the larger channel.[D2] It is moderately female dominated,[D9] at 63%.[D2] AI automation exposure is 0.68 and augmentation exposure is 0.75.[D4]

Filing and Registry Clerks slightly declined over the decade, at 16,500 in 2025 against approximately 17,900 in 2016, with a small supply gap of approximately 5,700 to 2035.[D2,D3] VET is the largest qualification channel at 34%, with higher education at 28% and rising.[D2] The occupation is highly female dominated,[D9] at 71%.[D2] Generative AI automation exposure is 0.76 and augmentation exposure is 0.74,[D4] both among the highest in the group: the records-handling, indexing and retrieval tasks that define the role are strongly exposed to substitution as document management moves into software.

Other Clerical and Office Support Workers contracted over the decade, falling to 6,500 in 2025 from approximately 7,900 in 2016.[D2] Supply is projected to stay close to balance with demand to 2035.[D3] VET is the largest qualification channel at 35%, with higher education at 20%.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced, at 57% female,[D2] one of only two occupations covered here that is not female dominated.[D9] AI automation exposure is 0.40 and augmentation exposure is 0.57,[D4] the lowest scores of any occupation covered in this cluster, reflecting a more varied task mix with less routine transactional content than the larger clerical roles.

Switchboard Operators are the smallest occupation covered here, at 2,600 in 2025, down from approximately 3,900 in 2016.[D2] The role contracted by more than a third over the decade, the steepest proportional fall in the group, and supply is projected to keep declining to 2035.[D3] VET is the largest qualification channel at 28%, the lowest VET share in the group.[D2] The occupation is highly female dominated,[D9] at 69%.[D2] Generative AI automation exposure is 0.65 and augmentation exposure is 0.70;[D4] call-routing and switching tasks have been progressively automated, and current generative AI tools extend that pressure.

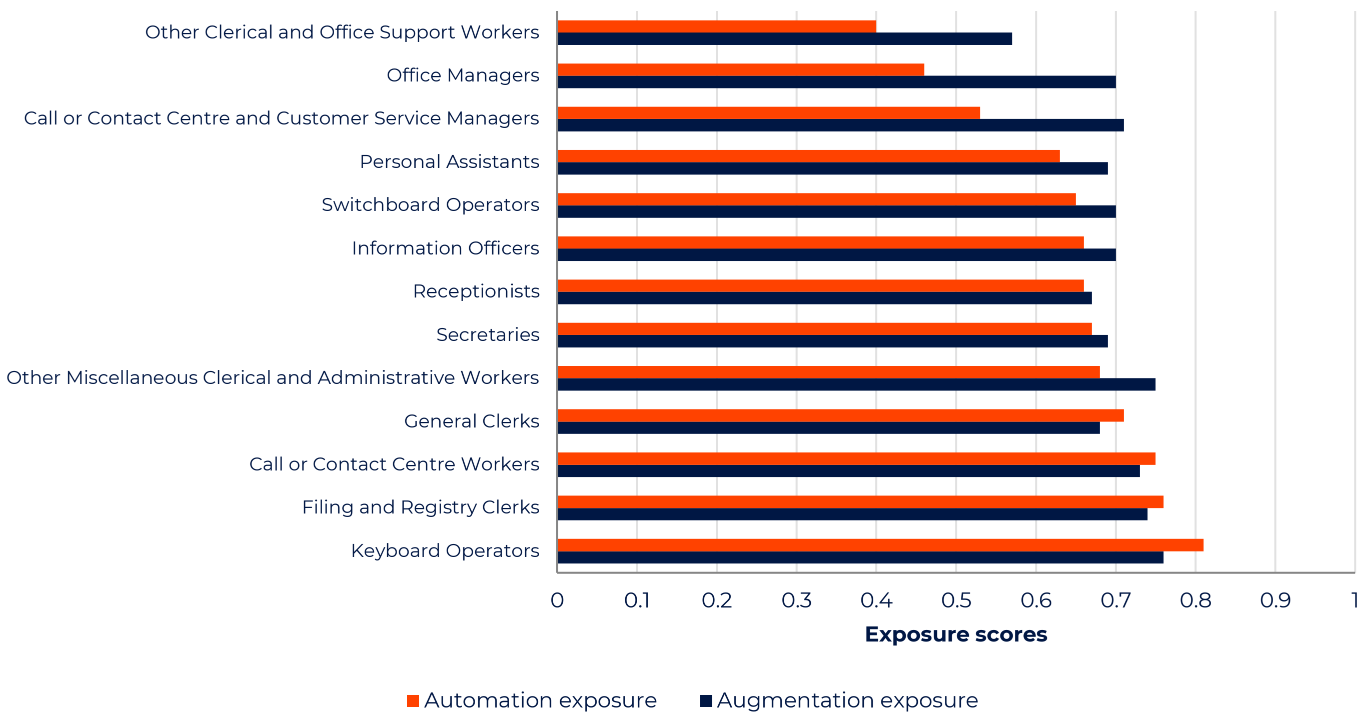

Figure 41: *Business occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers the six VET qualifications in scope, from the Certificate I in Workplace Skills through to the Advanced Diploma of Business, and the broad higher education field of management and commerce. The qualifications run as a single progression, from pre-vocational entry through to advanced management content, and are organised below by level.

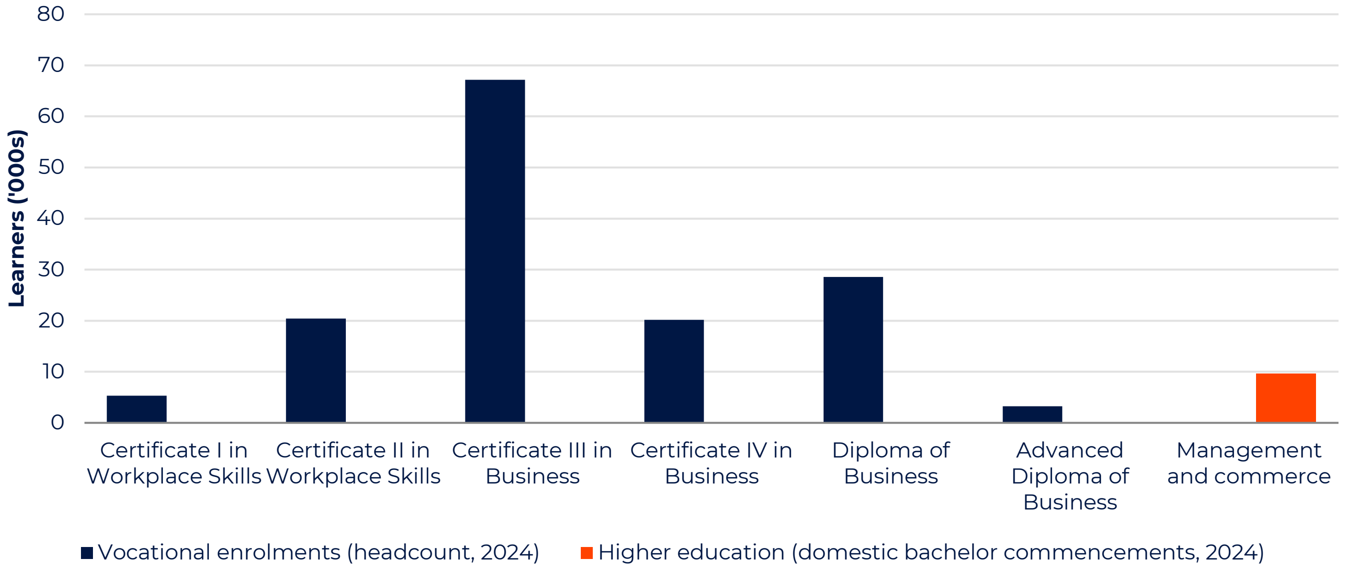

Figure 42: *Business (clerical and administrative): VET and higher education enrolments, 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

These qualifications are delivered through a large and competitive provider market. The National Training Register records 144 RTOs holding the Certificate I in Workplace Skills on their scope, the lowest in this group, up to 568 RTOs holding the Certificate III in Business on their scope.[D12] This is among the broadest delivery markets of any qualification family in the remit, and it means learner access is not a constraint.

Certificate I in Workplace Skills

The Certificate I in Workplace Skills is a pre-vocational qualification designed to introduce people who have not yet entered the workforce to basic work skills. Training to occupation pathways data confirms it as pre-vocational only, a preparation step rather than a direct route into a job.[D11] Enrolments in 2024 were 5,310, the small volume expected of an entry-level preparatory qualification.[D5]

The completion rate for the superseded version, measured on the 2019 commencing cohort, was 63%, the highest in the group and well above the BSB training package average of 50%. [D6] Student outcomes data for completers shows a mixed enrolment motivation: 44% cited employment-related reasons against a training package average of 71%, consistent with the qualification's pre-vocational purpose, since many learners are not yet aiming directly at a job.[D7] Among completers, 78% achieved their main reason for training, and 72% were employed or in further study after training, against a training package average of 86%.[D7] Relevance of training to work, reported by employed completers, was 60% against a training package average of 78%, the lowest in the group, which is unsurprising for a qualification designed to prepare for work rather than for a specific role.[D7]

Certificate II in Workplace Skills

The Certificate II in Workplace Skills builds on the Certificate I toward entry-level administrative work. Training to occupation pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for general clerk roles.[D11] Enrolments in 2024 were 20,425.[D5] The completion rate for the superseded version, on the 2019 commencing cohort, was 55%, above the BSB training package average of 50%.[D6]

Student outcomes data for completers shows 45% citing employment-related reasons for enrolling, below the training package average of 71% and consistent with a qualification that still sits early in the progression.[D7] Among completers, 82% achieved their main reason for training, in line with the training package average of 83%, and 77% were employed or in further study after training, below the training package average of 86%.[D7] Relevance of training to work, reported by employed completers, was 64% against the training package average of 78%, moderate and consistent with a broad entry-level qualification not tied to a single occupation.[D7]

Certificate III in Business

The Certificate III in Business is the central business qualification with the largest learner cohort across FTB. It is designed to prepare people for entry-level administrative and clerical roles across any industry, and training to occupation pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for a wide span of roles including general clerk, order clerk, receptionist and secretary, with progression pathways into bookkeeping, accounts and sales support.[D11] At around 67,000 enrolments in 2024, it is the largest VET qualification in the FTB remit.[D5] Enrolments grew more than fourfold between 2021 and 2023 as the current version replaced the earlier versions, and have since stabilised at high volume.[D5]

The completion rate for the superseded version, on the 2019 commencing cohort, was 48%, below the BSB training package average of 50%.[D6] Student outcomes data for completers is more positive on employment. Employment-related reasons motivated 66% of enrolments, close to the training package average of 71%.[D7] 80% of completers achieved their main reason for training, in line with the package average of 83%, and 79% were employed or in further study after training against a package average of 86%.[D7] Relevance of training to work, reported by employed completers, was 71%, below the package average of 78%.[D7]

The gap between the qualification's intended purpose and its actual use is the recurring theme in stakeholder evidence. Feedback gathered through the FSO Workforce Roadshows recorded detailed accounts that the qualification, and the closely related Certificate IV, are being used by school students to obtain early higher education entry rather than to prepare for administrative work, with reports of students dropping Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) subjects in favour of a VET pathway that delivers an equivalent entry score.

The same feedback held that the business qualifications have become so broad that the credential has lost meaning to employers, and that learners and employers find the qualification streams confusing. This is RTO and provider evidence rather than employer demand evidence, and it speaks to qualification design and purpose rather than to a discrete content gap. Read together with its position as the single largest qualification in this remit, this points toward a redesign or clearer differentiation of the business qualification suite rather than a communication fix alone.

Certificate IV in Business

The Certificate IV in Business is designed for administrative roles carrying greater autonomy. Training to occupation pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for general clerk roles, with progression into office manager, executive assistant, contract administrator and project administrator roles.[D11] Enrolments in 2024 were 20,160.[D5] The completion rate for the superseded version, on the 2019 commencing cohort, was 55%, above the BSB training package average of 50%.[D6]

Student outcomes data for completers is the strongest in the group. Employment-related reasons motivated 70% of enrolments, just below the training package average of 71%; 85% achieved their main reason for training, above the package average of 83%; and 90% were employed or in further study after training, above the package average of 86%.[D7] Relevance of training to work, reported by employed completers, was 76%, close to the package average of 78%.[D7]

The higher education access concern raised about the Certificate III applies most pointedly to the Certificate IV, where stakeholder evidence gathered through the FSO Workforce Roadshows reported the qualification being used specifically to secure early tertiary entry.

Diploma of Business

The Diploma of Business is designed for roles combining administrative responsibility with management content. Training to occupation pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for office manager, customer service manager and executive assistant roles, with specialised and progression pathways into analyst and management roles.[D11] Enrolments in 2024 were 28,580, the second-largest volume in the group.[D5] The completion rate for the superseded version, on the 2019 commencing cohort, was 53%, above the BSB training package average of 50%.[D6]

Student outcomes data for completers shows a more study-oriented enrolment than the certificates: 46% cited employment-related reasons and 40% cited study-related reasons, the highest study motivation in the group, consistent with a qualification that often is a bridge to higher-level study.[D7] Among completers, 83% achieved their main reason for training, in line with the package average of 83%, and 89% were employed or in further study after training, above the package average of 86%.[D7] Relevance of training to work, reported by employed completers, was 64% against the package average of 78%, moderate for a qualification spanning both administrative and management content.[D7]

Advanced Diploma of Business

The Advanced Diploma of Business is designed for senior administrative and corporate services roles. Training to occupation pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for corporate services manager and corporate general manager roles, with specialised pathways into management consulting and data roles.[D11] Enrolments in 2024 were 3,210, the smallest in the group, delivered through a narrower market of 198 RTOs.[D5]

The completion rate for the superseded version, on the 2019 commencing cohort, was 41%, the lowest in the group and well below the BSB training package average of 50%.[D6] A completion rate this far below the package average is notable, and for a senior qualification it may reflect cohort characteristics, with learners who are already in work exiting after targeted skills development. Student outcomes data for completers of the current qualification is largely suppressed because of small sample sizes and cannot be reported reliably, which itself limits what can be concluded about how well the qualification serves its learners.[D7]

Higher education context

The broad higher education field of management and commerce spans the content of several qualifications in this group rather than mapping to any single one. Domestic bachelor commencements in the field fell from approximately 43,000 in 2019 to approximately 37,000 in 2024, a sustained decline over the period.[D8] Graduate employment outcomes remain strong: medium-term employment for business and management graduates was 94% in 2024, above the all-fields average of 91%.[D8]

The pattern is a shrinking higher education pipeline in a broad field whose graduates continue to find work, set against a VET pipeline that holds at high volume. This points to VET taking a growing share of supply into the administrative and management-support roles these qualifications serve.

Skills and knowledge changes

AI is reshaping the work these qualifications prepare people for more directly than in any other part of FTB. The occupations covered here concentrate at the high end of generative AI exposure: most score above 0.6 on both automation and augmentation, and several, including keyboard operators, filing clerks and call centre workers, sit higher still on automation.[D4] The pattern is consistent rather than scattered, which is what makes it a structural change rather than a marginal one.

Generative AI exposure scores describe potential rather than realised impact, but the corroboration across sources is strong. The workforce projections show the same clerical roles contracting or losing supply, and national assessments of AI exposure place general clerks and receptionists among the most automatable occupations in the economy.

The change has two distinct patterns dependant on occupation area. For routine clerical roles, automation is the dominant pressure: the data entry, transcription, scheduling and document-handling tasks that define these jobs are the tasks current tools perform most readily, and the occupations are contracting accordingly.[D4,D2] For the roles built around judgement and coordination, such as office managers and customer service managers, augmentation dominates: generative AI accelerates the work without removing the need for the worker, shifting the task mix toward oversight, exception handling and managing AI-enabled processes.

The skill implication differs by role. Workers in the contracting clerical occupations need pathways into adjacent roles that are growing, while workers in the augmented roles need the capability to direct and supervise AI-supported work. In both cases the capability at issue is a general one, applicable across occupations rather than tied to a single job.

Digital and AI capability is emerging as a generalist skill within this training package. Employer and industry body feedback gathered through consultation framed business and workplace skills as a productivity and workforce participation issue rather than an optional extra, with human skills, business acumen, digital literacy and practical workplace readiness valued together. The same feedback distinguished generalist skills, meaning the cross-occupation capabilities that apply across roles, from specialist skills, and pointed to a need to identify and develop the generalist set deliberately rather than leaving it diffused across many products.

Digital and AI capability appears to sit within that generalist set, rather than as a specialist technical skill. The Generalist Skills Review now underway is looking at this distinction further and will help inform how it is addressed.

Implications for action

The Generalist Skills Review may anchor further work in this Business qualifications group. The defining skill need across these occupations is generalist rather than specialist, and these qualifications are the system's broadest entry products requiring that capability. The Uplift Digital Capability project is the complementary mechanism for building and delivering the digital component which can be used within these qualifications.

The system lacks a clear pathway for existing clerical workers to move into adjacent administrative and management-supporting roles that are growing.[D3,D4] These qualifications prepare new entrants for clerical roles that are contracting or being reshaped by automation, but offer no route from those roles into the administrative and management-support roles that are growing. Tracking where clerical workers move next would show whether that pathway needs to be built into the products.

Cluster 4: Entrepreneurship and Small Business

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate III in Entrepreneurship and New Business · Certificate IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business

Summary

Small businesses make up the overwhelming majority of Australian enterprises and are the engine of new-business formation, yet the people starting and running them are among the hardest to reach through conventional training. Around 97% of Australian businesses are small, more than 63% have no employees, and approximately 437,000 new businesses started in 2024–25 alone.[58] The two qualifications covered here exist to build the skills those founders and owner-managers need.

The Certificate III and Certificate IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business are built to help people start and run their own businesses, not to place graduates into a defined job. That purpose shapes everything about how these qualifications' performance should be read. The training teaches founding and operating a venture, and the graduate's destination is a business of their own.

Enrolments have grown modestly when the superseded small and micro-business qualifications are counted alongside the current ones. On a like-for-like basis that combines the current and superseded versions, enrolments rose from around 8,300 in 2020 to around 10,000 in 2024, dipping to about 6,800 in 2022 before recovering.[D5] Most of the apparent surge in the current qualifications reflects learners moving from the older micro-business and small-business qualifications the Certificate III and IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business replaced, rather than wholly new demand.

The education and training picture covers the two qualifications and the way generative AI is reshaping how new businesses are started.

- Certificate III in Entrepreneurship and New Business is the entry qualification for people testing or launching a small venture or moving into self-employment. Enrolments grew sharply as the superseded Certificate III in Micro Business Operations closed out.
- Certificate IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business is the qualification for people developing and running an established small business. It draws the larger share of enrolments and consolidates two older small-business qualifications into one.

Occupational demand

No occupation in the national classification corresponds to this training, so there is no occupation-level demand to report. People who complete them move into self-employment, sole-trader work, or roles spread across the economy rather than into one trackable occupation.

The destination data shows wide dispersion across the economy. Of those who completed the Certificate III and were employed afterwards, only around 3 to 4% were working in the occupation the training was designed for, and for the Certificate IV the matched share was close to zero.[D13] For job-placement qualifications a result like this would signal a problem. For training aimed at starting a business it reflects the reality that founders end up in many different places, including running ventures that no occupation code captures.

Education and training trends

This section covers the Certificate III in Entrepreneurship and New Business and the Certificate IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business.

Enrolments have grown over four years when the superseded qualifications are counted. Combining the current and superseded qualifications for a like-for-like comparison, enrolments rose from around 8,300 in 2020 to around 10,000 in 2024, with a dip to about 6,800 in 2022 before recovering, and the Certificate IV is consistently the larger of the pair.[D5] The apparent surge in the current qualifications largely reflects learners shifting from the older micro-business and small-business qualifications they replaced, rather than new demand entering the system. Net of that shift, accredited entrepreneurship training has held its enrolment base and grown modestly.

Certificate III in Entrepreneurship and New Business

This is the entry-level qualification for people starting a small venture or moving into self-employment. It is delivered by 86 RTOs that hold it on their scope, according to the National Training Register.[D12] Enrolments climbed from 255 in 2021 to 4,040 in 2024.[D5] 86 providers for a qualification at this enrolment volume indicates a moderately distributed market with room for learner choice, though it is a thinner provider base than the larger business sector qualifications carry.

Completion sits below the national benchmark, on the evidence available from the superseded version. Four-year completion data exists only for the predecessor qualification, the Certificate III in Micro Business Operations, which recorded 48% for the 2019 commencing cohort and 42% for 2020, both below the national four-year VET completion average of around 51%.[D6] A rate at this level can reflect learners who enrol for specific skills without intending to finish, or the time pressures on people already trying to start a business. It is not on its own evidence of a content problem.

Learners come for employment reasons and mostly get what they came for, but the post-training measures read low against a job-placement yardstick. Among completers, 80% enrolled for employment-related reasons and 89% achieved their main reason for training, both at or above the business sector averages of 71% and 83%.[D7] After training, 74% were employed or in further study, below the sector average of 86%, and of those employed, 66% found the training relevant to their work, below the sector average of 78%.[D7] Against a job-placement benchmark those figures read poorly, but as measures of business formation they capture an outcome the qualification was never built to produce, since a graduate who starts a venture may not register as conventionally employed and may rate job relevance differently from a jobseeker.

Certificate IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business

This is the qualification for people developing and running an established small business, and it carries the larger enrolment share. It is delivered by 132 RTOs holding it on their scope.[D12] Enrolments rose from 590 in 2021 to 5,985 in 2024.[D5] The larger provider base and higher enrolment volume point to a healthier market than the Certificate III, with delivery spread broadly rather than concentrated in a few providers.

Completion data from the two superseded qualifications it replaced points in different directions. The Certificate IV in New Small Business recorded 38% completion for the 2019 cohort and 24% for 2020, while the Certificate IV in Small Business Management recorded 81% and 75% for the same cohorts.[D6] The wide gap reflects different learner cohorts and delivery models in the two predecessors rather than a single trend, and four-year data for the current qualification is not yet available. The low end of that range sits well below the national average and warrants attention as completion data for the current qualification matures.

Employment motivation is very high and largely met, while job-relevance again reads below the sector benchmark. Among completers, 92% enrolled for employment-related reasons, the highest of any qualification discussed here and well above the sector average of 71%, and 87% achieved their main reason.[D7] After training, 79% were employed or in further study and, of those employed, 73% found the training relevant to their work, both below the sector averages.[D7] The same interpretation applies as for the Certificate III: a graduate who starts a business is not well described by measures built around finding a job.

Higher education context

Higher education has no field of study dedicated to entrepreneurship. The closest is broad business and management study, which spans far more than new-business creation and cannot be read as a pipeline into self-employment. Domestic commencing full-time equivalent enrolments in business and management remained broadly flat over the past decade, at around 9,600 in 2024.[D8] It provides general management grounding rather than the venture-formation focus these VET qualifications carry.

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is changing how new businesses are started, which bears on the currency of what these qualifications teach. Generative and no-code tools now let a single founder handle work that recently required a team or technical co-founder, and the harder skill has shifted toward defining the problem clearly and orchestrating tools rather than executing every task by hand. Participants at the FSO Workforce Roadshows captured the same shift, noting that AI opens up new routes into business and asking for training that connects to how ventures actually run today.

Stakeholders describe the current qualifications as practice-light and, in places, mislabelled. Employers and providers at the FSO Workforce Roadshows argued the training should have learners actively building a venture rather than studying the idea of one and described the qualification title itself as misleading about what the training delivers.

Digital and AI capability for small business owners is the dominant theme in the wider evidence. Employer and peak-body consultation identifies digital and AI capability as the top concern for owner-managers, with adoption among small businesses running well behind larger firms.[59,60] Most of the response to that concern runs through non-accredited programs, government support, and private initiatives rather than these two qualifications, which matters when weighing what accredited training can and should carry.

Implications for action

The evidence supports reviewing whether these qualifications reflect how businesses are now started, particularly the use of AI and digital tools in venture formation. This is a content-currency question rather than a gap in provision, and the stakeholder signal is consistent on direction but thin on which specific units or outcomes need to change. Confirming that would require targeted intelligence from learners and employers who have used these products.

The deeper issue is that the system measures these qualifications against the wrong outcome. Completion, post-training employment, and job relevance were built for job-placement training and understate qualifications whose purpose is business formation, and no current data links completers to the businesses they start or to whether those survive.

Cluster 5: Human Resources

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Human Resource Management · Diploma of Human Resource Management · Advanced Diploma of Human Resource Management

Summary

Every human resources occupation has grown over the past decade, but that growth masks a shift underway: generative AI is concentrating on the transactional work that the entry-level qualification trains for, changing the roles it leads to. The four occupations covered here all increased in employment between 2016 and 2025. The roles with the highest generative AI automation exposure are the clerical and recruitment functions at the entry of the occupational structure.

Workforce projections point to comfortable supply for most occupations, with one clear exception. Human Resource Professionals are projected to move into a sizeable surplus by 2035. Human Resource Managers, Training and Development Professionals and Human Resource Clerks face modest projected shortfalls between supply and demand, though none currently appears on the formal skills shortage list.

Talent acquisition is emerging as a distinct area of work and specialisation within human resources. Recruitment-related tasks are among the most exposed functions within human resources to generative AI. The recruitment function is separating from generalist human resources practice as a specialisation in its own right.

The three qualifications serve distinct purposes and ladder onto the occupational structure:

- Certificate IV in Human Resource Management is the entry qualification for clerical and administrative roles. It carries the strongest stakeholder concern about content and the lowest completion rate of the three.
- Diploma of Human Resource Management is the qualification for advisory and recruitment roles. It produces strong completer outcomes and prepares learners for the part of the workforce where demand is most secure.
- Advanced Diploma of Human Resource Management is a small qualification feeding managerial roles. Enrolments are low and declining.

Completer outcomes are strong across all three qualifications, and the profession maintains its own capability standard alongside the VET system. The Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) publishes a capability framework and professional certification that sit above formal qualifications as a marker of ongoing professional standing.[61]

Occupational demand

Human Resource Managers are the largest occupation covered here and one of the faster-growing management roles across the FTB sectors, nearly doubling in a decade. Employment rose from approximately 51,300 in 2016 to 95,000 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching approximately 113,000 by 2035 against supply of approximately 109,000, a supply gap of approximately 3,900.[D3]

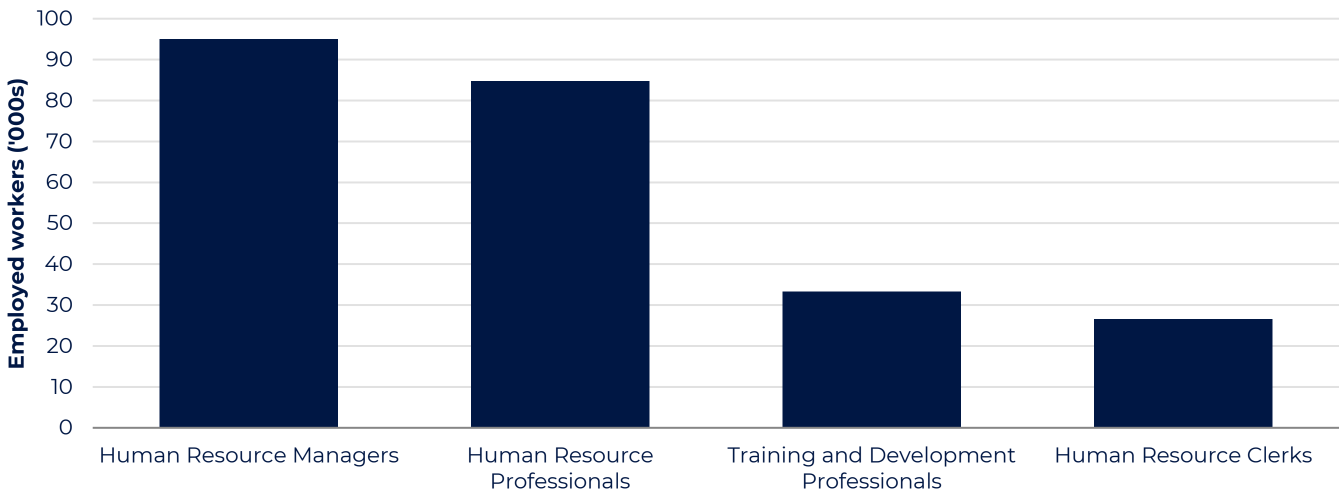

Figure 43: *Human Resources occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Higher education is the most common highest qualification held for this role, at 52%, with VET qualifications the highest qualification for a further 36%.[D2] The occupation moved from gender balanced to moderately female dominated[D9] over the decade, and women held 59% of these roles in 2025.[D2] AI automation exposure is low at 0.36 and augmentation exposure is medium at 0.66,[D4] a pattern of a role built on judgement, negotiation and stakeholder decisions where generative AI accelerates output without displacing the reasoning behind it.

Human Resource Professionals are projected to move into substantial oversupply by 2035, the largest projected surplus of any occupation covered here. This group includes human resource advisers, recruitment consultants and workplace relations advisers. It grew from approximately 64,100 in 2016 to 84,800 in 2025.[D2] Demand is projected to reach approximately 103,000 by 2035 while supply reaches approximately 132,000, a surplus of approximately 29,000.[D3]

Higher education is the highest qualification held for 49% of this workforce and VET qualifications for 32%.[D2] The role is moderately female dominated,[D9] with women holding 73% in 2025.[D2] AI automation exposure is medium at 0.51 and augmentation exposure is also medium at 0.68.[D4]

The recruitment function within this group is where the change is sharpest. Talent acquisition is the single most common workplace use of generative AI, with screening, sourcing and scheduling now routinely automated.[62] This is pulling recruitment apart from generalist human resources work into a specialisation focused on interpreting tool outputs and managing the parts of hiring that tools cannot.

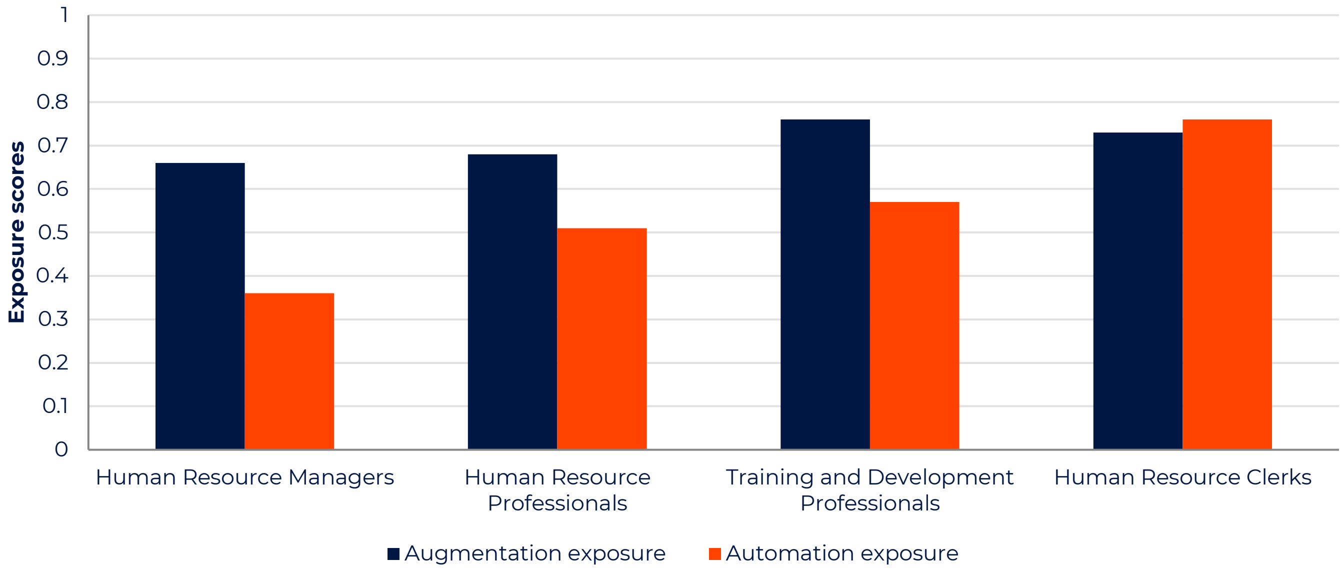

Figure 44: *Human Resources occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Training and Development Professionals are growing steadily but face the largest projected supply gap of the four occupations. Employment rose from approximately 23,600 in 2016 to 33,300 in 2025.[D2] Demand is projected to reach approximately 37,000 by 2035 against supply of approximately 24,000, a supply gap of approximately 12,400.[D3]

This is one of two occupations covered here where VET qualifications are the highest qualification held for a larger share of the workforce than higher education (Human Resource Clerks, below, is the other) at 43% against 40%.[D2] AI augmentation exposure is the highest of the four at 0.76 and automation exposure sits lower at 0.57,[D4] indicating a role where the task mix is shifting toward the work that tools support.

Human Resource Clerks have doubled in size over the decade and have the highest generative AI automation exposure of any human resources occupation. Employment rose from approximately 11,600 in 2016 to 26,600 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching approximately 26,000 by 2035 against supply of approximately 18,000, a supply gap of approximately 8,000.[D3]

VET qualifications are the highest qualification held for 42% of this workforce, the largest single channel, with higher education at 27%.[D2] The role is highly female dominated,[D9] with women holding 77% in 2025,[D2] the most gender concentrated of the four.[D9] Both exposure scores are high, with automation at 0.76 and augmentation at 0.73,[D4] the pattern of a role whose transactional core is open to substitution while its relational tasks are supported. The combination of a projected supply gap and high generative AI automation exposure suggests the gap may narrow as tools absorb part of the workload, rather than widening into an acute shortage.

Education and training trends

The qualifications covered in this section are the Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Human Resource Management. Higher education provision relevant to human resources sits within broader management and commerce study and cannot be separated out as a distinct field.

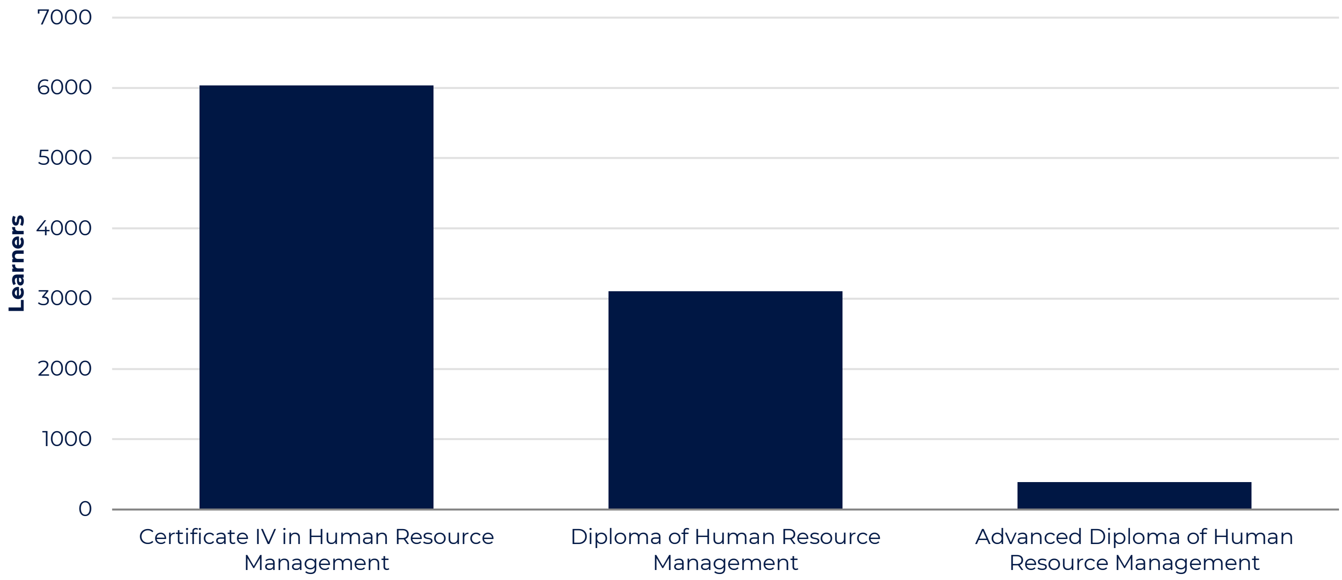

Figure 45: *Human Resources: VET and higher education enrolments, 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

The enrolment pattern shown reflects the replacement of the superseded qualifications with their current versions, which is now complete. The steep climb from 2020 to 2022 is learners moving onto the new qualifications, not new demand. Read from 2023, the Certificate IV is the volume qualification, the Diploma sits at roughly half its size, and the Advanced Diploma is a small and declining market.

Certificate IV in Human Resource Management

The Certificate IV is the entry qualification for clerical and administrative human resources roles. It develops learners into occupation-ready human resources administrators, with progression pathways into adviser, payroll and workplace relations roles.[D11] Delivery is broadly distributed, with 88 RTOs holding the qualification on their scope according to the National Training Register, a healthy provider market for a qualification of this size.[D12] Enrolments in the current qualification reached approximately 6,035 in 2024.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 42% for the 2020 commencing cohort, below the national VET average of 51%.[D6] A below-average completion rate alone does not by itself indicate a content problem. It may reflect qualification laddering, where learners move on before completing, or the characteristics of a largely employed cohort studying alongside work.

Student outcomes for completers are strong. Almost all completers enrolled for employment-related reasons, at 92%, well above the BSB training package average of 71%.[D7] Of those completers, 80% achieved their main reason for training, a touch below the training package average of 83%, and 93% were employed or in further study after training, above the average of 86%.[D7] Among employed completers, 79% found their training relevant to their work, close to the training package average of 78%.[D7]

Stakeholder evidence points to a design concern at this level. Industry body feedback through the FSO Workforce Roadshows identified that a core unit on developing critical thinking in others carries no prerequisite, leaving learners required to demonstrate a capability they have not yet been taught to develop in themselves. This is a sequencing and prerequisite design issue rather than a question of whether the content is current. The relevance and goal-achievement measures themselves are close to the training package average, within the range typical of survey variation, so the outcomes data alone does not point to a content problem.

Diploma of Human Resource Management

The Diploma is the qualification for advisory and recruitment roles. It confirms learners as occupation-ready for human resources administration and recruitment consultant roles, with progression pathways into adviser, manager and workplace relations roles.[D11] It has the widest provider base of the three, with 92 RTOs holding it on their scope, indicating a well-supplied market.[D12] Enrolments in the current qualification reached approximately 3,100 in 2024.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 53% for the 2020 commencing cohort, slightly above the national VET average.[D6] Completer outcomes are the strongest of the three qualifications on most measures. Employment-related motivation was 90%, achievement of the main reason for training was 85%, above the training package average, and 95% of completers were employed or in further study after training.[D7] Among employed completers, 87% found their training relevant to their work, well above the training package average.[D7] This qualification trains learners for the advisory and recruitment roles where demand is most secure, and its outcomes data shows it doing so effectively.

Advanced Diploma of Human Resource Management

The Advanced Diploma feeds managerial and senior advisory roles, confirming learners as occupation-ready for human resources manager, human resources adviser and workplace relations adviser roles.[D11] It is a small qualification: 32 RTOs hold it on their scope, and enrolments in the current qualification were 390 in 2024, down from a peak of approximately 615 in 2022.[D12,D5] This is a thin and contracting market, which limits learner choice.

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 68% for the 2020 commencing cohort, well above the national VET average and the highest of the three qualifications, consistent with a smaller, more committed and often employer-sponsored cohort.[D6] Completer outcomes are strong: 93% employed or in further study, and 91% of employed completers finding their training relevant to their work, the highest relevance result of the three.[D7]

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is reshaping the human resources task mix from the bottom of the occupational structure upward. The clerical and recruitment functions show the highest generative AI automation exposure, while managerial and advisory roles show high augmentation and low automation.[D4] The skill implication is a shift away from processing tasks toward interpreting tool outputs and exercising the judgement that human resources decisions still require.

Recruitment is the most advanced example of this shift and is becoming a specialisation in its own right. Screening, sourcing, scheduling and job-ad generation are now widely automated, and talent acquisition is the leading workplace application of these tools.[62] Australian labour market analysis has flagged that automated recruitment can entrench bias unless practitioners can interrogate how the tools shortlist, which points to a new analytical and ethical skill requirement for recruitment and adviser roles.[63]

The profession maintains its own capability standard alongside the VET system. The AHRI, the professional body for human resources in Australia, publishes a capability framework defining the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of practitioners from early career to senior leadership, refreshed in response to rising complexity in employee relations and growing personal liability for workplace decisions.[61] It accredits courses against that framework and offers a professional certification that sits above formal qualifications as a marker of ongoing professional standing. The framework is an industry-aligned reference point rather than a competitor to the VET qualifications, but the VET qualifications are not visibly mapped to it, which leaves their relationship to the recognised professional standard unclear to learners and employers.

Workplace relations and work health and safety obligations are changing in ways that affect adviser and manager roles. Emerging regulation of algorithmic management, including a proposed New South Wales duty of care covering digital work systems, would extend work health and safety obligations to AI-managed work, and workplace tribunals are issuing guidance on the disclosure of generative AI in proceedings.[30] These developments add regulatory knowledge requirements for workplace relations advisers and human resource managers.

Implications for action

Two content questions warrant monitoring: whether entry-level training keeps pace as automation absorbs the transactional work it teaches, and whether the qualifications align to the profession's own capability standard. The first is whether the entry-level content keeps pace as automation absorbs transactional work: the Certificate IV trains for the clerical and recruitment tasks most exposed to substitution, and the analytical and ethical skills now required for AI-assisted recruitment are an area to watch. The second is the alignment between the VET qualifications and the profession's capability standard, which would benefit from further engagement with the professional body and practitioners.

Cluster 6: Leadership and Management

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Leadership and Management · Diploma of Leadership and Management · Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management · Graduate Diploma of Management (Learning) · Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership

Higher education fields of education in scope: Business and Management, within the broader Management and Commerce field of education

Summary

Management roles across Australia are growing, and the people who fill them often hold a qualification before they arrive. The five management occupations covered here employed roughly 332,000 workers in 2025, up from around 227,700 a decade earlier.[D2] These are senior and professional roles: most holders enter with a degree, and the VET leadership and management qualifications largely serve people who are already working and want to move into or up within management.[D2]

Demand is projected to keep rising, producing supply shortfalls in four of the five occupations by 2035. Chief Executives and Managing Directors, General Managers, Corporate Services Managers and Other Specialist Managers are each expected to face a gap between projected demand and supply, driven by employment growth of 14% to 22% over the decade.[D3] The exception is Management and Organisation Analysts, the largest occupation, where supply is projected to grow faster than demand.[D3]

These are judgement-intensive roles that AI is likely to reshape. Every occupation here scores high on the potential exposure for generative AI to augment the work and low to moderate on the potential to automate it.[D4] Managing the adoption of AI is itself becoming a core management skill.

Strong management capability is increasingly understood as a driver of national productivity. Australian and international evidence links better management practice to higher labour productivity, and a people management skills deficit has become a named priority in the national productivity debate. The 2026 Workforce Plan: Mixed Signals, Future Opportunities, includes further details regarding the critical nature of leadership capability.

The education and training picture divides along clear lines:

- The Certificate IV and Diploma of Leadership and Management are an upskilling pathway into and within management, taken overwhelmingly by people already in work, moving from individual-contributor or frontline roles into supervision and management.
- The Diploma of Leadership and Management leads VET market provision, with the widest provider base and the largest enrolment volume of the leadership and management suite, and it draws the most sustained stakeholder comment about cost, access and structure.
- The two Graduate Diploma level qualifications occupy defined niches, sitting alongside, rather than competing with, higher education postgraduate coursework.
- Higher education supplies the professional and executive tier. Bachelor and postgraduate study in business and management feeds the corporate general manager, chief executive and analyst roles, and the postgraduate pipeline is growing and heavily international.

Completer outcomes are strong, but completion rates sit slightly below the VET average. Workers who finish report employment-focused motivations, high rates of achieving what they enrolled for, and strong relevance of training to their work, all above the BSB training package average.[D7]

Occupational demand

The five management occupations covered here range from management and organisation analysts at over 109,000 workers, to corporate services managers at around 23,000. All five grew over the past decade, and all are concentrated in the kind of judgement, interpretation and stakeholder work that AI supports rather than substitutes.

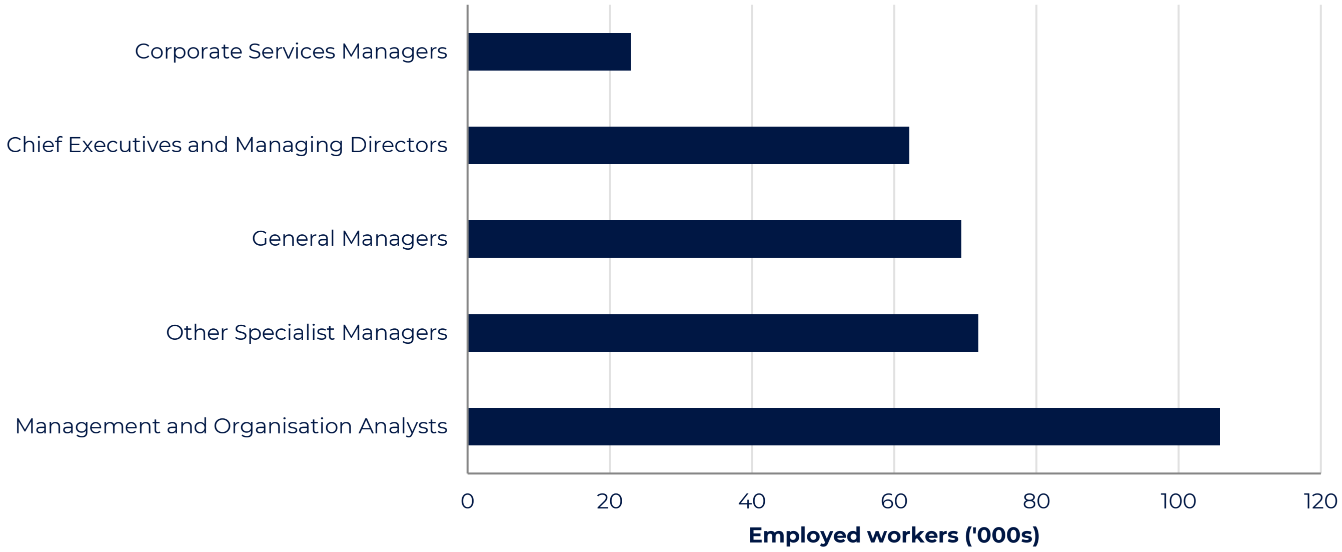

Figure 46: *Leadership and Management occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Management and Organisation Analysts are the largest management occupation in this analysis and one of the fastest growing across the FTB sectors, reaching 105,800 workers in 2025.[D2] The occupation nearly doubled from approximately 63,300 in 2016, a sustained climb with no interruption across the decade.[D2] Projected demand grows another 27% to 2035, the strongest of the five occupations here.[D3]

Supply is projected to grow faster still, leaving a surplus of approximately 9,300 workers by 2035.[D3] This is the only occupation covered here where projected supply outpaces demand. The result reflects a steady inflow of graduates rather than weak demand: the role continues to expand, but the pipeline expands faster.

Most workers enter through higher education, held as the highest qualification by 72% of the workforce against 19% through VET, which feeds this occupation more than VET does.[D2] The occupation is gender balanced,[D9] with women making up 48% of the workforce in 2025.[D2]

Of the five occupations in this cluster, this carries the highest generative AI exposure scores, at 0.73 for augmentation and a medium score of 0.53 for automation.[D4] This indicates that the transactional parts of the work, such as data preparation and standard reporting, may face substitution by current AI tools, while the interpretive and advisory parts are supported rather than displaced. The likely effect is a shift in the task mix toward the analytical and client-facing work that defines the role.

Other Specialist Managers numbered 71,800 in 2025, growing from approximately 50,000 in 2016 and spanning a group that includes quality assurance, environmental, laboratory and regulatory affairs managers.[D2] Projected demand rises 20% to 2035, producing a supply gap of approximately 8,000 workers driven by that demand growth.[D3]

Women make up 43% of the workforce,[D2] placing the occupation in the gender-balanced band,[D9] and higher education is the main route in, held by 54% of the workforce, with VET study a secondary channel at 32%.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores of 0.70 for augmentation and 0.36 for automation[D4] place these managers among roles where AI may accelerate outputs without substituting for the judgement that gives those outputs meaning.

General Managers reached 69,400 in 2025, up from approximately 47,800 in 2016 after strong expansion through the late 2010s.[D2] Projected demand grows 14% to 2035, producing a supply gap of approximately 10,000 workers.[D3]

Women make up 33% of the workforce in 2025,[D2] a moderately male dominated profile,[D9] and the higher education route into the role has grown over the decade.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores of 0.66 for augmentation and 0.31 for automation[D4] suggest that AI may raise output expectations or change the makeup of the role, without reducing the need for the role.

Chief Executives and Managing Directors employed 60,200 workers in 2025, a figure that has recovered rather than grown over the decade.[D2] The occupation sat at approximately 55,300 in 2016, fell to around 45,400 by 2020, then climbed to 62,100, ending the decade close to where it started.[D2] Projected demand grows 14% to 2035, producing a supply gap of approximately 10,100 workers.[D3]

This occupation has the highest annual rate of workers leaving among the five, reflecting retirement and career exit at the top of organisations, which compounds the demand-driven gap.[D3] Most enter through higher education, and the occupation is highly male dominated,[D9] with women making up 31% of the workforce in 2025.[D2]

Generative AI exposure scores of 0.67 for augmentation and 0.26 for automation[D4] are consistent with a role concentrated in strategic decision-making, where AI supports analysis and communication but cannot substitute for accountability.

Corporate Services Managers are the fastest-growing management occupation covered here, more than doubling from approximately 11,300 in 2016 to 22,900 in 2025.[D2] Projected demand grows 22% to 2035, producing a supply gap of approximately 3,800 workers, the smallest of the four gaps in absolute terms but proportionally significant given the occupation's size.[D3]

This occupation has the strongest VET route into management of the five, and is the only one here where women form a clear majority of the workforce, at 66% in 2025,[D2] within the gender-balanced band on the segregation scale.[D9] Generative AI exposure scores of 0.71 for augmentation and 0.46 for automation[D4] reflect the administrative and coordination tasks within the role that current AI tools can take on, alongside the management judgement they cannot.[D4]

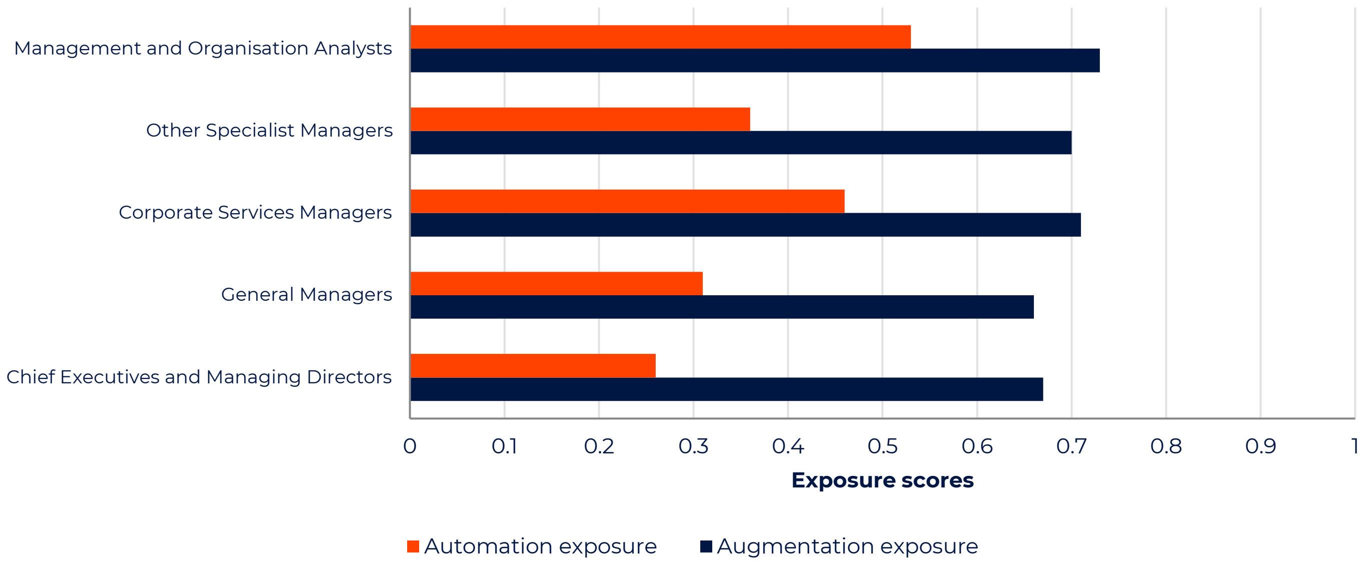

Figure 47: *Leadership and Management occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers five VET qualifications, the Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management and the Graduate Diploma of Management (Learning) and Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership, alongside higher education study in business and management.

A point of interpretation applies throughout. The share of each occupation whose highest qualification is VET understates the role these qualifications play, because a worker who completes a degree and later takes a VET Leadership and Management qualification to move into management is still counted in the higher education share. These qualifications function as an upskilling pathway into and within management, used by people already in the workforce regardless of the level they previously reached, and the great majority of enrolees are employed when they study.[D5]

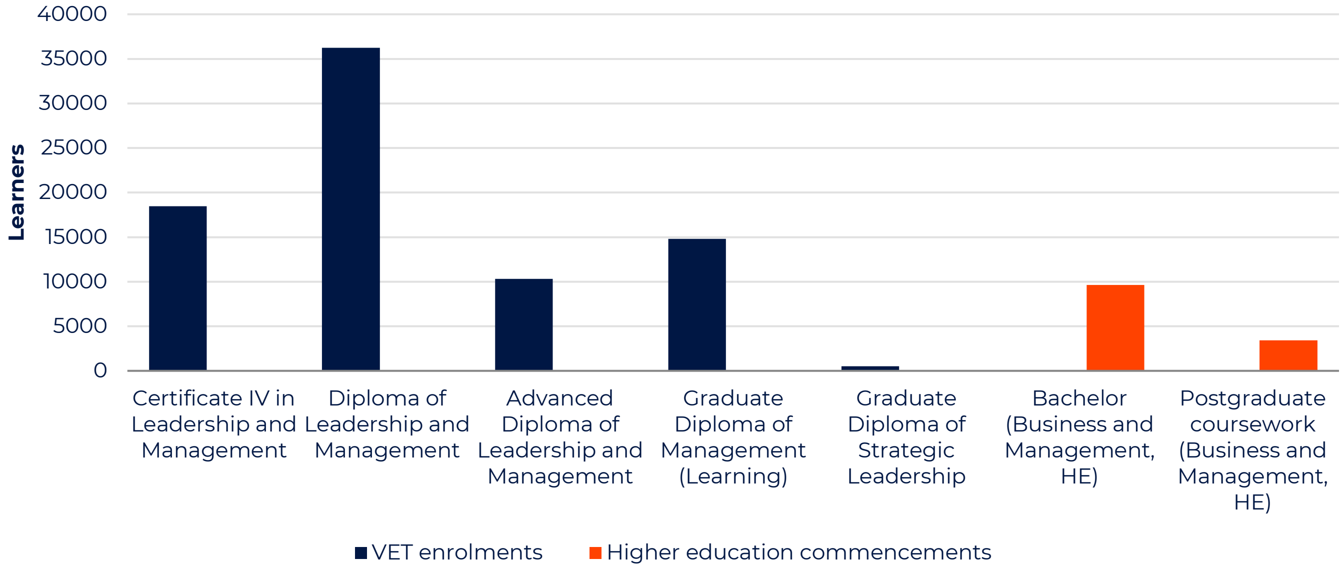

Figure 48: *Leadership and Management VET and higher education learners, 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

Certificate IV in Leadership and Management

The Certificate IV in Leadership and Management prepares workers for their first formal supervisory and management roles, covering team leadership, operational planning and people management. It supports workers stepping up from individual-contributor or frontline positions into their first management role, and its learners are overwhelmingly already employed.

In 2024 the qualification recorded 18,420 enrolments, having taken over from its superseded version as the current qualification from 2021 onward.[D5] Of learners whose labour force status is known, around 94% were already employed, confirming the qualification's role in upskilling working people rather than preparing new entrants.[D5] Delivery is broadly distributed: 458 RTOs hold the qualification on their scope according to the National Training Register, indicating a competitive provider market with wide learner access rather than concentration among a few large providers.[D12]

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort, which reflects the superseded version of the qualification, was 48%, slightly below the national VET average of 51% and the BSB training package average of 51%.[D6] A completion rate below the average alongside strong completer outcomes does not by itself point to a quality problem. It is consistent with working learners drawing units from across the leadership and management suite without completing a full qualification, a pattern stakeholders described directly.

Student outcomes for completers are strong. Employment-related reasons motivated 90% of enrolments, well above the BSB training package figure of 71%, confirming this is a workforce-focused qualification.[D7] Of completers, 89% achieved their main reason for training, and 96% were employed or in further study afterward, both above package averages.[D7] Among employed completers, 92% found their training relevant to their work, against 78% for the package as a whole.[D7]

Stakeholders raised the Certificate IV consistently as the right level for workers moving into supervisory and operational management, and just as consistently raised access concerns. The qualification is not funded in every jurisdiction, which stakeholders said limits access for exactly the working learners it is designed for. The unmet need employers described was access to affordable, appropriately pitched leadership training at this level, where cost and funding settings keep it out of reach for many of the operational workers and smaller employers who want it.

Diploma of Leadership and Management

The Diploma of Leadership and Management prepares workers for substantive management roles, covering the leadership of teams and work areas, operational strategy and staffing decisions. It is the largest and most widely delivered qualification of the VET leadership pathway, and the evidence on management capability and productivity gives it particular weight.

The Diploma leads VET delivery in this area. In 2024 it recorded 36,185 enrolments, roughly double the Certificate IV, and 850 RTOs hold it on their scope, by far the widest provider base of any qualification covered here.[D5,D12] This is a large, actively traded qualification market with strong learner access, and the great majority of its enrolees are already employed.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort, reflecting the superseded version, was 49%, slightly below the national and package averages.[D6] Completer outcomes are strong: 84% enrolled for employment-related reasons, 88% achieved their main reason for training, 96% were employed or in further study afterward, and 92% of employed completers found their training relevant, the last two both above package averages.[D7]

The Diploma drew the most sustained stakeholder comment of any qualification covered here. Through the FSO Workforce Roadshows, stakeholders described it as too advanced for workers making their first move into leadership without prior management experience, and noted that younger workers in particular are not accessing it because it assumes a level of work and life experience they have not yet reached. The same stakeholders positioned the Certificate IV as the more appropriate first step.

The quality of management capability is linked to firm-level productivity. Australian evidence finds a positive and significant association between management capability and labour productivity,[64] international research attributes around 30% of productivity differences between firms to variations in management practice,[65] and the national productivity review has named a people management skills deficit as a priority for action.[53] A widely held qualification that much of its potential audience finds pitched above their stage of progression is a structural concern for building that capability at scale.

Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management

The Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management prepares experienced managers for senior leadership roles involving high-level autonomous decision-making and accountability for the work of others. It sits above the Diploma in scope and complexity.

In 2024 the qualification recorded 10,320 enrolments, and 458 RTOs hold it on their scope, a solid provider base for a senior qualification.[D5,D12] The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort, reflecting the superseded version, was 50%, close to the national and package averages and the highest of the three leadership and management qualifications at diploma level or below.[D6]

Completer outcomes remain strong, though slightly lower than for the Certificate IV and Diploma: 79% enrolled for employment-related reasons, 86% achieved their main reason for training, 93% were employed or in further study afterward, and 91% of employed completers found their training relevant.[D7] These figures sit above the BSB training package average across all four measures.

Graduate Diploma of Management (Learning)

The Graduate Diploma of Management (Learning) prepares specialists in organisational learning and capability development, including roles that design and lead major learning and development functions. It serves a defined professional niche rather than general management.

In 2024 the qualification recorded 14,810 enrolments, a larger volume than its niche purpose might suggest, and 482 RTOs hold it on their scope.[D5,D12] Enrolments have grown steadily since the current version replaced its superseded qualifications, indicating sustained demand for formal qualifications in the learning and development field.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort, reflecting a superseded version, was 48%, below the national and package averages.[D6] Completer outcomes are strong: 81% enrolled for employment-related reasons, 87% achieved their main reason for training, 90% were employed or in further study afterward, and 90% of employed completers found their training relevant.[D7]

Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership

The Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership prepares senior leaders for strategic and executive roles, including chief executive and corporate general manager positions. It is the most advanced VET qualification covered here.

The qualification serves a small, specialised audience. In 2024 it recorded 510 enrolments, by far the lowest of the five, and 67 RTOs hold it on their scope, a more limited provider base than the other qualifications here, consistent with low volume and a senior audience.[D5,D12] The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort, reflecting the superseded version, was 71%, well above the national and package averages and the highest of any qualification covered here, consistent with a small cohort of experienced and committed senior learners.[D6]

Completer outcomes are strong: 80% enrolled for employment-related reasons, 83% achieved their main reason for training, 96% were employed or in further study afterward, and 94% of employed completers found their training relevant.[D7] The small respondent base means these figures should be read as indicative.

Higher education in business and management

Higher education supplies the professional and executive tier of management more heavily than VET does, and for the larger occupations covered here it is the dominant channel. Domestic commencing bachelor enrolments in business and management stood at approximately 9,600 full-time equivalent places in 2024, a level that has been broadly flat over the decade.[D8] Postgraduate coursework tells a different story: the field is growing and is heavily weighted toward international students, with domestic commencing postgraduate enrolments at approximately 3,400 full-time equivalent places in 2024 against a much larger and rising international cohort.[D8]

Employment outcomes for business and management graduates are strong. Around 93% of domestic postgraduate completers seeking full-time work found it within about four months of finishing in 2023, above the all-fields average, and medium-term outcomes three years out sit higher still.[D8] The combination of a flat domestic bachelor pipeline, a growing internationally weighted postgraduate pipeline and strong graduate employment indicates a higher education channel meeting demand at the professional tier while leaving the move into operational and supervisory management largely to VET.

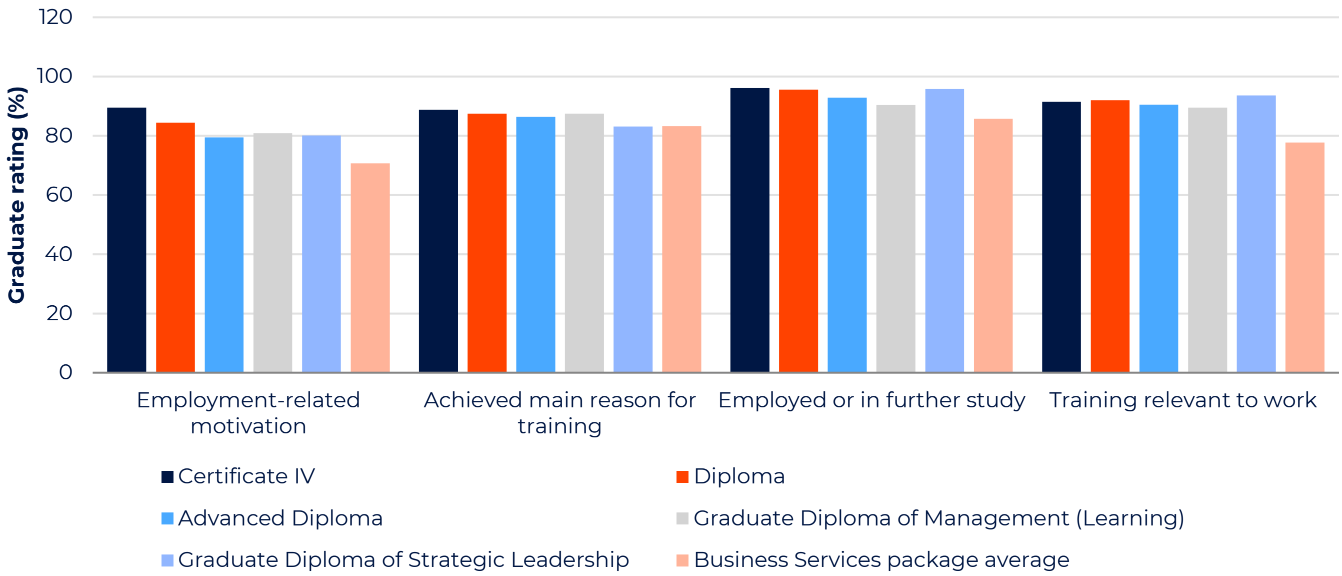

Figure 49: *Student outcomes for leadership and management VET qualifications against the BSB training package average.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Student Outcomes Survey data prepared for FSO.[D7]

Skills and knowledge changes

Three forces are reshaping what management roles require: the spread of AI through the work managers oversee, the shift to remote and hybrid arrangements, and a changing workforce composition that places new demands on workplace culture.

Managing the adoption of AI is emerging as a management skill in its own right. Across multiple jurisdictions, stakeholders in the FSO Workforce Roadshows described leadership challenges that did not exist a few years ago: overseeing work produced with AI tools, deciding where AI use is appropriate, managing staff anxiety about AI, and making ethical judgements about its integration. These are leadership capabilities rather than technical ones.

The ability to interrogate, validate and contextualise AI outputs was repeatedly described as a management competency. This aligns with the broader evidence that AI is augmenting professional and management work rather than replacing it, and that the binding constraint on realising productivity gains is workforce capability to apply AI rather than access to the technology.

Remote and hybrid work has changed the core leadership task. Stakeholders raised the need for explicit skills in building workplace culture across distributed teams, maintaining accountability without physical oversight, and managing workers across different arrangements, including those who cannot work from home. These were described as skills that now require deliberate development rather than skills managers acquire by default.

Managing across generations and shifting expectations of workplace culture is a growing capability need. Stakeholders raised this as a significant concern through the FSO Workforce Roadshows: managers increasingly lead teams that span several generations, with differing expectations about flexibility, communication, feedback and what a workplace should offer. Building and sustaining a shared culture across those differences, and adapting management style to it, is an explicit skill that current leadership and management training does not strongly address.

Employers want leadership content delivered in shorter, more flexible and more contextualised forms than full qualifications provide. Through the FSO Workforce Roadshows, stakeholders across jurisdictions called for greater skill set based delivery, particularly for small and medium enterprises and for mid-career workers seeking targeted uplift. Face-to-face and work-integrated delivery were identified as well suited to the relational nature of leadership development. A significant volume of leadership development occurs through non-accredited and informal training, with stakeholders also identifying skills recognition as a frequent gap.

Implications for action

The evidence points to a training product development need centred on structure and currency, not supply volume or content quality. Completer outcomes are strong and above the BSB training package average, so the case for action rests on alignment between what the qualifications offer and how working learners and employers need to consume it.

Stakeholders consistently identified the Certificate IV as the right first step into management while the Diploma sits above where much of the demand is, and they called for greater skill set based delivery that lets working learners and smaller employers access targeted leadership content without committing to a full qualification. The pattern of learners taking units without completing suggests the current full-qualification structure does not match how this content is used. Funding settings that leave the Certificate IV out of reach in some jurisdictions are an implementation matter beyond the scope of training product development, but they sharpen the case for accessible, stackable options.

The capabilities stakeholders flagged as newly important, leading the adoption of AI, managing distributed teams, and managing across generations and changing cultural expectations, are not yet strongly reflected in the qualifications. These are content questions with evidence consistent across FSO consultations, the AI exposure analysis and the productivity literature.

Cluster 7: Legal and Conveyancing

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate III in Legal Services · Certificate IV in Legal Services · Diploma of Paralegal Services · Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing

Higher education fields of education in scope: Law

Summary

The VET pathways in legal and conveyancing train the people who support legal practice rather than the lawyers who carry a practising certificate. Solicitors and Barristers enter through a law degree and supervised admission. The four VET qualifications here prepare Conveyancers and Legal Executives, and other legal roles, who work alongside admitted practitioners.

Solicitors are heading into oversupply while the smaller Conveyancers and Legal Executives, and Barrister occupations are contracting. Solicitors grew strongly over the past decade and are projected into substantial oversupply by 2035, while remaining in current shortage. Conveyancers and Barristers are smaller occupations facing supply contraction.

VET completers find work, but mostly not in the occupation their qualification targets. Around 82% to 88% of completers across the four VET qualifications are employed or studying further, yet for the three legal-services qualifications the share working in the intended occupation sits between roughly 4% and 25%. Conveyancing is the exception, where a licensed pathway channels completers into the role.

The education and training evidence divides along the same line:

- The Certificate III in Legal Services, Certificate IV in Legal Services, and Diploma of Paralegal Services prepare administrative and paralegal staff for law firms and legal departments. Delivery is thin and intended-occupation match is low.
- The Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing is the qualifying credential for licensed conveyancers in most states and territories. It shows the strongest relevance and occupation-match outcomes of the four, and the clearest content-currency pressure from generative AI and mandatory electronic conveyancing.

Occupational demand

Solicitors are the dominant occupation here and one of the faster-growing professional occupations across the FTB sectors, reaching 104,800 in 2025 from approximately 69,200 in 2016.[D2] Demand is projected to keep rising, to roughly 121,500 by 2035.[D3] Supply is projected to rise faster, to about 154,600, producing a surplus of approximately 33,100 by 2035.[D3] This is the largest projected oversupply of any occupation in this section.

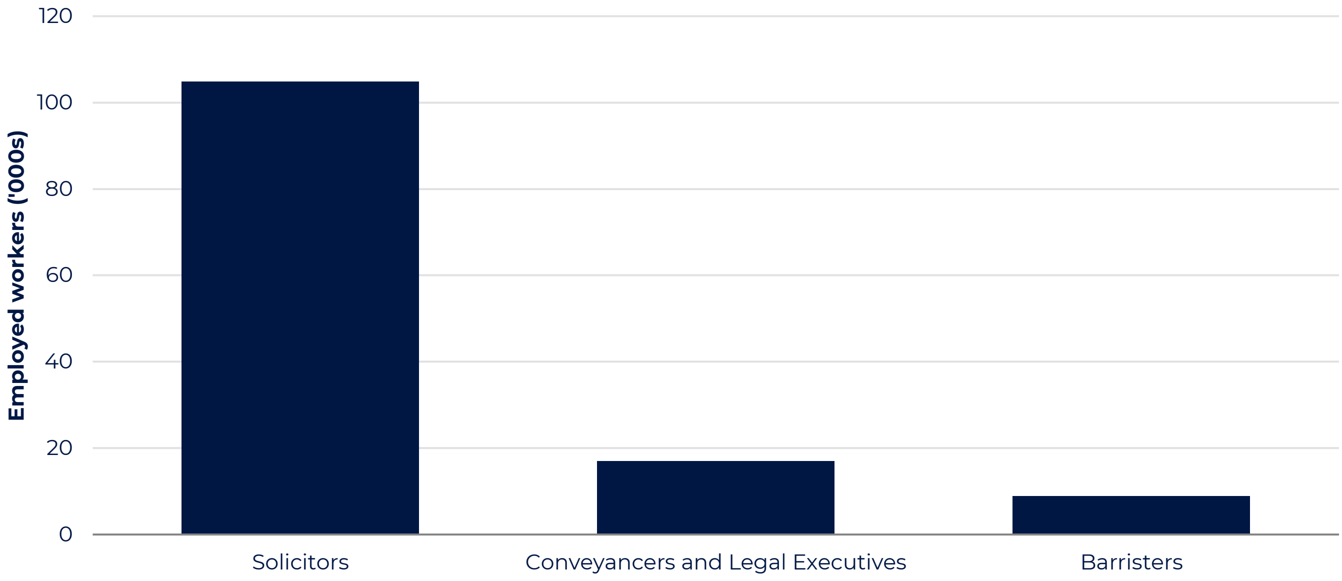

Figure 50: *Legal and Conveyancing occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

The most recent Occupational Shortage List records Solicitors in shortage, as did the prior year, with the shortage driver reclassified from a long training requirement to uncertain between the two years.[D10] Supply and demand are balanced in 2025, at about 100,200 each, and supply only pulls ahead from 2026 onward, widening year on year to the 2035 figure; the apparent conflict with the current shortage listing resolves once this trajectory is clear.[D3]

The position today is tight; the oversupply is a forward projection that builds over the decade. Independent profession data points the same way: the practising solicitor population reached 97,500 in 2024, up from 66,211 in 2014, while more than 15,000 law graduates now enter the market each year from around 40 law schools, far more than the profession absorbs into legal roles.[66,67]

Higher education is the supply mechanism for this occupation. A law degree is the highest qualification held by 83% of Solicitors, with VET the highest qualification for 16%.[D2] The VET qualifications in this section do not lead to this occupation. Solicitors are gender balanced,[D9] at 57% female in the workforce data,[D2] a shift in a historically male profession.

Generative AI exposure scores for Solicitors show medium augmentation at 0.61 and lower automation at 0.34.[D4] The occupation is built on judgement, interpretation, and client interaction. AI tools can accelerate drafting, research, and review, but cannot substitute for the legal reasoning that gives that work meaning. The practical effect is that practitioners can produce more, faster, which may raise output expectations without reducing the need for qualified lawyers.

Conveyancers and Legal Executives grew from approximately 13,000 in 2016 to 17,000 in 2025, and face a supply gap of approximately 5,400 by 2035.[D2,D3] The gap reflects supply contraction rather than rapid demand growth: demand rises modestly to about 21,000 while projected supply falls to roughly 15,700.[D3] Annual attrition is low, around 4%, so the contraction reflects a thinning entry pipeline more than workers leaving.[D3]

This is the one occupation in this section for which VET is a genuine entry route. A VET qualification is the highest credential held by 31% of the workforce and higher education by a further 30%, a more even split than for any other legal occupation.[D2] Conveyancing is licensed, and the licensing pathway gives the Advanced Diploma a direct line into the role.

The occupation is highly female dominated,[D9] at 78% female.[D2] Generative AI exposure is the highest of the three occupations in this cluster, with augmentation at 0.70 and automation at 0.49.[D4] Conveyancing combines transactional, document-heavy tasks with client interaction and legal-adjacent judgement. The augmentation score signals strong potential for AI to support the routine document and search work, while the licensed, advice-bearing parts of the role stay with the practitioner. The combination points to a shift in task mix rather than a wholesale fall in demand.

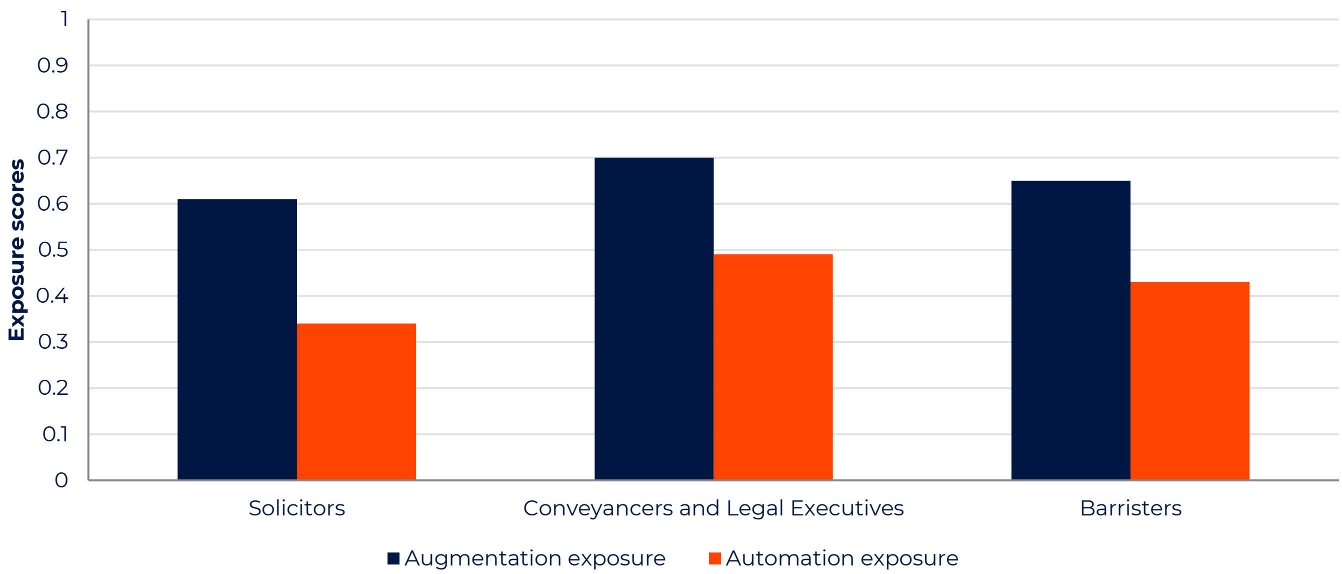

Figure 51: *Legal and Conveyancing occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Barristers are the smallest occupation in this section and the only one whose employment was essentially flat over the decade, moving from 8,700 in 2016 to 8,900 in 2025.[D2] Demand is projected to rise to about 10,500 by 2035 while supply falls to roughly 5,200, a gap of approximately 5,400.[D3] In proportional terms this is the most severe supply shortfall in the section, equivalent to about half of projected demand. The mechanism is a contracting supply pipeline, with annual attrition running higher than the other two occupations, at around 8%, in an occupation that depends on a small, self-employed bar replenished through years of post-admission experience.[D3]

Higher education supplies this occupation almost entirely, with a law degree the highest qualification for 78% of Barristers.[D2] Barristers are moderately male dominated,[D9] at 40% female in 2025,[D2] the only male-dominated occupation in this section. AI exposure shows augmentation at 0.65 and automation at 0.43,[D4] a judgement-and-advocacy pattern in which AI accelerates preparation and research without displacing the courtroom and advisory core of the role.

Education and training trends

This section covers four VET qualifications: the Certificate III in Legal Services, the Certificate IV in Legal Services, the Diploma of Paralegal Services, and the Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing. Higher education law qualifications are discussed at the end, because they supply the Solicitor and Barrister occupations rather than mapping to any qualification in this section.

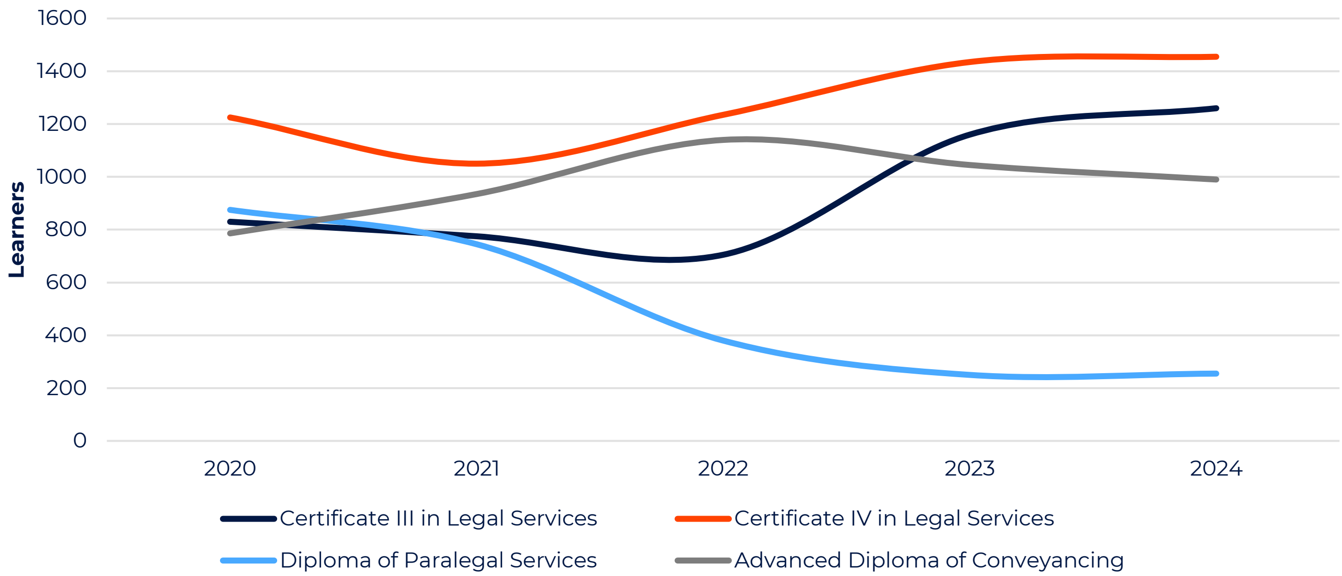

Figure 52: *Legal and Conveyancing: VET enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Delivery is thin across all four qualifications. 15 RTOs hold the Certificate III in Legal Services on their scope, 13 hold the Certificate IV, 12 hold the Diploma of Paralegal Services, and nine hold the Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing, recorded on the National Training Register.[D12] For comparison, the Diploma of Leadership and Management is held by several hundred RTOs. A small market limits learner choice, particularly outside the major cities. Combining each current qualification with its directly superseded version gives a continuous enrolment series from 2020, which shows the four qualifications moving in different directions rather than uniformly rising.[D5]

Certificate III in Legal Services

The Certificate III in Legal Services prepares entry-level legal administrative staff, with Legal Secretary the occupation-ready outcome and Law Clerk and Clerk of Court as progression roles.[D11] Combined with its superseded version, enrolments dipped from about 830 in 2020 to roughly 705 in 2022, then recovered to 1,260 by 2024.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 36% for the 2019 commencing cohort, below the national VET average of around 51% and the BSB training package average of around 50%. A completion rate below the benchmark, read alongside strong completer outcomes, does not by itself indicate a quality problem. It can reflect learners leaving once they secure work or moving between qualifications.

Student outcomes data tells a clear story. Around 69% of completers undertook training for employment-related reasons, close to the training package average.[D7] Most achieved what they came for, with 83% reporting they wholly or partly met their main reason, in line with the package average.[D7] After training, 86% were employed or in further study.[D7] Relevance is where this qualification diverges: among employed completers, 62% found their training highly or somewhat relevant to their job, well below the BSB completer average of 78%.[D7] Occupation-match data sharpens the point. Of completers who found work, only about 11% to 25% across recent cohorts were working in the occupation the qualification was designed for.[D13] Completers are getting jobs, but mostly not as legal administrative staff.

Certificate IV in Legal Services

The Certificate IV in Legal Services prepares paralegal and legal support workers, with Law Clerk, Legal Secretary, and Clerk of Court as occupation-ready outcomes.[D11] Combined with its superseded version, enrolments were broadly stable across the period, moving from about 1,225 in 2020 to 1,455 in 2024.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 30% for the 2019 commencing cohort, the lowest of the four qualifications and well below the national and package benchmarks.[D6] Around 70% of completers trained for employment-related reasons, and 79% met their main reason wholly or partly.[D7] After training, 88% were employed or in further study.[D7] Relevance again sits low, with 62% of employed completers rating their training highly or somewhat relevant, against the 78% package average.[D7] Intended-occupation match is the lowest in the section, at roughly 4% to 17% of employed completers across recent cohorts.[D13]

The pattern across both legal-services qualifications is consistent: strong employment, weak occupation match, below-average relevance.

Diploma of Paralegal Services

The Diploma of Paralegal Services prepares paralegals and senior legal support staff, with Legal Secretary and Law Clerk as occupation-ready outcomes.[D11] Combined with its superseded version, enrolments fell over the period, from about 875 in 2020 to 255 in 2024, the only qualification in this section in clear decline.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded Diploma of Legal Services was 46% for the 2019 commencing cohort, close to the national VET average and the strongest of the four qualifications.[D6] Around 62% of completers trained for employment-related reasons, with a higher study-related share than the other qualifications, at 30%, consistent with learners using the diploma as a step toward further study.[D7] Most met their main reason, at 82%, and 83% were employed or in further study afterward.[D7] Relevance sat at 66% of employed completers, below the package average.[D7] Intended-occupation match was low, at roughly 4% to 17%.[D13]

Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing

The Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing is the qualifying credential for licensed conveyancers, with Conveyancer the occupation-ready outcome, subject to state and territory licensing and registration.[D11] Progression roles include Business Broker and Real Estate Agency Principal.[D11] Combined with its superseded versions, enrolments rose from about 785 in 2020 to a peak of 1,140 in 2022, then eased to 990 by 2024.[D5]

This qualification behaves differently from the three legal-services qualifications, and the licensing link explains why. The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 36% for the 2019 commencing cohort, below the national average but consistent with a qualification many learners pursue while already working.[D6]

Student outcomes are the strongest in the section. Almost all completers, 99%, trained for employment-related reasons, the highest employment motivation of any qualification here.[D7] Around 91% met their main reason, 87% were employed or in further study, and 81% of employed completers rated their training highly or somewhat relevant, above the BSB completer average of 78%.[D7] Occupation-match data confirms the difference: roughly 36% to 67% of employed completers across cohorts were working in the intended occupation, far above the legal-services qualifications.[D13] A licensed pathway with a defined occupational destination produces measurably better alignment between training and work.

Higher education context

Higher education is the supply mechanism for the Solicitor and Barrister occupations. A law degree is the highest qualification held by 78% of Barristers and 83% of Solicitors, and 85% of legal, social and welfare professionals more broadly hold a bachelor degree or higher, above the all-professionals average of 81%.[D2,D8] The pipeline runs ahead of the profession's capacity to absorb it: more than 15,000 law graduates enter the market each year from around 40 law schools, against a practising solicitor population of 97,500 in 2024.[66,67] This corroborates, from an independent evidence stream, the workforce projection of substantial Solicitor oversupply by 2035.

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is changing how legal and conveyancing work is performed, with the clearest documented pressure on conveyancing. Stakeholder consultation identifies the Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing as no longer current due to generative AI changing tasks within the occupation. Senior legal-sector stakeholders also describe AI reshaping legal work, and a recognised need to plan the legal workforce on a skills basis rather than by job title. The recurring theme is that change management, role redesign, and ethical use are larger challenges than the technology itself.

The generative AI exposure scores reinforce this. All three occupations sit in a high-augmentation, lower-automation pattern,[D4] where generative AI can accelerate document drafting, research, and review while judgement, advice, and client trust stay with the practitioner. The skill implication is consistent across the legal support and conveyancing pathways: workers need to operate AI tools competently, verify their output against authoritative sources, and understand where human judgement and disclosure are required.

Regulators have moved quickly to govern AI use in legal proceedings. The Fair Work Commission published a draft guidance note in March 2026 requiring parties to disclose when they have used generative AI to prepare documents lodged in a case, with reduced weight or dismissal as possible consequences for non-disclosure.[68] The Federal Court followed with a practice note in April 2026 requiring disclosure of generative AI use in proceedings.[69] Both responded in part to a steep rise in AI-assisted, often inaccurate, self-represented filings; the Commission reported its workload rising by more than 70% over three years.[68]

For paralegals, law clerks, and legal administrative staff, this creates direct knowledge requirements around AI disclosure obligations, verification against authoritative sources, and the limits of AI-generated legal content.

The expansion of AML/CTF obligations introduces a significant new capability requirement for legal and conveyancing professionals.[5] Legal practices and conveyancing businesses providing designated services are now required to operate within the AML/CTF framework, creating new obligations related to customer due diligence, risk assessment, recordkeeping and suspicious matter reporting. These requirements extend beyond specialist legal practice areas and have implications for legal support, compliance and administrative functions.

For many employers, the workforce challenge is not the creation of dedicated AML/CTF teams but the development of foundational compliance capability within existing legal and conveyancing roles. See the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing cluster for further discussion.

Electronic conveyancing has become standard practice and is now a baseline competency. Electronic conveyancing is mandatory for property transactions in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, and available for some transactions in Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, and Tasmania.[70] The national framework set by the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council, through its Model Operating Requirements (current version 7.1, published February 2025) and Model Participation Rules, imposes identity verification, security, and compliance obligations that conveyancers must meet to practise.[71]

Stakeholder consultation raises qualification-currency concerns about whether the Advanced Diploma keeps pace with platform-based practice, and notes that state-based licensing variation complicates qualification recognition across jurisdictions. Current conveyancing practice assumes fluency with electronic lodgement platforms and the verification and compliance duties attached to them.

Implications for action

The evidence in this section points to three areas that warrant further monitoring for the 2027 Workforce Plan.

Conveyancing training content is out of step with modern work practices. The Advanced Diploma of Conveyancing is the licensed entry credential, which makes content currency a condition of occupational readiness. Mandatory electronic conveyancing is now embedded in practice under a national regulatory framework,[71] and stakeholders have flagged that the qualification does not account for generative AI's effect on tasks. Whether the qualification reflects current platform-based practice, AI-affected tasks, and the verification and compliance duties conveyancers now carry is a question worth examining in depth, supported by direct employer input.

The occupation-match gap in legal-services qualifications. The Certificate III, Certificate IV, and Diploma of Paralegal Services share a consistent pattern of below-average relevance and very low intended-occupation match.

Low match can reflect a content gap, or labour-market factors such as completers using the qualifications as general administrative credentials or as steps toward further study. Targeted intelligence-gathering with legal employers and RTOs would establish which explanation holds and is worth pursuing before any product response is considered.

The Diploma of Paralegal Services enrolment decline. Enrolments in this qualification have fallen steadily while the other three have held or grown. Whether this reflects displacement by the Certificate IV, weak labour-market demand for the paralegal destination, or a content or delivery issue is not clear from the current evidence and would benefit from further investigation.

Cluster 8: Library and Information Services

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate III in Library and Information Services · Certificate IV in Library and Information Services · Diploma of Library and Information Services

Summary

Library and information work is splitting into two labour markets, and VET reaches only one of them. The occupations that VET qualifications produce, library assistants and library technicians, are flat or shrinking. The occupations that are growing, archivists and records managers and to a lesser extent librarians, recruit mainly through higher education pathways.

Demand is rising across the higher-skilled roles while the supply of trained workers contracts.[D3] Every occupation covered here faces a workforce shortfall to 2035, ranging from approximately 2,000 for Gallery, Library and Museum Technicians to approximately 5,700 for Archivists, Curators and Records Managers. For the technician and assistant roles, the shortfall is a supply problem rather than a demand surge: attrition removes workers faster than new entrants replace them.

VET enrolments are growing[D5] even though very few providers deliver these qualifications.[D12] Enrolments in the Diploma rose from approximately 1,500 in 2020 to 2,350 in 2024, and the Certificate III roughly doubled, yet only three to seven RTOs hold each qualification.[D12] Delivery rests on a handful of providers serving a national market.[D12]

The education and training picture differs by qualification:

- The Certificate III in Library and Information Services is used by most (almost 90%) learners for work-related reasons, but only half found the training relevant to the job they ended up in: the widest gap between intent and outcome of the three qualifications.
- The Certificate IV in Library and Information Services has stronger outcomes than the Certificate III but weaker than the Diploma on every measure, with relevance to work below the BSB training package average.
- The Diploma of Library and Information Services is the gateway to the library technician role, allowing for professional membership with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA),[72] this is the strongest performer in the group, however student outcomes remain lower than the BSB average.

The skills that define library work are being rewritten faster than the qualifications that teach them. ALIA, the sector's peak body, revised its national skills and ethics framework in 2025 to put AI, generative AI, misinformation, and digital inclusion at the centre of the role, while the qualifications were last updated in 2020.[72]

Occupational demand

Librarians are the largest occupation in the library and information services sector, but the only one of the four whose employment has declined. Employment grew from approximately 11,200 in 2016 to a peak near 12,600 in 2021, then fell back to 11,900 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections point to a supply gap of approximately 5,000 by 2035, the product of rising demand meeting a contracting supply of trained workers.[D3]

Higher education is the main entry pathway: 56% of librarians hold higher education as their highest qualification and that share is rising, against 37% who hold VET qualifications, a share that is falling.[D2] The role is highly female dominated,[D9] at around 80%.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores place augmentation at 0.70 and automation at 0.52,[D4] a profile concentrated in judgement, interpretation, and client interaction. AI tools can speed up cataloguing, search, and reference work, but the reasoning that selects, organises, and contextualises information for a community is not something current tools substitute for.

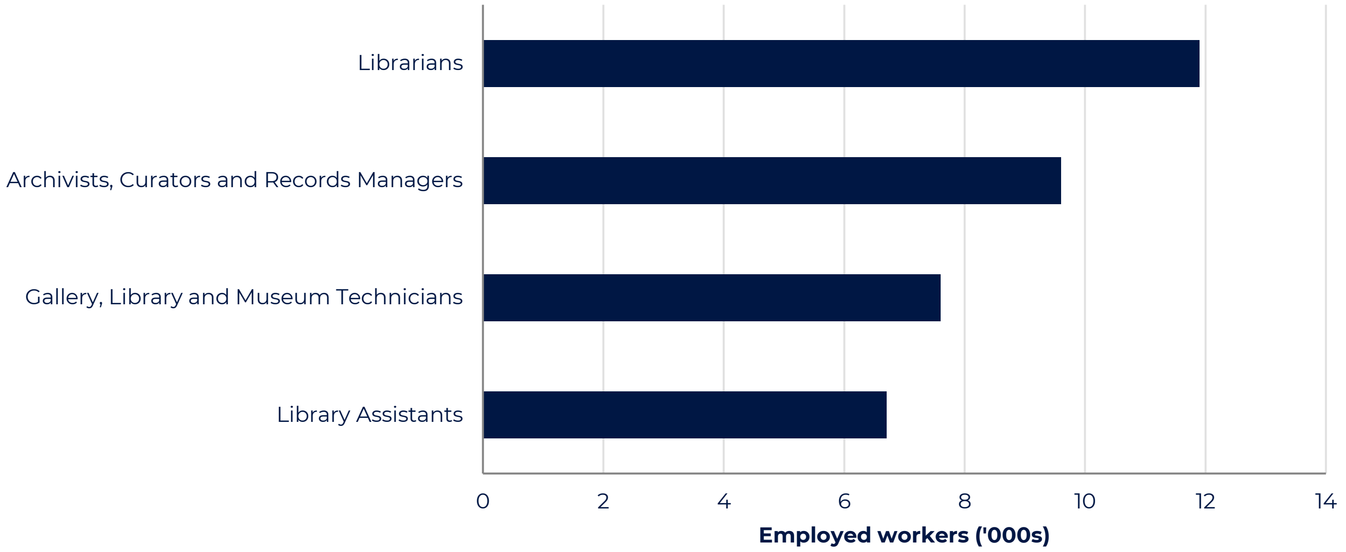

Figure 53: *Employment across library and information services occupations, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Archivists, Curators and Records Managers are the fastest-growing library and information services occupation and face the largest workforce shortfall. Employment rose from approximately 7,100 in 2016 to 9,600 in 2025, a gain of around a third.[D2] Demand is projected to keep climbing while trained supply falls, opening a supply gap of approximately 5,700 by 2035, the widest of the four occupations.[D3] This is predominantly a higher education pathway occupation: 61% hold higher education as their highest qualification and the share is climbing, against 27% holding VET and falling.[D2]

The work is female dominated,[D9] at around 82%.[D2] AI augmentation exposure sits at 0.70 against automation at 0.50,[D4] the same judgement-led profile as librarians. Records and information management is the part of this group most exposed to change, as organisations digitise recordkeeping and apply automated classification, but the accountability for what is kept, destroyed, and made accessible stays with the worker.

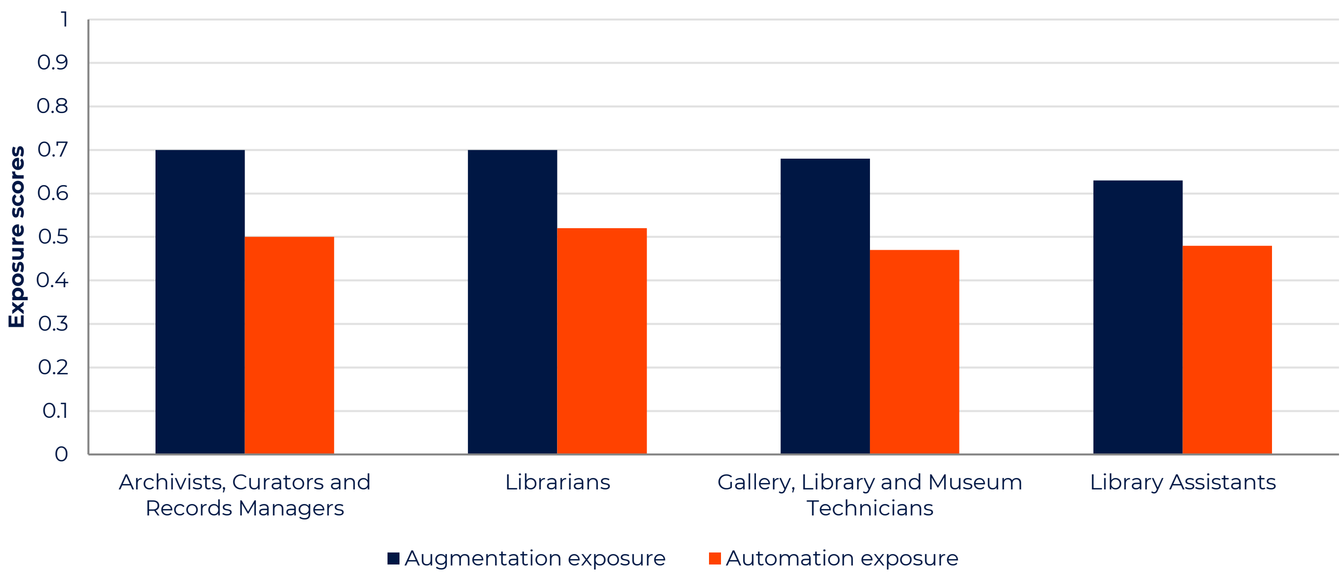

Figure 54: *Generative AI exposure scores across library and information services occupations.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Gallery, Library and Museum Technicians have been stable over the decade. Employment shifted only slightly from approximately 7,700 in 2016 to 7,600 in 2025.[D2] The supply gap of approximately 2,000 by 2035 is the smallest of the four and is driven by attrition against broadly flat demand rather than by growth.[D3] VET is the largest single qualification channel at 50%, though that share is slowly falling as the higher education share rises to 31%.[D2]

The occupation is highly female dominated,[D9] at around 77%.[D2] Generative AI augmentation exposure is 0.68 against automation at 0.47;[D4] the cataloguing, data entry, and bibliographic verification tasks that make up much of the role are supported by generative AI tools rather than replaced by them, and the work of preparing and handling physical collections has no automated substitute.

Library Assistants have held steady, but their trained supply is projected to fall sharply. Employment was approximately 6,700 in 2016 and 6,700 in 2025, broadly flat across the decade.[D2] Demand is projected to stay flat to 2035, yet the supply of workers is expected to contract enough to open a gap of approximately 3,600, an attrition-driven shortfall rather than a response to growth.[D3] VET is the largest qualification channel at 44% and rising, the clearest case among the four occupations of VET as the primary supply mechanism.[D2]

The role is highly female dominated,[D9] at around 70%,[D2] the most concentrated of the four. AI augmentation exposure is 0.63 against automation at 0.48.[D4] Library assistant roles carry the highest entry-level content of the four occupations, with most job advertisements pitched at entry level, which makes the qualifications that feed this occupation the front door to the sector for new workers.[D4]

Education and training trends

Three VET qualifications serve this part of the workforce: the Certificate III, Certificate IV, and Diploma in Library and Information Services.

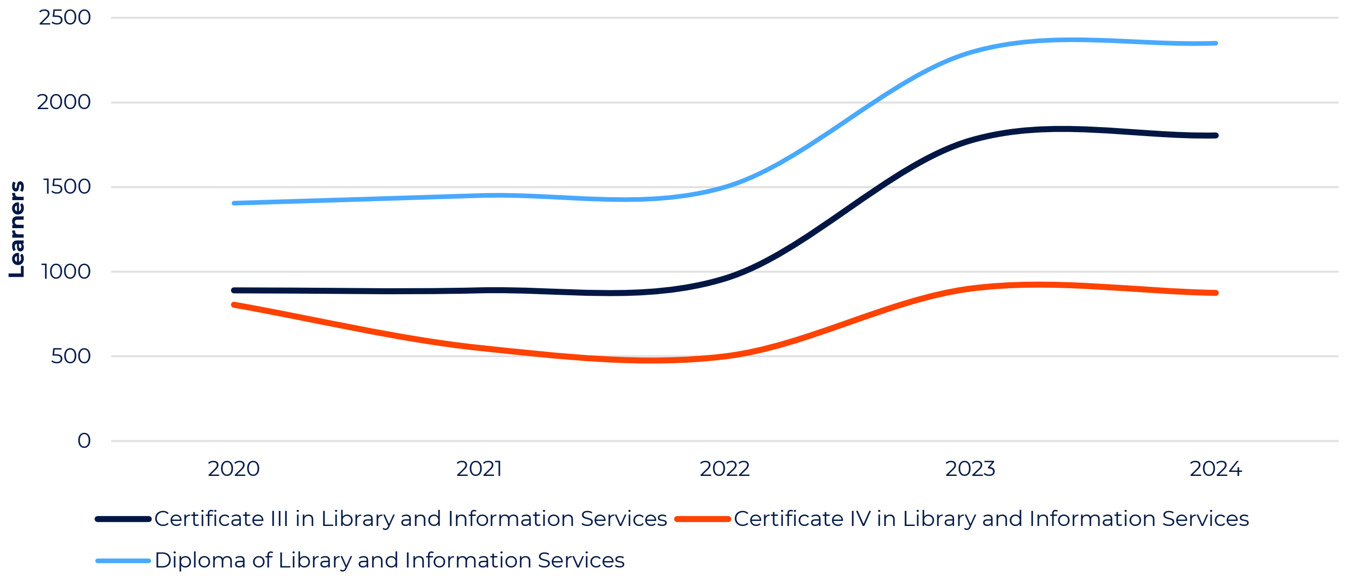

Figure 55: *VET enrolments in library and information services qualifications, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Across all three qualifications, delivery sits with a small number of providers. Three RTOs hold the Certificate III on their scope, four hold the Certificate IV, and seven hold the Diploma, recorded on the National Training Register.[D12] For a workforce of more than 30,000 people across the four occupations, this is a thin provider base: a learner's access to these qualifications depends on a handful of organisations, and the loss of any one provider would noticeably reduce delivery capacity.

Certificate III in Library and Information Services

The Certificate III is the entry qualification for the sector, designed to prepare people for work as a library assistant and recognised as occupation-ready for that role.[D11] It also opens progression pathways toward library technician and information officer roles.[D11] Enrolments grew from 785 in 2022, the first full year of the current qualification, to 1,805 in 2024, roughly doubling over two years.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded version of this qualification, measured on the 2020 commencing cohort, was 40%, below the national VET average of 51% for that cohort.[D6] A completion rate around ten percentage points below the national figure can reflect several things at this level: learners moving into work before finishing, laddering into the Certificate IV or Diploma, or content that does not hold learners through to completion.

Student outcomes for completers show strong work intent but poor outcomes. Among completers, 88% undertook the training mainly for employment-related reasons, well above the BSB training package average of 71%.[D7] Of completers, 59% reported they had wholly or partly achieved their main reason for training, below the package average of 83%.[D7] After training, 78% were employed or in further study.[D7]

The relevance measure is the one that stands out: among those employed after completing, only 52% found their training highly or somewhat relevant to their job, against a package average of 78%, the widest intent-to-relevance gap of the three qualifications.[D7] Employers and the sector's peak body describe a role that increasingly centres on community digital and AI support, which a 2020 qualification was not built to teach: the relevance figure is consistent with that account.

Certificate IV in Library and Information Services

The Certificate IV prepares people for information officer and library assistant roles, and is recognised as occupation-ready for both, with a progression pathway toward library technician.[D11] It is the smallest of the three qualifications by enrolment, growing modestly from 395 in 2022 to 875 in 2024.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification, on the 2020 commencing cohort, was 41%, close to the Certificate III and similarly below the national average.[D6] Among completers, 90% trained mainly for employment reasons, and 58% achieved their main reason, again below the package average.[D7] After training, 81% were employed or in further study.[D7] Of employed completers, 62% found their training relevant to their work: better than the Certificate III but still below the package average of 78%.[D7]

Diploma of Library and Information Services

The Diploma is the highest VET qualification in the sector and the gateway to the library technician role, recognised as occupation-ready for library technician and library assistant positions and offering progression toward records and information manager roles.[D11] It carries a 70-hour work placement requirement, the only one of the three qualifications to do so, which aligns it with the accreditation requirements for library technician recognition.[D12] It is also the largest by enrolment, growing from approximately 1,500 in 2020 to 2,350 in 2024.[D5]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded version, on the 2020 commencing cohort, was 46%: below the national average of 51%.[D6] Student outcomes are the strongest of the three across every measure yet are still lower than the training package average. Among completers, 94% trained mainly for employment reasons, and 72% achieved their main reason, the only one of the three to approach the package average.[D7] After training, 82% were employed or in further study.[D7] Of employed completers, 74% found their training relevant to their work, close to the package average of 78%.[D7] The work placement requirement is the most visible difference between the Diploma and the lower qualifications, and the stronger relevance and achievement figures are consistent with a qualification that places learners in a workplace before they finish.

The three qualifications against the training package benchmark

Read together, the three qualifications draw work-motivated learners but return weaker outcomes than the rest of the training package, and the shortfall widens at the lower levels. All three enrol people who are markedly more focused on employment than the BSB training package norm: 88% of Certificate III completers, 90% of Certificate IV completers, and 94% of Diploma completers trained mainly for work-related reasons, against a package average of 71%.[D7]

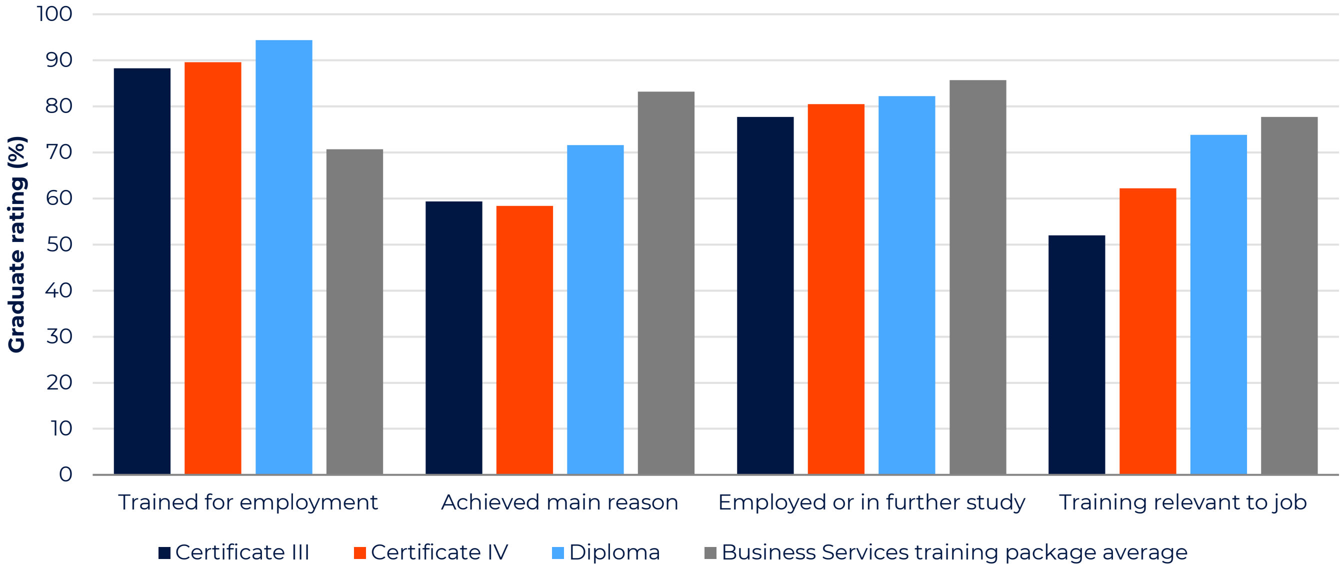

Figure 56: *Student outcomes against the Business Services training package average.*
Source: NCVER 2025, VET student outcomes 2025 (Student Outcomes Survey).[D7]

On the three measures that capture whether the training delivered, all three sit below the package average. The Diploma comes closest: it trails the package by around 12 percentage points on achieving the main reason for training, by under 4 points on employment or further study, and by 4 points on relevance to work. The Certificate III sits furthest behind on every measure, and its relevance figure shows the widest gap: 52% of employed completers found the training relevant to their job, against a package average of 78%, a gap of around 26 percentage points and the widest distance between why people enrol and what the training returns.[D7]

The completion data points the same way. All three qualifications complete below the national VET average of 51% for the relevant cohort, at 40%, 41%, and 46%, with the Diploma again the closest to the benchmark and the two lower qualifications around ten percentage points beneath it.[D6] The pattern across both outcomes and completions is consistent: the qualifications attract people who want the work, the Diploma with its mandatory work placement performs closest to the benchmark, and the entry-level qualifications return the weakest results on relevance and completion. Set against a sector that has rewritten its skills framework around AI and digital inclusion since these qualifications were last updated, the case for reviewing their currency rests on evidence from both the student outcomes and completion data, along with this industry feedback.

Skills and knowledge changes

The skills that define library work are being rewritten around AI and digital inclusion, and the VET qualifications have not yet followed. In 2025 the sector's peak professional body, ALIA, revised its national skills, knowledge and ethics framework for the library and information services workforce, first issued in 2023, to add explicit treatment of AI and generative AI, sustainability, misinformation and disinformation, intellectual freedom, and inclusion.[72] The framework is now scheduled for review every two years.

This revision shows that the knowledge expected of library workers is changing, and it post-dates the 2020 qualifications by five years.[72] Industry body feedback gathered through consultation points the same way, recording the framework reform as a direct indicator of qualification change pressure.

Library workers are increasingly the people who help the public use digital and AI tools, which adds a teaching and support dimension to the role. Sector data records public libraries delivering more than 409,000 programs to over seven million participants in 2023 to 2024, with digital literacy programs in high demand and library staff fielding requests from people navigating online government services.[73] Consultation with community digital inclusion organisations positions libraries as active sites for building digital and AI confidence in the community rather than passive venues.

Generative AI exposure scores across all four occupations confirm an augmentation-led profile,[D4] where the technology accelerates information tasks but the interpretive and community-facing work remains with the worker. The skill implication is twofold: workers need enough AI capability to use the tools in their own cataloguing, search, and reference work, and enough to help members of the public use them safely. Neither is addressed in qualifications written before generative AI tools were in general use.

Demand from the community sits ahead of the formal training pathway. Consultation identifies a persistent gap between community-based digital learning that comes before basic skills and credentialed VET pathways, with interest in short courses, micro-credentials, and non-accredited products that connect community learning to formal qualifications. This is an implementation and pathway-design signal rather than evidence of a content gap inside the existing qualifications, and it rests on consultation with a small number of organisations rather than broad sector feedback.

Implications for action

The evidence points to a content currency problem rather than a missing qualification. Three current qualifications cover the VET pathway, with correctly mapped occupational outcomes and growing enrolments. What has changed is the content of the work: the sector's own 2025 skills framework now centres AI, generative AI, misinformation, and digital inclusion, none of which the 2020 qualifications were built to teach, and the student outcomes data shows the consequence, with relevance to work running below the training package average at every level and widest at the Certificate III.

The sector has produced an explicit, current statement of the skills, knowledge, and ethics it expects, and has committed to revising it every two years.[72] Mapping the qualifications against that framework at each respective level would show directly where the accredited content has fallen behind, particularly on AI capability, both for workers' own practice and for the public-facing digital support role that library work increasingly involves. This is the most direct route to resolving the relevance gap the outcomes data exposes.

Cluster 9: Marketing

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Marketing and Communication · Diploma of Marketing and Communication · Advanced Diploma of Marketing and Communication

Higher education field of education in scope: Sales and Marketing

Summary

Marketing work is splitting by role: strategy and management roles are growing while phone-based sales and survey fieldwork roles are shrinking.[D2] The professional and managerial occupations that design strategy and run campaigns have expanded over the past decade, while the transactional roles that once handled calls and survey fieldwork have contracted sharply.

Supply in the largest professional occupation is already running ahead of demand. Advertising and Marketing Professionals are projected to reach a surplus of approximately 45,000 workers by 2035, the result of a decade of strong graduate and migrant inflows meeting steady but slower demand growth. This complicates any case for expanding entry-level supply through training.

Technology is substituting for the transactional roles. Survey Interviewers fell by roughly three-quarters between 2016 and 2025, and Telemarketers nearly halved.[D2] Both carry high generative AI automation exposure,[D4] and the qualifications that feed them now serve a much smaller labour market than their enrolment numbers suggest.

The education and training picture turns on whether content keeps pace with AI-enabled practice:

- Both the Certificate IV and Diploma qualifications return relevance-to-work scores well below the BSB training package average, concentrated at the two lower levels where learners are most likely to enter content, campaign, and coordination roles.
- The Advanced Diploma performs strongly on completion and relevance, consistent with an older cohort already working in the field and using it to formalise existing capability.
- Industry intelligence and generative AI exposure data point to a possible mismatch between qualification content and AI-affected marketing practice, which warrants closer examination of content currency.

Occupational demand

The five occupations covered here span the full skill range, from strategy and management down to phone-based sales and survey fieldwork. Employment size across the five in 2025 is shown below, and AI exposure scores follow later in this section.

Figure 57: *Marketing occupations: employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Advertising and Marketing Professionals are the occupation where supply has most clearly outpaced demand. The occupation grew from approximately 66,400 in 2016 to 102,400 in 2025, one of the strongest decade-long expansions in the business sector.[D2] Demand is projected to keep rising, reaching roughly 125,700 by 2035, but supply is projected to reach about 170,700 over the same period.[D3] The result is a surplus of approximately 45,000 workers by 2035, the largest projected surplus of any occupation covered in the Marketing analysis.[D3]

This surplus is supply-driven. A sustained inflow of higher education graduates and skilled migrants has expanded the available workforce faster than employer demand, and there is no current shortage.[D10] Higher education is the dominant entry route: 70% of workers hold higher education as their highest qualification, up from 61% in 2016, while the share whose highest qualification is VET has fallen from 20% to 17%.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores place automation at 0.54 and augmentation at 0.79.[D4] The high augmentation score points to AI accelerating the production of campaign material, analysis, and content, which raises output expectations per worker. Combined with the projected surplus, this suggests the binding constraint is not the number of workers but their ability to operate effectively with AI tools.

Advertising, Public Relations and Sales Managers are growing steadily and face a modest shortfall driven by replacement. Employment rose from approximately 133,400 in 2016 to 166,500 in 2025, making this the largest occupation covered here.[D2] Demand is projected to reach roughly 194,400 by 2035 against supply of about 180,300, leaving a supply gap of approximately 14,100.[D3] The gap reflects the volume of workers who must be replaced as they retire or move on rather than rapid demand growth.

This occupation appeared on the national shortage list in 2024, classified as a suitability gap, meaning applicants were available but did not meet employer requirements. It was no longer in shortage in 2025.[D10] Higher education is the main qualification route at 54%, with VET qualifications the highest held for 27%.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores show automation at 0.38 and augmentation at 0.72.[D4] The low automation score and high augmentation score are consistent with a role concentrated in judgement, client relationships, and strategic decisions, where AI tools speed up supporting work but cannot replace the reasoning that gives it value.

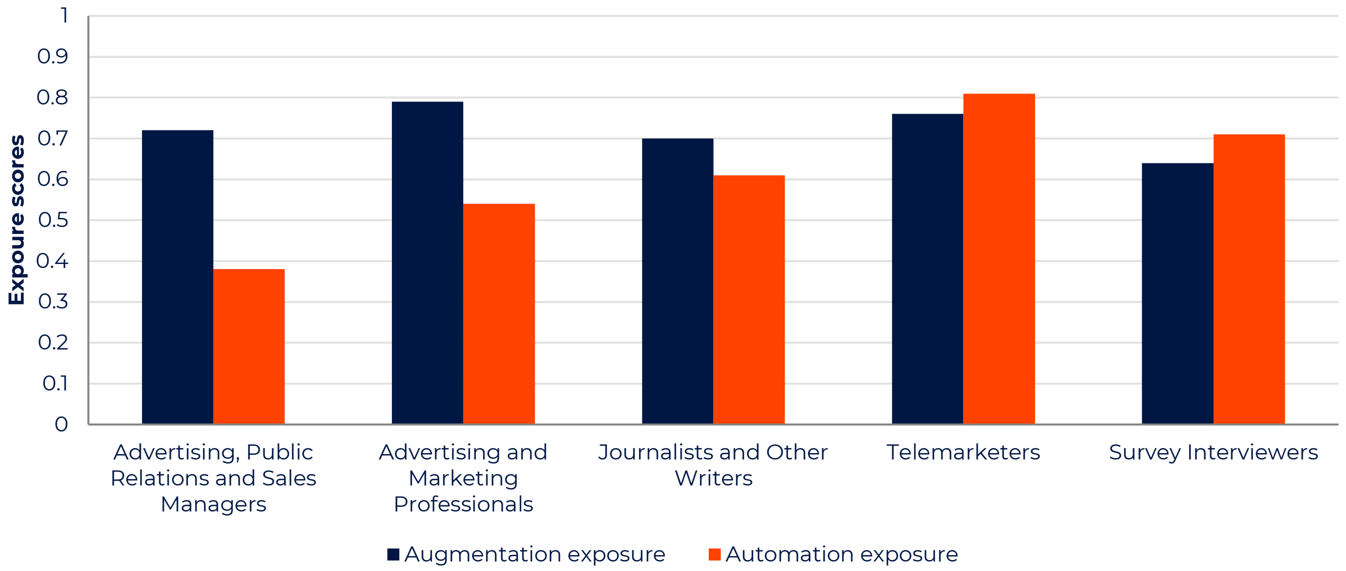

Figure 58: *Marketing occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Journalists and Other Writers are the only occupation here in sustained decline, and the print publishing industries that employ many of them are contracting faster still. Employment fell from approximately 24,900 in 2016 to 23,100 in 2025.[D2] Demand is projected to recover modestly to about 27,700 by 2035, but supply is projected to fall to roughly 19,100, producing a supply gap of approximately 8,600.[D3] The gap reflects workers leaving the occupation faster than new entrants replace them, against a small projected lift in demand.

There is no dedicated VET publishing qualification in the current training packages, and the editing, content, and writing skills associated with publishing work sit within the broader writing and communications occupations rather than in a separate qualification or occupational group. Higher education is the dominant route for writers at 71%, with 17% holding VET qualifications as their highest.[D2] Generative AI exposure scores place automation at 0.61 and augmentation at 0.70.[D4] This pattern is consistent with the routine writing and editing tasks being exposed to substitution, while interpretive and investigative work supported by AI. The likely effect is a shift in the task mix toward work that AI cannot do well, concentrating demand on writers who can operate in that augmented space.

Telemarketers and Survey Interviewers have both contracted sharply and carry the highest substitution risk in the Marketing analysis. Telemarketers fell from approximately 7,900 in 2016 to 5,400 in 2025, and Survey Interviewers fell from approximately 3,000 to 1,000 over the same period.[D2] Both occupations are projected to keep shrinking on the supply side to 2035, with small residual demand.[D3] These are small occupations, and the projected gaps, approximately 3,000 for Telemarketers and 500 for Survey Interviewers, sit against a backdrop of structural decline rather than growth.[D3]

Both roles are concentrated in routine, scripted, transactional tasks. Generative AI exposure scores are the highest in the Marketing cluster: Telemarketers at 0.81 automation and 0.76 augmentation, and Survey Interviewers at 0.71 automation and 0.64 augmentation.[D4] The high automation exposure scores indicate that the tasks of both roles are exposed to potential substitution by current generative AI tools, consistent with the steep employment falls already recorded by previous changes in the work done by these roles in Australia.

Education and training trends

This section covers three VET qualifications, the Certificate IV, Diploma, and Advanced Diploma in Marketing and Communication, and the higher education field of Sales and Marketing. Enrolments across all four are shown below.

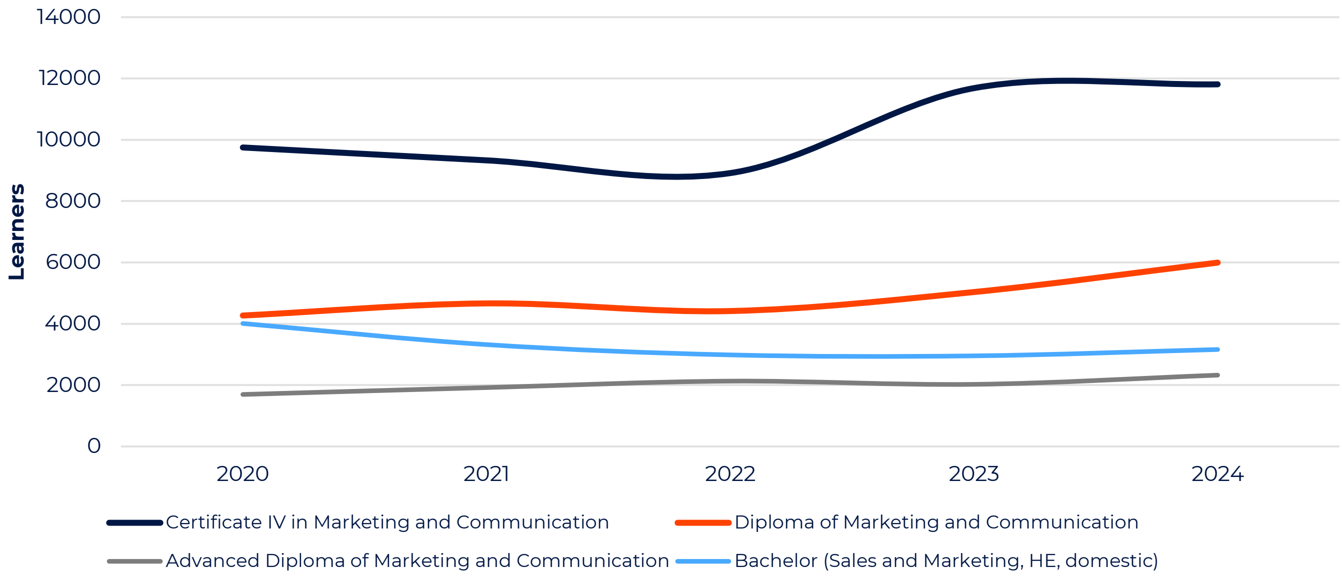

Figure 59: *Marketing: VET and higher education enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data;[D5] Norton, A 2026, Higher education data and trends for the finance, technology and business sectors.[D8]

All three VET qualifications are delivered through a broad provider market. The National Training Register records 124 RTOs holding the Certificate IV on their scope, 108 holding the Diploma, and 75 holding the Advanced Diploma.[D12] This is a wide and competitive delivery base, with no sign of a thin or concentrated market, and learner access is unlikely to be constrained by provider availability.

Enrolments across all three qualifications have grown strongly since the current versions were introduced in 2021. The Certificate IV reached 11,810 enrolments in 2024, the Diploma 5,985, and the Advanced Diploma 2,325, each rising year on year from a low base as the superseded versions were phased out.[D5] The growth runs counter to the higher education trend in the same field, where commencements have fallen over the past decade.

There is no dedicated VET qualification for publishing or editing. Workers entering writing, editing, and content roles draw on the Marketing and Communication qualifications, on higher education, or on experience, rather than on a publishing-specific product.

Certificate IV in Marketing and Communication

The Certificate IV is the entry qualification, designed to prepare learners for coordination and support roles in marketing, advertising, and communications, and to provide a VET pathway into the field. Pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for sales representative, telemarketer, and survey interviewer roles, with progression pathways into marketing specialist, copywriter, and public relations roles.[D11]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 44% for the 2020 commencing cohort, below the national VET average of 51% for that cohort.[D6] Some learners leave before completing because they have already gained the specific skills they came for. Accordingly, the below-average completion rate does not on its own signal a content problem.

Student outcomes tell a more complete story. Learners enrol for employment reasons: employment-related motivation runs at 77%, above the training package average of 71%, and 81% achieved their main reason for training, close to the training package average of 83%.[D7] After training, 89% were employed or in further study, above the training package average of 86%.[D7] The weak point is relevance: among employed completers, only 64% found their training highly or somewhat relevant to their work, well below the training package average of 78%.[D7] Because the relevance measure is drawn only from employed completers, it is a smaller respondent base than the motivation and achievement measures, but the size of the gap is notable. It indicates that completers are finding work but that a substantial minority do not see their training as relevant to it.

Diploma of Marketing and Communication

The Diploma is the mid-level qualification, designed for learners moving into specialist and coordinator roles such as marketing specialist, marketing coordinator, and campaign manager. Pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for marketing specialist, marketing assistant, advertising manager, and sales and marketing manager roles.[D11]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 60% for the 2020 commencing cohort, above the national VET average.[D6] Employment-related motivation is strong at 78%, and 81% achieved their main reason for training.[D7] After training, 89% were employed or in further study.[D7] As with the Certificate IV, relevance is the weak point: 66% of employed completers found their training highly or somewhat relevant, below the training package average of 78%.[D7] The relevance gap at the Diploma level mirrors the gap at Certificate IV, suggesting a pattern across the two qualifications that feed most directly into working marketing roles rather than an issue confined to one product.

Advanced Diploma of Marketing and Communication

The Advanced Diploma is the highest VET qualification, designed for senior and strategic roles such as marketing manager, marketing strategist, and client services director. Pathways data confirms it as occupation-ready for marketing specialist, advertising manager, communications manager, and content creator roles, with progression toward business development and executive roles.[D11]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded qualification was 73% for the 2020 commencing cohort, well above the national VET average.[D6] The qualification performs strongly across student outcomes: 92% achieved their main reason for training, above the training package average of 83%, and 82% of employed completers found their training relevant to their work, above the training package average of 78%.[D7] The contrast with the lower two qualifications is clear. The strong completion and relevance results are consistent with an older cohort already working in marketing and using the Advanced Diploma to formalise and extend existing capability, rather than to enter the field.

Higher education context

Higher education is the dominant entry route for the two largest professional occupations, but the pipeline in the relevant field is contracting. Domestic full-time equivalent commencements in Sales and Marketing bachelor courses fell from approximately 4,600 in 2016 to a low of 2,985 in 2022, recovering slightly to 3,161 in 2024.[D8] Counting international students, total commencements fell from approximately 7,409 in 2016 to 5,831 in 2024.[D8] The decline runs against the growth in VET enrolments over the same period, indicating that the VET qualifications are taking on a larger share of new supply into marketing roles even as they sit below the professional occupations in the qualification mix.

Skills and knowledge changes

The dominant change across all five marketing occupations is the spread of generative AI into everyday marketing work. The generative AI exposure scores show a consistent pattern: high augmentation across the professional and managerial roles, and high automation across the transactional roles.[D4] Published research on the advertising and marketing workforce describes the same divide, with AI absorbing routine content production, copywriting, reporting, and campaign optimisation while human work concentrates on brand strategy, creative judgement, and the emotional and relational dimensions of the work.[74,75] A 2025 study of senior advertising executives found that generative AI was reshaping creative work by handling routine tasks, leaving brand strategy and emotional connection to people.[74]

Industry intelligence points in the same direction. Sector feedback describes marketing-adjacent roles in content, design, and campaign work evolving toward hybrid profiles that combine creative, digital, and AI-enabled skills, and flags a risk that workers face role disruption without clear capability pathways into that new mix. The same evidence raises a question about whether the current qualifications keep pace with AI-affected practice, identifying marketing and communications among a group of qualifications that may warrant review for the impact of generative AI on the tasks they teach. The quantitative AI exposure scores and published research support the broad direction of this signal.

A second theme is the tension between generalist and specialist framing: whether AI capability for marketing workers is best built as broad uplift applied across roles or as specialist content tied to particular occupations. This is a design question rather than a content gap, and it applies to how any future AI-related content is positioned rather than to a deficiency in the existing qualifications.

Implications for action

The evidence points to a content currency question at the Certificate IV and Diploma levels, where relevance-to-work scores sit well below the training package average and industry intelligence questions whether the qualifications reflect AI-affected practice. The occupational data adds a constraint: the largest professional occupation is projected into a substantial surplus by 2035, and the transactional occupations the Certificate IV feeds are contracting, so any case for action rests on the currency of what workers are taught rather than on a need to expand supply. Ongoing monitoring with employers and providers should be undertaken to inform the 2027 Workforce Plan.

Marketing capability also feeds the product management role, which draws on marketing alongside delivery, analytics, and business skills. Marketing's contribution to product management capability is considered in the analysis of that capability in the Project Management cluster.

Cluster 10: Project Management

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate IV in Project Management Practice · Diploma of Project Management · Advanced Diploma of Program Management · Graduate Diploma of Portfolio Management

Summary

Project management is a capability applied across almost every industry, as well as an occupation in its own right. People who train in project management tend to coordinate work in construction, technology, finance, health and government, often in roles not titled "project manager". This shapes how the qualifications perform and how their results should be read.

Completers achieve strong outcomes. Those who finish report that they trained for employment-related reasons, met the goal they enrolled for, moved into work or further study, and found the training relevant to their job. On each of these measures they exceed the average for the BSB training package. Demand is substantial: the Diploma of Project Management alone enrols more than 22,000 people a year.

Most completers do not enter an occupation formally classified as project management. Around one in ten moves into the specific occupation the training maps to, while the remainder apply their project skills in other roles, the pattern expected of a capability that transfers across the economy.

The four qualifications fall into two groups:

- The Certificate IV and Diploma prepare people to support and then lead individual projects, with a focus on project delivery. These two account for almost all enrolments, and stakeholder concern about content currency centres on them.
- The Advanced Diploma and the Graduate Diploma serve experienced managers coordinating multiple projects or an organisation's full portfolio of project investment. Both are small, and the Graduate Diploma is marginal in enrolment terms.

Occupational demand

Project administration and coordination have grown steadily over the past decade. Workers in Contract, Program and Project Administration roles numbered approximately 124,600 in 2016 and reached 161,300 in 2025.[D2] Higher education is the largest source of qualified workers and its share is rising, from 43% in 2016 to 50% in 2025, while the share holding a VET qualification as their highest credential has eased from 35% to 33%.[D2] VET supplies a substantial and stable part of this workforce, but it is not the largest channel and its relative position is slowly narrowing.

The occupation is gender balanced,[D9] with women making up 57% of workers in 2025.[D2] This sits in contrast to the senior management roles that the highest qualification in this section feeds toward, described below.

Generative AI exposure scores for this occupation are 0.73 for augmentation and 0.53 for automation.[D4] The work concentrates on coordination, stakeholder management and judgement under uncertainty, which AI tools accelerate rather than replace. The administrative core of the role, including status reporting, scheduling updates and document preparation, carries more substitution potential, which lifts the automation score toward the midpoint. The practical effect is that practitioners can produce more, faster: AI raises the output expected of a project coordinator without removing the need for the person who holds the relationships and makes the calls.

Senior general management roles are the destination for the portfolio qualification, and they face modest supply shortfalls to 2035. Chief Executives and Managing Directors, along with General Managers, are discussed in detail in the Leadership and Management cluster.

Education and training trends

This section covers the Certificate IV in Project Management Practice, the Diploma of Project Management, the Advanced Diploma of Program Management and the Graduate Diploma of Portfolio Management. The four qualifications form a ladder running from project administration through to portfolio leadership, and their enrolment volumes fall sharply as the level rises.

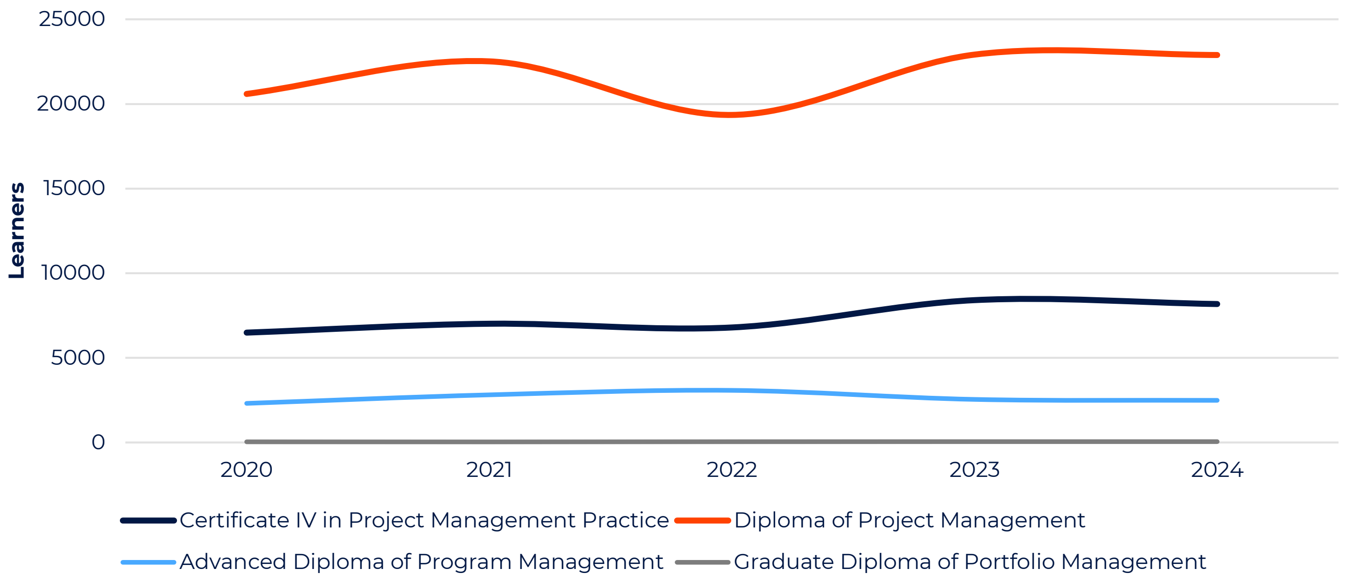

Figure 60: *Project Management: VET and higher education enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Certificate IV in Project Management Practice

The Certificate IV in Project Management Practice prepares people to support and coordinate projects, and it has rebuilt its enrolments quickly since replacing the earlier version. The qualification is designed for project team members and administrators who work to a project plan rather than owning project outcomes. Enrolments reached 8,170 in 2024, drawn across 176 RTOs holding the qualification on their scope, recorded on the National Training Register.[D5,D12] Delivery is broadly distributed rather than concentrated among a few providers, which supports learner access across states and delivery modes.

The four-year completion rate for the superseded version was 58% for the 2019 commencing cohort, above the national VET average of around 51%.[D6] This is a solid result for a certificate-level qualification and does not indicate a completion problem.

Completer outcomes are strong. Among those who finished the qualification, 92% undertook it for employment-related reasons, well above the 71% average for the BSB training package.[D7] Of completers, 85% achieved their main reason for training, and 96% were employed or in further study afterwards, both above the package averages of 83% and 86%.[D7] Among employed completers, 87% found their training relevant to their work, against a package average of 78%.[D7] The occupation-of-training match tells the other half of the story: only around 8% to 12% of completers entered the specific occupation the qualification maps to.[D13] Strong relevance alongside low occupational match is consistent with project skills being applied widely rather than channelled into one job.

Training to occupation pathways data confirms the Certificate IV as occupation-ready for program and project administrator roles, with specialised-training pathways into contract administration, cost control and management consulting, and a progression pathway toward procurement management.[D11]

Diploma of Project Management

The Diploma of Project Management is one of the larger VET qualifications in the business sector. It prepares people to plan and lead projects, applying specialised knowledge and judgement with accountability for project outcomes. Enrolments reached 22,855 in 2024, delivered across 324 RTOs holding it on their scope.[D5,D12]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded version sat at 50% for the 2019 commencing cohort and 51% for 2020, close to the national average.[D6] A completion rate at the sector average, paired with strong completer outcomes, does not by itself indicate a delivery problem for the intended cohort: many learners enrol while working and complete to the point of immediate use.

Completer outcomes are strong and consistent with the Certificate IV. Of completers, 88% trained for employment-related reasons, 87% achieved their main reason, and 95% were employed or in further study after training, each above the relevant package average.[D7] Among employed completers, 89% found the training relevant to their work.[D7] As with the Certificate IV, the occupation-of-training match was low, at around 7% to 11% of completers, reflecting the same cross-cutting application of project skills.[D13]

Stakeholder feedback indicates that the Certificate IV is a more appropriate entry point for some learners, however many are bypassing this directly to the Diploma. The Diploma as an entry point can disadvantage capable workers who lack a formal qualification, and some providers assemble delivery by drawing units from leadership and management qualifications. Stakeholders also flagged project management qualifications as a high priority for review, on the grounds that content has not kept pace with industry practice.

Training to occupation pathways data confirms the Diploma as occupation-ready for program and project administrator roles, with progression pathways into construction project management, information and communications technology (ICT) project management and business development management.[D11] The construction pathway may carry licensing or registration requirements depending on the state or territory.

Advanced Diploma of Program Management

The Advanced Diploma of Program Management serves experienced managers coordinating sets of related projects, and it performs well on completion despite small numbers. A program in this context is a group of interrelated projects run toward a shared organisational objective. Enrolments reached 2,490 in 2024 across 102 RTOs holding it on their scope, a smaller but viable market.[D5,D12]

The four-year completion rate for the superseded version was 67% for the 2019 commencing cohort and 68% for 2020, well above the national VET average.[D6] Higher completion at this level fits a cohort of established managers undertaking the qualification with employer backing and a clear purpose.

Completer outcomes are strong, with 88% training for employment-related reasons, 84% achieving their main reason, and 93% employed or in further study after training.[D7] Among employed completers, 89% found the training relevant.[D7] Sample sizes at this level are smaller, so these figures carry wider margins of error than the Certificate IV and Diploma.

Training to occupation pathways data positions the Advanced Diploma as specialised training for research and development management, with progression pathways into ICT project management, procurement management, business development and quality assurance management.[D11]

Graduate Diploma of Portfolio Management

The Graduate Diploma of Portfolio Management is the highest-level qualification in this section, training for high-level decisions about which projects and programs an organisation invests in. Enrolments were 50 in 2024, delivered through 10 RTOs holding it on their scope.[D5,D12] At this volume the qualification functions as a specialist offering rather than a broad pathway, and its delivery is concentrated among very few providers.

Completion and outcomes data for this qualification draws on small samples and is reported as indicative only. Available figures suggest completers train for employment-related reasons and find the training relevant, consistent with the qualifications below it, but the numbers are too small to support firm conclusions.[D7] The qualification maps to corporate general management and policy and planning management roles, with a progression pathway into business development and management consulting.[D11]

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is changing project work by automating its administrative core while raising the value of the judgement and coordination that surround it. Research on AI in project management finds that the tasks most exposed to automation are status reporting, scheduling, documentation and routine analysis, with time savings on these tasks commonly estimated at 20% to 30%.[76] The tasks that define the role at higher levels, including stakeholder negotiation, risk judgement and decisions about scope and priority, are supported by AI rather than performed by it. This matches the exposure scores for the project administration occupation, where augmentation outweighs automation.

The constraint sits with organisations rather than the technology. Survey evidence shows project professionals adopting AI tools faster than their organisations are equipped to support, with a large majority of senior practitioners expecting significant impact on the profession while formal investment and governance lag behind.[77] This is consistent with the broader finding that management and business skills, including project management, are among the most-demanded skills in occupations highly exposed to AI, and that demand for cognitive and digital skills has risen sharply in those occupations.[78]

Industry feedback raised the incorporation of AI into project management directly, describing project management skills as set to change, and linked currency concerns to AI: the concern is that qualification content describes project practice as it was before AI tools became standard.

Another factor is the relationship between accredited qualifications and the certifications that dominate the senior end of the occupation. Globally, the most sought project credentials are professional certifications rather than accredited qualifications.[79] The VET qualifications hold a clear role at the project delivery and coordination levels, while the program and portfolio levels compete with established certifications that many employers already recognise.

Product management is emerging as a distinct business capability, and the building blocks for a VET response already exist within the system. Employers and recruiters describe product management as a role that brings together customer research, analytics, commercial judgement, stakeholder management and lifecycle planning, with accountability for the value a product delivers. It draws people from adjacent functions such as software delivery, marketing, analytics, business operations and project work, which makes it a capability that experienced workers grow into.

The opportunity this creates is to build capability for workers moving toward product roles from those adjacent functions. Industry feedback points to several routes that would fit the way the role is actually entered: UoCs already in the business and technology training packages cover much of the underlying capability and could support a structured offering; and employer-led models, including rotational placements and structured internal development, suit workers building product capability while in work. A response designed around transition and capability-building, aimed at people with adjacent experience, matches both the demand signal and the way employers recruit for these roles.

Implications for action

The Certificate IV and Diploma perform well for learners, but the evidence suggests their content has fallen behind current project practice, particularly the use of AI tools. Both deliver strong completer outcomes into a large, growing and broadly distributed market, so the question is currency, not supply: whether the qualifications teach project work as it is now done, including the judgement required to use AI tools well.

Product management is an emerging capability without a current VET pathway. The stakeholder signal is consistent that product management is a growing role best entered through transition from adjacent functions, and that the underlying capability is partly covered by existing units.

Cluster 11: Scientific Services

Higher education fields of education in scope: natural and physical sciences · mathematical sciences · economics · biological sciences

Summary

Scientific Services covers a set of high-skill analytical occupations that sit outside the VET system and are supplied almost entirely through higher education pathways. The five occupation groups span Research and Development Management, the actuarial and statistical professions, economics, the life sciences, and a group of social-research professions. Between 80% and 92% of workers in the core analytical roles hold a higher education qualification as their highest credential, and the VET share is in single digits for most.[D2]

The business-analytical core of this grouping is growing, and demand is projected to outpace supply across most roles to 2035.[D3] Research and Development Managers, and Actuaries, Mathematicians and Statisticians both grew strongly over the decade to 2025, and workforce projections point to demand running ahead of supply for both. Economists are the exception: the only group here whose employment fell over the past decade.[D2]

Generative AI exposure is concentrated in augmentation rather than automation for every occupation in this grouping.[D4] These are judgement-intensive roles built on interpretation, modelling, and advice, where AI tools accelerate output without substituting for the underlying reasoning. The practical effect is likely higher output expectations rather than reduced headcount, with the most quantitative roles, economists and the actuarial professions, carrying somewhat more exposure to task substitution.

Occupational demand

Research and Development Managers grew by roughly three-quarters over the decade to 2025, one of the faster growth rates among business-analytical occupations across the FTB sectors. Employment rose from approximately 11,400 in 2016 to 20,200 in 2025.[D2] Workforce projections point to demand reaching around 24,300 by 2035 against a supply trajectory that flattens and then declines, leaving a supply gap of approximately 7,300, the largest in this grouping.[D3]

The role is a managerial one drawing on deep technical backgrounds, and about 79% of workers hold a higher education qualification as their highest credential, against a VET share of around 15%.[D2] Generative AI exposure sits higher in the augmentation band, with an augmentation score of 0.71 and a low automation score of 0.43.[D4] The work centres on directing research programs, setting priorities, and translating technical findings into organisational decisions, tasks that AI can support but not perform independently.

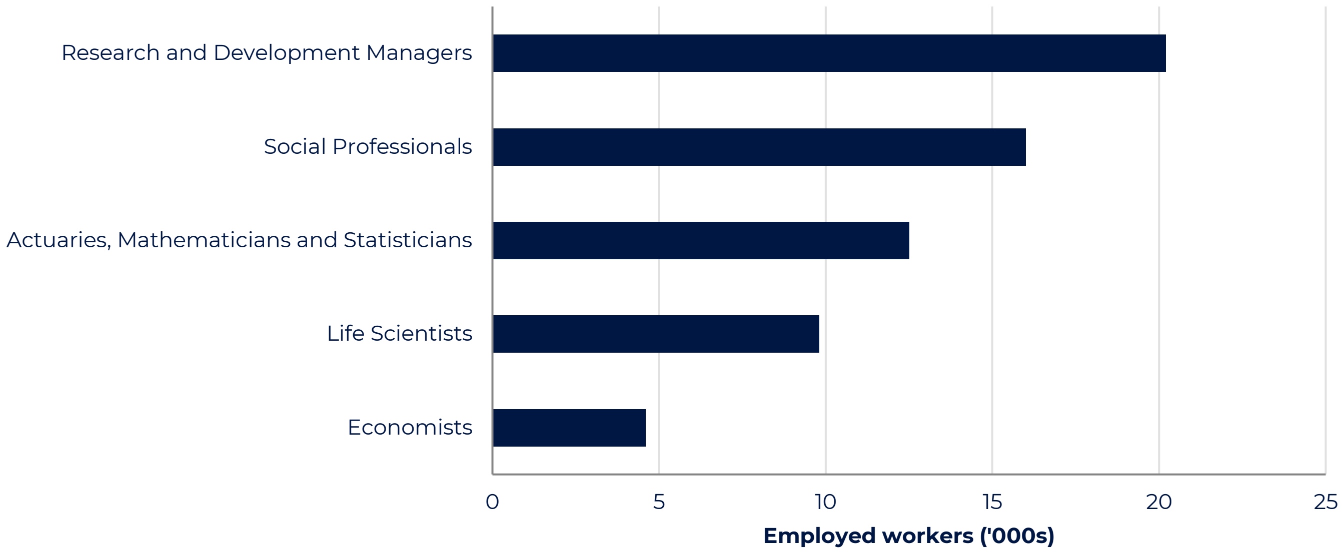

***Figure 61:** Scientific Services occupations (Research and Development Managers): employment, 2025.*

Source: FSO 2026, Occupation data based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey and Census data.[D2]

Actuaries, Mathematicians and Statisticians grew by more than half over the decade, and projections show demand slightly exceeding supply to 2035. Employment rose from approximately 8,400 in 2016 to 12,500 in 2025.[D2] Projected demand of around 15,900 by 2035 sits marginally above a rising supply trajectory, leaving a supply gap of approximately 300: the workforce is close to balance.[D3] This is among the most higher education-intensive occupations in the FTB sectors, with around 88% of workers holding higher education as their highest qualification and a VET share of about 7%.[D2]

Generative AI exposure has an augmentation score of 0.77 and an automation score of 0.58.[D4] The quantitative and computational tasks at the core of these roles, model building, statistical estimation, and data preparation, carry automation exposure, while the interpretive work of designing analyses and advising on uncertainty is augmented rather than replaced. The likely effect is a shift in the task mix toward the judgement-heavy portion of the role.

Economists are the only occupation in this grouping whose employment contracted over the decade, falling from approximately 5,300 in 2016 to 4,600 in 2025. [D2] Despite the decline, workforce projections show demand recovering to around 5,600 by 2035 against broadly flat supply, producing a supply gap of approximately 900.[D3] Around 92% of workers hold a higher education qualification as their highest credential, the highest higher education share in this grouping, with a VET share of roughly 5%.[D2] Economists are moderately male dominated,[D9] at about 35% female.[D2]

Generative AI exposure is the highest in the cluster on both measures, with an augmentation score of 0.78 and an automation score of 0.59.[D4] Forecasting, data analysis, and modelling tasks are exposed to substitution, while the framing of economic questions and the interpretation of results for decision-makers are augmented.

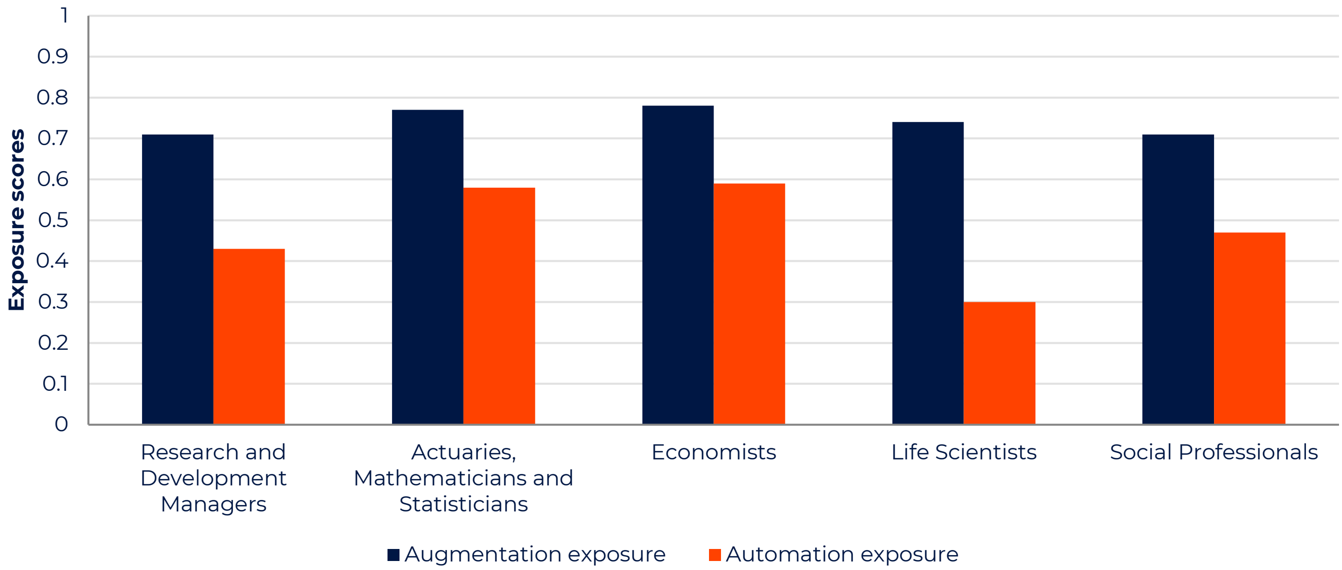

Figure 62: *Scientific Services occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Life Scientists grew steadily over the decade and face modest demand pressure to 2035. Employment rose from approximately 7,700 in 2016 to 9,800 in 2025,[D2] with projected demand of around 12,600 against slowly growing supply, leaving a supply gap of approximately 1,700.[D3] The group spans biochemists, biotechnologists, microbiologists, botanists, zoologists, and marine biologists, and around 90% hold higher education as their highest qualification.[D2] Generative AI exposure is higher on augmentation with a score of 0.74 and a notably low automation score of 0.30, the lowest in this cluster.[D4] Laboratory, field, and experimental work resists automation by current tools, while literature synthesis, analysis, and reporting are supported.

Social Professionals grew from approximately 12,800 in 2016 to 16,000 in 2025 and are projected to remain in demand to 2035.[D2] Workforce projections show demand reaching around 19,200 against a supply trajectory that declines after 2025, leaving a supply gap of approximately 5,300.[D3] The group includes historians, interpreters, translators, and archaeologists, sits at about 76% female,[D2] and is moderately female dominated.[D9] The VET share here is higher than elsewhere in this grouping, at around 24%, reflecting accredited pathways for interpreting and translating that sit within other training packages, though higher education remains the larger channel at about 66%.[D2]

Generative AI exposure is higher for augmentation with a score of 0.71 and an automation score of 0.47.[D4] Language translation tasks carry some substitution exposure from current tools, while research, cultural interpretation, and specialist advisory work are augmented.

Education and training trends

Higher education is the principal supply channel for every occupation in this grouping, and the analytical roles are among the most credential-intensive in the FTB sectors. Higher education shares run from around 66% for Social Professionals to about 92% for Economists, with VET qualifications a minor channel for the core analytical roles.[D2]

Where comparable higher education employment outcomes are available, graduates of related analytical fields move into work at rates at or above the all-fields benchmark. Medium-term employment for domestic undergraduates in business and management fields sat at around 91% in 2024, close to the all-fields figure, while computing fields reached around 93%.[D8] These fields are adjacent to rather than coextensive with the occupations here, so the figures indicate the general strength of analytical graduate pathways rather than occupation-specific outcomes.

Skills and knowledge changes

Generative AI is reshaping the task composition of these analytical occupations through augmentation, and the evidence points consistently to enhancement of knowledge work rather than displacement of it. Across all five occupation groups, generative AI exposure scores place augmentation well above automation,[D4] a pattern associated with roles built on judgement, interpretation, and advice. The implication is a rising premium on the skills that AI does not supply, framing the right question, designing the analysis, judging the reliability of outputs, and communicating findings to decision-makers.

The most quantitative roles carry the clearest exposure to task substitution within an augmentation-dominant picture. Economists and the actuarial and statistical professions record AI automation exposure scores approaching 0.6, higher than the rest of this grouping,[D4] reflecting the routine computational and modelling content embedded in otherwise interpretive work. The skills emphasis shifts toward the portion of the role that AI cannot perform: scenario design, assumption-setting, and the translation of model output into advice. This is a task-mix change rather than a reduction in the value of the underlying expertise.

Implications for action

These higher-education-supplied analytical roles sit outside the VET remit, so the evidence here is for monitoring rather than training product development. Three things are worth watching: demand growth in the business-analytical core, the augmentation-driven change in task composition across all five occupation groups, and the higher education pipeline that feeds these roles. Demand is projected to outpace supply for Research and Development Managers, the actuarial and statistical professions, and the social-research professions to 2035, while AI is reshaping the task mix of every role toward the judgement-intensive work that current tools do not perform.

Cluster 12: Work Health and Safety

VET qualifications in scope: Certificate III in Work Health and Safety · Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety · Diploma of Work Health and Safety · Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety

Active project: A new UoC on safe and respectful workplaces is in development for the Certificate III in Work Health and Safety as an elective, designed to be contextualised across industries. The psychosocial safety evidence in this section is directed to that work.

Summary

Work health and safety qualifications prepare workers for roles that are growing and that training serves well, so the pressure on these qualifications falls on keeping content current rather than on lifting supply. The occupations these qualifications feed into have expanded steadily over the past decade and report no shortage. The open questions concern what practitioners now need to know, not whether enough of them are being trained.

Two regulatory and practice shifts are changing the knowledge base faster than the qualifications have moved to match. Employers now carry an explicit duty to manage psychosocial hazards, a category of risk that earlier versions of these qualifications treated lightly. At the same time, AI is entering safety practice through hazard detection, monitoring and incident analysis, which changes the tasks a practitioner is expected to perform.

The qualifications differ sharply in scale and purpose:

- The Certificate III in Work Health and Safety is a small qualification that prepares people for support roles and acts as a step toward higher study rather than a direct route into professional safety work.
- The Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety carries the large majority of enrolments and is the qualification that makes a learner ready for work as a safety adviser or inspector.
- The Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety prepare experienced practitioners for adviser and manager roles, with strong completion and outcomes but modest volume.

Occupational demand

These qualifications lead into safety occupations that sit outside the FTB workforce, so the data available here is limited. The two occupations are presented as the destinations the qualifications serve.

Occupational and Environmental Health Professionals grew from approximately 24,900 workers in 2016 to 41,400 in 2025, one of the steeper increases among professional occupations in this report.[D2] This four-digit occupation group is broader than work health and safety: it includes environmental health officers alongside safety advisers and managers, so the count overstates the work health and safety workforce specifically.

VET is the highest qualification held for 48% of these workers, and higher education for 40%, with the VET share easing slightly over the past decade as the higher education share has risen. The VET route remains the larger single channel, but the two run close, and a reader should not treat this as a vocationally dominated occupation. The group is gender balanced,[D9] with women making up 50% of workers in 2025.[D2]

Generative AI exposure scores show augmentation is high and automation is low: an augmentation score of 0.72 against an automation score of 0.36.[D4] The work concentrates on judgement, interpretation and dealing with people, where AI tools can speed up the production of risk assessments, reports and analysis but cannot replace the reasoning that makes those outputs defensible. The practical effect is a practitioner who can cover more ground, which may raise what employers expect from each role rather than reduce the number of roles.

Safety Inspectors reached 6,600 workers in 2025, up from approximately 4,800 in 2016, though the occupation has eased back from a peak of 6,800 in 2023.[D2]

VET is the highest qualification held for 55% of safety inspectors and higher education for 28%, making this the more VET oriented of the two occupations. The occupation is highly male dominated,[D9] with women making up 17% of workers in 2025,[D2] a pattern that has held across the past two census points and stands in contrast to the gender-balanced professional group above it.[D9]

Generative AI exposure sits with an augmentation score of 0.69 against an automation score of 0.38.[D4] Inspection work involves site judgement, observation and dealing with people on the ground, so the likely effect is faster reporting and pattern detection rather than substitution of the inspector.

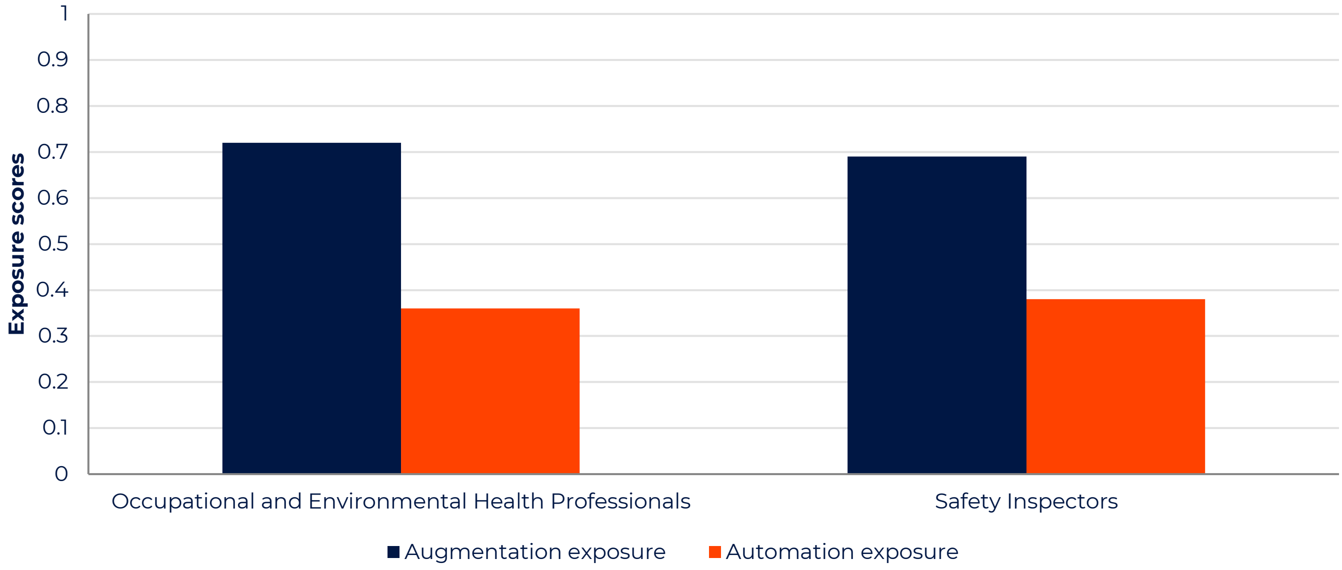

Figure 63: *Work Health and Safety occupations: generative AI exposure scores.*

Source: JSA 2025, generative AI exposure scores.[D4]

Education and training trends

This section covers the four VET qualifications in scope: the Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety. The enrolment chart below covers VET enrolments.

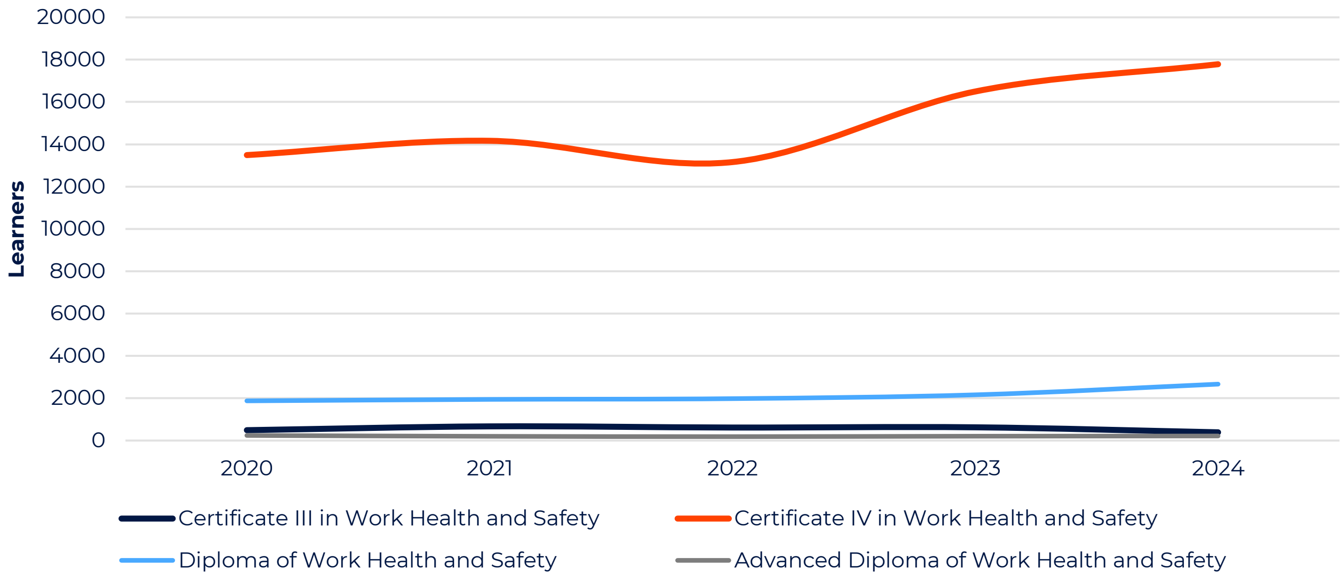

Figure 64: *Work Health and Safety: VET enrolments, 2020 to 2024.*

Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024 data.[D5]

Enrolments concentrate heavily in the Certificate IV, which has grown almost fourfold in five years while the other three qualifications have stayed small. The Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety rose from 4,565 enrolments in 2020 to 17,785 in 2024. The Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma together accounted for fewer than 3,300 enrolments in 2024. This is a single-qualification market with three smaller satellites around it.

Certificate III in Work Health and Safety

The Certificate III in Work Health and Safety is an entry-level qualification for people in safety support roles or moving toward professional safety study. It is the smallest of the four by enrolment and has been shrinking, from 630 enrolments in 2021 to 390 in 2024. 40 RTOs held the qualification on their scope as recorded on the National Training Register in April 2026, a thin provider base that matches the low and falling enrolment volume and limits learner choice in any given region.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 78%, well above the national VET average of around 51% for that cohort.[D6] A high completion rate at this level, combined with the qualification's role as a stepping stone, is consistent with learners using it as a deliberate first rung rather than an endpoint.

Student outcomes for completers are strong and employment-driven. Among those who completed, 86% trained mainly for employment-related reasons, above the BSB training package average of 71%.[D7] Almost all, 95%, achieved their main reason for training, and 92% were employed or in further study afterwards, both above the training package averages of 83% and 86%.[D7] Of those employed after training, 92% found the training relevant to their work, against a training package average of 78%.[D7] The relevance figure is drawn only from employed completers and is a smaller group than the full completer cohort, so it sits alongside the other measures rather than being compared directly against them.

Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety

The Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety is the qualification that makes a learner ready for work as a safety adviser or safety inspector, and it is the main professional entry point. Its enrolment growth, from 4,565 in 2020 to 17,785 in 2024, makes it one of the larger business sector qualifications by volume. The provider market is correspondingly broad: 284 registered training organisations held the qualification on their scope in April 2026, which gives learners wide access and choice across the country.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 54%, close to the national VET average of around 51% for that cohort and the lower of the four work health and safety qualifications.[D6] A completion rate near the national average alongside strong completer outcomes does not point to a content problem on its own: it may reflect the volume and breadth of the cohort, learners completing units for immediate workplace needs without finishing the full qualification, or delivery factors. The FSO Workforce Roadshow evidence indicates that core safety units are often taken for immediate employment needs while later pathways are untracked.

Completer outcomes are stronger than the training package average across the board. Employment was the main reason for training for 94% of completers, against the BSB average of 71%.[D7] Achievement of the main reason ran at 86%, employment or further study at 96%, and relevance of training to work, among employed completers, at 90%, each at or above the training package average.[D7] Industry feedback gathered through the roadshows was positive on this qualification, with one industry association describing it favourably. The strong outcomes and supportive industry view together indicate a qualification that is working for the learners and employers who use it.

Diploma of Work Health and Safety

The Diploma of Work Health and Safety prepares experienced practitioners for adviser and manager roles and sits above the Certificate IV in scope and depth. Enrolments grew steadily from 940 in 2020 to 2,665 in 2024, a healthy mid-sized market. 113 RTOs held the qualification on their scope in April 2026, enough for reasonable learner access without the breadth of the Certificate IV market.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 83%, well above the national VET average.[D6] Completer outcomes are strong: 89% trained mainly for employment reasons, 87% achieved their main reason, 97% were employed or in further study, and 95% of employed completers found their training relevant, all above the relevant BSB training package averages.[D7] The pathways data confirms the Diploma as occupation-ready for safety adviser, safety inspector and safety manager roles, with progression into human resources and training and development roles.[D11]

Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety

The Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety is the most senior qualification in scope, aimed at practitioners moving into management. It is a small qualification, with enrolments rising modestly from 175 in 2020 to 215 in 2024. Only 11 RTOs held it on their scope in April 2026, a thin provider base that reflects its niche, senior position rather than a market failure.

The four-year completion rate for the 2020 commencing cohort was 97%, the highest of the four qualifications and far above the national average, consistent with a small cohort of committed, experienced learners.[D6] Completer outcomes are the strongest in the group: 90% trained for employment reasons, 97% were employed or in further study afterwards, and 98% of employed completers found the training relevant.[D7] The pathways data confirms the Advanced Diploma as occupation-ready for safety adviser, safety inspector and safety manager roles.[D11]

Skills and knowledge changes

The clearest change to the knowledge base for work health and safety is the explicit duty on employers to manage psychosocial hazards, which has moved psychological health from the margins of safety practice to a core obligation. *Model Work Health and Safety Regulations* introduced in 2022, supported by a national code of practice, require employers to identify and control psychosocial risks such as workplace bullying, harassment, exposure to traumatic events and aggression, applying the same risk management discipline used for physical hazards.[80] Enforcement has been building across jurisdictions, with compliance activity from 2025.[81] Practitioners trained under earlier versions of these qualifications, which treated psychological health lightly, need current knowledge of how to identify, assess and control psychosocial risk.

AI is entering safety practice as a working tool, which changes the tasks a practitioner performs rather than the need for the practitioner. Recent literature documents AI being used for hazard detection, real-time monitoring, fatigue and exposure sensing, and incident analysis, shifting the practitioner toward interpreting these outputs and integrating them into risk management.[82] A 2025 survey of safety professionals found about 29% of firms using AI for safety purposes, most commonly to identify hazards and monitor safety behaviours, so adoption is established but far from universal. A systematic review published the same year found only two of more than 1,200 studies directly linking these tools to measurable injury or illness outcomes, which means the technology is being adopted faster than the evidence for its effectiveness is accumulating.[83]

This pattern matches the augmentation-heavy generative AI exposure scores for both occupations: the tools extend what a practitioner can do without removing the judgement at the centre of the role. The roadshow evidence pointed in the same direction, with stakeholders in one jurisdiction calling for a module on technology in safety practice covering responsible use of AI tools, governance of autonomous systems, and the mental health effects of technology at work.

A third change is regulatory rather than technological: the first attempts to bring AI managed work within safety duties. A bill introduced to the New South Wales Parliament in 2025 would, if passed, place a duty on businesses to ensure that digital work systems, including algorithmic management, do not compromise worker health and safety.[84] This is at an early stage and applies to one jurisdiction, so its weight should not be overstated, but it signals that the scope of safety practice is widening to cover how technology directs and monitors work, not only physical and psychosocial hazards.

State-by-state regulatory variation is a standing feature of safety practice that the qualifications must accommodate. Roadshow feedback noted that each jurisdiction regulates safety itself, with some running their own short programs, which means a nationally recognised qualification has to equip practitioners to work within a framework that differs by location.

Implications for action

The pressure on these qualifications is content currency. Training outcomes are strong across all four and the occupations are growing, and the evidence points to no missing qualification and no structural gap in the suite. What the evidence does show is a knowledge base that has moved ahead of the qualifications.

The psychosocial hazard duty is the most developed of these and is already being addressed through the safe and respectful workplaces unit in development for the Certificate III. AI entering safety practice is a separate and distinct pressure: practitioner tasks are changing, the regulatory scope is starting to widen to cover algorithmically managed work, and the roadshow evidence calls directly for technology content in safety qualifications. This AI-related evidence sits outside the scope of the Certificate III unit currently in development and is a distinct question for a future review, rather than an extension of that project's brief.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Artificial intelligence (AI)	Digital systems that perform tasks normally requiring human judgement, such as analysing data, generating content, recognising patterns or supporting decisions.
Attrition	The rate at which workers leave an occupation or the workforce, through retirement, career change or other exits, creating demand for replacement workers.
Augmentation exposure	A measure of the potential for an occupation’s tasks to be enhanced, rather than replaced, by generative AI (its generative AI augmentation exposure), reported on a zero-to-one scale. Scores describe technical potential; actual adoption will vary with cost, regulation, and the value placed on human judgement. See JSA's methodology notes for full detail.
Automation exposure	A measure of the potential for an occupation’s tasks to be automated by generative AI (its generative AI automation exposure), reported on a zero-to-one scale. Scores describe technical potential; actual adoption will vary with cost, regulation, and the value placed on human judgement. See JSA's methodology notes for full detail.
Contextualisation	Adapting a nationally recognised training product so it reflects the language, systems and practices of a particular industry or workplace.
Industry	A grouping of businesses that produce similar goods or services, classified in this report using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC).
Generative AI	A class of artificial intelligence that creates new content, such as text, code, images or audio, in response to prompts, rather than only classifying or predicting from existing data.
Sector	One of the three broad areas of work this report covers, finance, technology and business (FTB), each made up of related industries.
Occupation	A grouping of jobs involving similar tasks and skills, classified in this report using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO).
Occupation Shortage Report	The Jobs and Skills Australia publication reporting quarterly analysis on select data from the Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised.
Occupation Shortage List	The Jobs and Skills Australia annual list of occupations assessed as in shortage, used as the basis for the Core Skills Occupation List. Distinct from the quarterly Occupation Shortage Report.
Registered training organisation (RTO)	An organisation authorised to deliver and assess nationally recognised vocational education and training.
Skill level	A measure used in ANZSCO of the formal education, training and experience typically needed to work in an occupation, ranging from skill level 1 (commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher) to skill level 5 (commensurate with a Certificate I or compulsory secondary schooling). It is an attribute of occupations, not of individuals.
Skill set	A grouping of units of competency that meets a specific workplace or licensing need, smaller than a full qualification.
Training package	A nationally endorsed set of qualifications, skill sets and units of competency for an industry, used as the basis for accredited vocational training.
Unit of competency (UoC)	The smallest nationally recognised component of a training package, describing the skills and knowledge needed to perform a workplace task.

Term	Definition
Vocational education and training (VET)	Australia's system of work-focused, nationally recognised education and training delivered below the level of a higher education degree.
Workforce projections	Trend-based modelling of future workforce demand, supply, attrition, education, migration and job movement to 2035, prepared for FSO and read as a baseline rather than a prediction.

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AASB	Australian Accounting Standards Board
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACMA	Australian Communications and Media Authority
AI	Artificial intelligence
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
BSB	Business Services Training Package
CPA Australia	Certified Practising Accountants Australia
CPS	Cross-industry Prudential Standard
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
FNS	Financial Services Training Package
FSO	Future Skills Organisation
FTB	Finance, technology and business
FY	Financial year
ICT	Information and Communications Technology Training Package
JSA	Jobs and Skills Australia
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCA	Occupation Standard Classification for Australia
OSL	Occupation Shortage List
QILT	Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered training organisation
SaaS	Software-as-a-service
SFIA	Skills Framework for the Information Age
TPB	Tax Practitioners Board
TPD	Training product development
VET	Vocational education and training
WEF	World Economic Forum

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Data sources

The data assets and collections drawn on in this report are labelled D1 to D13 where they are cited in the text. Visit the FSO Workforce Intelligence Platform for more information about the data.

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- Gender: ABS Census – Tablebuilder Census 2011, 2016, 2021. Gap years in Census data (2011, 2016, and 2021) are filled using linear interpolation. 2022–2025 data is filled using extrapolation.
- Highest education level: ABS Census — Tablebuilder Census 2011, 2016, 2021. Gap years in Census data (2011, 2016, and 2021) are filled using linear interpolation. 2022–2025 data is filled using extrapolation.

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