2025 Workforce Plan

High Load, Short Supply

Bridging the gap to 2030

Summary Report

Powering Skills Organisation Ltd

CEO foreword

The biggest workforce development opportunity in a generation

The Net Zero transition is one of the largest changes to our global and national economy since the Industrial Revolution. Chief amongst its impacts will be a profound reshaping of the labour and training market for energy trades in this country and across the world.

The transition provides the impetus to understand how these markets operate in Australia. Additionally, it provides the impetus to proactively embrace this moment as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strategically prepare the labour and training market for a fundamentally different energy future.

Australia is already witnessing several trends that signal we've got the workforce fundamentals in place to support the transition:

- Our energy trades workforce now sits at around 300,000 workers – a 20% increase since 2010.
- A record number of energy apprentices are in training, including unprecedented numbers of women and First Nations people.
- Additional demand for energy apprenticeships is soaring, in some cases over 100 applicants want to train for every available spot.
- Electricians rank among the top career choices for students, especially for young men.
- As part of its productivity agenda, the federal government has tasked the Productivity Commission with several new inquiries, including ones focused on workforce and skills, and the Net Zero transition.
- The landmark five-year National Skills Agreement commits $12.6 billion from the federal government (with potential state co-investment) to strengthen the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. This commenced in 2024, with a key focus on supporting the Net Zero transition.

Other key institutional foundations have also been laid, and that's why Powering Skills Organisation (PSO) was born. Established in 2023, as one of ten government-backed Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC), PSO was purpose-built to harness the specific workforce opportunities in the energy, gas, and renewables sector.

This has proved a timely and bold move. Not all nations around the world have a dedicated entity like PSO – even though all are undergoing the Net Zero transition, and all need to strategically understand and reform their energy labour markets to deliver a larger and ever more complex portfolio of projects.

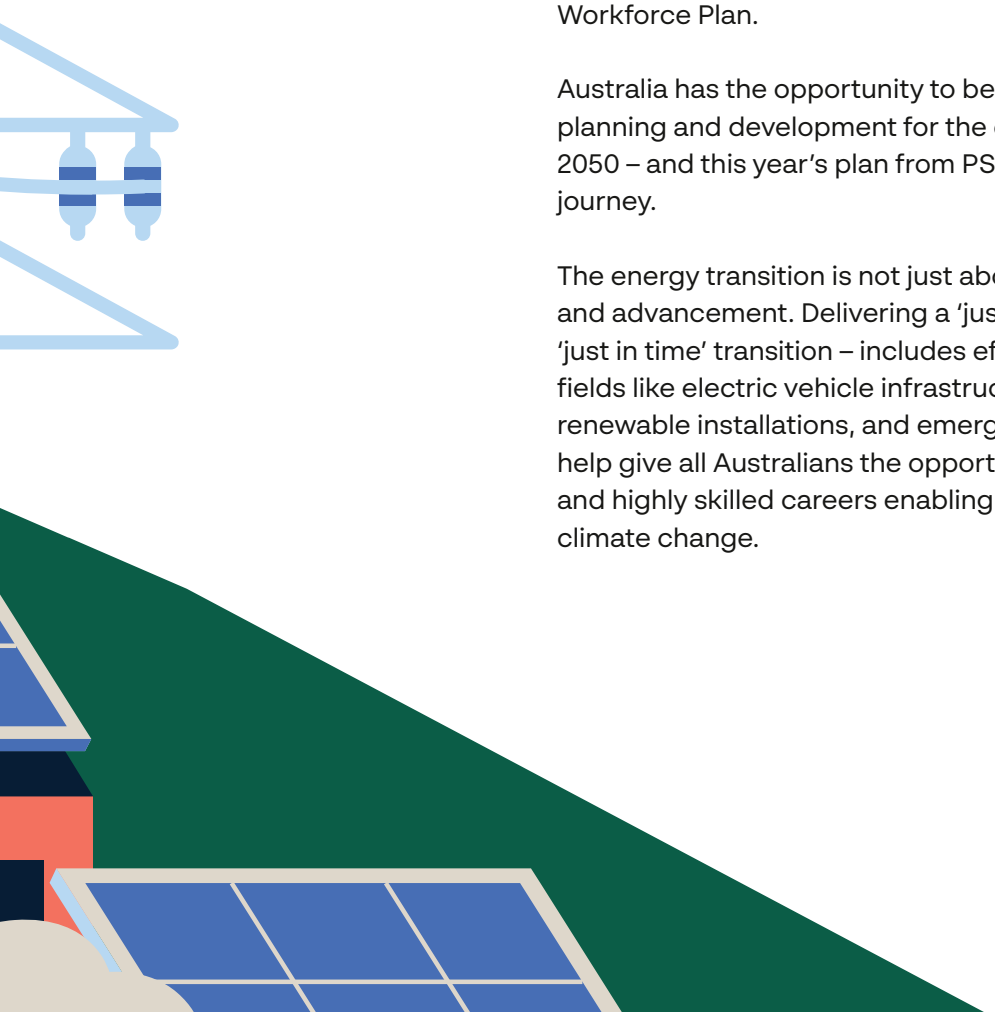
The foundations of the JSC model in general, and PSO in particular, are further strengthened by a strategic focus on 'workforce planning'. This is an emerging discipline in our public discourse, but one close to my heart, having worked as a workforce planning practitioner in the energy and resources sector for many years.

I understand its importance, but also its frustrations. The workforce, skills and training requirements are often among the last factors considered as any industry undergoes change. And workforce plans are often one-off or short-term documents, rather than dynamic and continually evolving like the workforces they are trying to support.

That's part of the reason why I am so excited to release PSO's 2025 Workforce Plan.

Australia has the opportunity to be heavily proactive in workforce planning and development for the energy sector between now and 2050 – and this year's plan from PSO spearheads that continuing journey.

The energy transition is not just about change, but about growth and advancement. Delivering a 'just' transition – over and above a 'just in time' transition – includes effort to understand upskilling in fields like electric vehicle infrastructure, smart home automation, renewable installations, and emerging digital and soft skills. This will help give all Australians the opportunity for stable, safe, well-paying and highly skilled careers enabling Australia, and the world, to solve climate change.



What's in the plan?

In developing the 2025 WFP we spoke to over 280 organisations across the country, and brought them together for one purpose – to help us develop a plan to grow, skill and retain the energy workforce we need. Close to two-thirds of these organisations were from industry and the training sector.

Our collective efforts have come together resulting in a strategic response of over 30 actions. Most of these actions are to be undertaken directly by PSO, which we plan to start prioritising, scoping and implementing within the remainder of 2025. Other actions are policy recommendations to our government partners.

To me, a strength of this year's plan is its systemic view of what factors enable success in the evolving energy labour market, which helps to better shape coordinated strategic action across those areas. For too long, I believe the national conversation in this area has been constrained by 'silver bullet' thinking and 'quick fix' solutions.

We've determined there are four discrete requirements or 'success factors' that, if worked towards tenaciously and holistically, would help build and secure the workforce required now and in the future – capacity, capability, culture and confidence. The first two have been central to my strategic outlook since the beginning of my tenure as CEO, while the latter two have quickly joined the repertoire as equally critical.

We then unpacked each of these success factors. This was to measure their need (where possible), determine their drivers and brakes on expansion, and, critical for workforce planning, what type of action could be taken to start unlocking real change.

Take 'capacity' as an example of the utmost importance. As outlined in the plan, the energy sector – particularly the trades – is acutely dependent on the onshore apprenticeship system for its future workforce taking four years to train a qualified professional. Energy apprentices are at the heart of the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, and are a critical indicator of our sovereign human resource potential. Ultimately, our future workforce capacity in the energy trades is determined by the size of this apprentice pipeline over the medium to long-term.

We estimate that, despite record growth recently, the energy apprentice pipeline could do with an additional 40% boost to help reach our highest Net Zero ambitions, that is, to become a clean energy superpower that realises our domestic goals and export potential. The federal government continues to signal this ambition through recent commitments, one example, the very recent expansion of the renewable energy capacity investment scheme by 25%.

But how can we encourage even more onshore growth – over and above our current record-breaking levels?

We highlight that various initiatives to unlock the latent potential in three deeply interconnected areas could be activated to drive and sustain further capacity growth: apprentices, apprentice employers and the training system. For instance, we found more apprentices available than positions offered and the potential to build additional interest in the trades. We found some employers (mainly small businesses) remain hesitant to take on apprentices and more apprentices could be training with larger

businesses. We found we could use more trainers and expand the amount of training infrastructure and space. All contribute to our current capacity ceiling, and all are within our collective power to unlock. But again, there are no silver bullets and no quick fixes.

To lift capacity, PSO offers a range of actions in the 2025 Workforce Plan.

These include:

- A national register for apprentices who want to train to connect directly with employers
- A national strategy to support career influencers and promote trades pathways
- Better understanding and defining the apprenticeship value proposition for employers
- Early year apprentice quotas on major projects – especially large businesses
- Evaluate existing initiatives to increase number of trainers
- A grants program for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to invest in training infrastructure

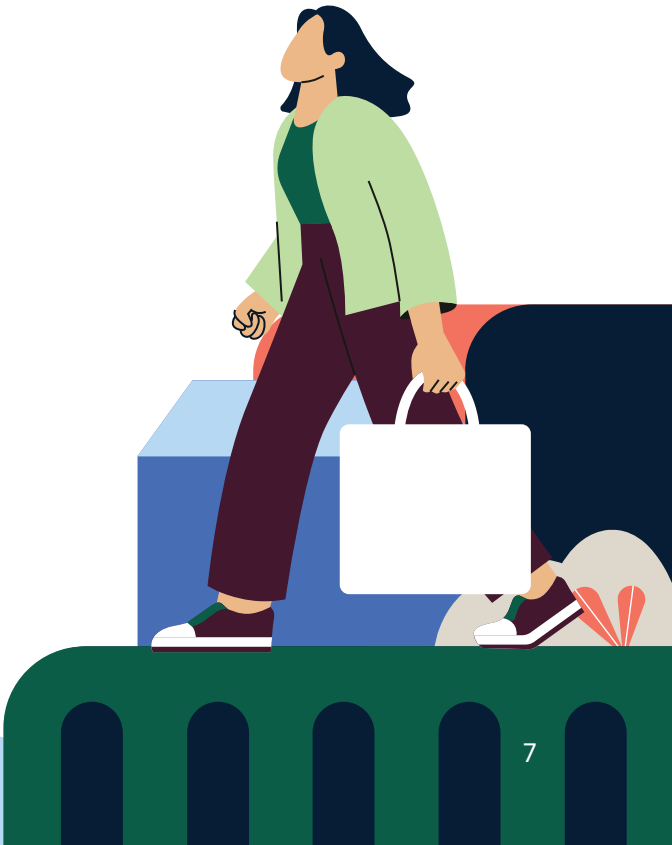
These are just some of the actions in our 2025 Workforce Plan PSO will now start implementing to unleash future capacity growth for the industry.

As you'll discover, other initiatives in the plan outline a similar network of evidence-based, integrated and implementable actions PSO can now start taking over short, medium and long-term horizons. Actions we know will boost and improve the other labour market success factors we've identified – capability, culture and confidence.

Finally, we believe that all national energy labour markets around the world are being reshaped by the Net Zero transition, and no country has a perfectly functioning labour and training system to respond. Yet Australia is at the forefront by proactively using this as a sovereign opportunity. By developing and implementing a plan like this, leveraging our strong workforce, training and institutional foundations, and working in partnership with industry and government, we are demonstrating to our global peers how to make the most of this moment.

I encourage all stakeholders to read our plan, and I thank everyone who participated in its development. Especially our industry and training sector colleagues who are already busy helping deliver their unique share of the new energy transition.

Anthea Middleton
Chief Executive Officer
Powering Skills Organisation



Executive summary

Net Zero is a top government priority – but its success risks being held back by an underprepared and undersupplied labour market. Very few workforces have faced such a sharp rise in demand for more workers, new skills and cultural change from such a low starting point in supply as the energy sector is anticipated to face.

In response, PSO has developed this Workforce Plan, informed by in-depth consultation, analysis, and modelling. Consequently, this has revealed multiple interconnected crises, spanning workforce shortages, upskilling gaps, and cultural barriers, along with their underlying causes.

To address these, PSO has proposed a strategic response made up of 31 targeted actions.

Built with industry, backed by insight

PSO developed the 2025 Workforce Plan through a structured, industry-led approach – beginning with the identification of workforce challenges, central to which was extensive industry engagement, involving 280 organisations across every state and territory. This process was supported by quantitative data analysis, stakeholder insights, and workforce modelling.

Collectively, stakeholders contributed around 3,000 comments, with nearly 60% of input coming directly from industry and the training sector, and the remainder from peak bodies, unions, and government departments. Over 100 solutions and recommendations were proposed by these stakeholders.

Engagement occurred in two key phases: first, to identify workforce challenges and their root causes; and second, to collaboratively identify solutions. All industry contributions were consolidated into a single, comprehensive research asset, ensuring the plan was built with industry and backed by evidence.

The 'dual crisis' putting Australia's clean energy ambitions at risk

During the development of the 2025 Workforce Plan, PSO uncovered some sobering truths about the future of Australia's energy workforce. The country's structural shift toward a Net Zero economy is profoundly transforming the labour market for energy workers – in ways unforeseen just a decade ago. The result isn't a standard one-dimensional labour market issue.

The Net Zero transition has quickly catalysed two urgent, simultaneous crises: a shortage of workers that is expected to worsen and a critical need for more diverse skills, underwritten by the necessity for a cultural overhaul across the industry.

The workforce challenge

The key driver of the workforce challenge is the sheer scale of demand. According to PSO analysis of data from Jobs and Skills Australia, Australia requires an additional 42,000 energy trades workers by 2030. This is expected to expand over the following decades. This growth in demand reflects the total additional workforce needed to support both renewable and non-renewable sectors – particularly under a high growth scenario when Australia becomes a major clean energy exporter.

Several factors limit the ability to scale up the workforce to meet this demand.

The energy trades have some of the lowest immigration rates, and legitimate safety regulations make it a thorough, carefully managed and longer-term prospect for migrants to fill licensed roles like electricians.

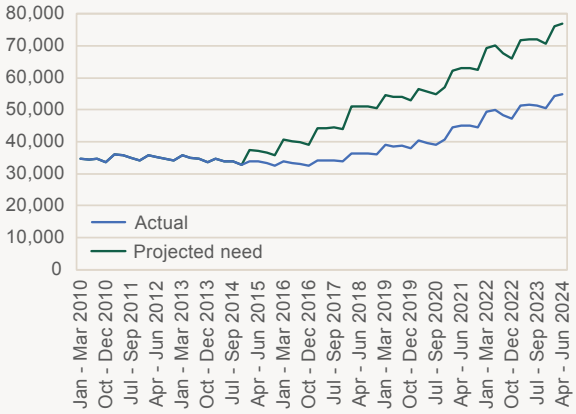
As a result, the workforce gap will largely need to be addressed through the onshore apprenticeship system – an essential but time intensive pathway (around four years) – that ensures workers are fully qualified and safety-ready. This is a notoriously hard system to scale.

PSO's independent modelling underscores the significant challenge Australia therefore faces.

Meeting the 2030 target of 42,000 additional workers means boosting apprentices in training by 40%, or approximately 22,000 more energy apprentices. As of 2024, this would mean raising the current total from 55,000 to 77,000. Ideally, efforts to expand capacity should have begun ten years ago, given the structural and logistical challenges of scaling the training sector.

On a positive note, the number of apprentices in training is already on the rise, thanks to strong efforts by the government to grow the pipeline. However, there's still much more room and need for concerted action.

Figure 1: Energy trade apprentices, Australia, in-training



Source: National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (2025). Apprentices and trainees ('Actual'). PSO (2025). For 'Projected need' methodology – see appendices. Energy trade apprentices are Electricians, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics, Electrical Distribution and Transmission Trades Workers, Electrical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians, Electronics Trades Workers, Electrical Engineers.

Apprenticeship bottlenecks are limiting growth

Stakeholder feedback for the 2025 Workforce Plan highlights the reality of the crises starts right at the beginning of the workforce pipeline: apprenticeships.

Multiple factors are holding back the growth of apprentice numbers. These factors collectively affect all three groups that need to work in harmony in the training system – apprentices, employers, and training providers.

Apprentices

Two issues were identified that, while seemingly contradictory, conspire to limit the number of apprentices in training. The need to generate more interest and exposure for people to become apprentices, and the need to better meet the existing demand from those already eager to start.

The first issue is unsurprising. Most school students are steered toward university over trades. Data from *Year13* shows 78% of secondary students plan to attend university, while only 10% report an intention to pursue an apprenticeship. The second issue is more distinctive. Current demand for apprenticeships is outstripping both the number of positions offered by employers and the capacity of the training sector. This includes one report of around 6,000 applicants vying for just 150 energy apprenticeship positions at a single network distribution company.

Employers

Stakeholders highlighted that micro, small and medium-sized businesses, as of 2024, train around 75% of Australia's energy apprentices, face significant wage and supervisory pressures when hiring apprentices – often without a clear return on investment.

This challenge is worsened by frequent reports of larger companies 'poaching' third – and fourth – year apprentices, further discouraging employers from taking on apprentices. Additionally, apprentice quotas on major projects are limited in scope and often exclude early-year or mature aged apprentices, further restricting new entrant opportunities.

Training providers

A major barrier to expanding the apprentice pipeline is the shortage of VET trainers and limited training infrastructure. 79% of training organisations surveyed by PSO reported needing more educators, with low pay being the main obstacle to attracting qualified candidates. Additionally, 77% of surveyed training organisations say infrastructure must grow to meet future demand, but costs and capital investment remain the biggest hurdles. These challenges have also reportedly led to delays in commencements and long wait times for many apprentices already enrolled but have yet to begin their classroom studies.

The upskilling challenge

While the need for more energy workers is evident, an equally urgent – but less visible – challenge is the parallel skills needed for development.

The skills required within the energy trades are also undergoing profound transformation, driven by the Net Zero transition and rapid technological change. Early indications of a skills evolution is happening within existing roles, rather than through the creation of entirely new ones. The nature of tasks is shifting fast, driving urgent demand for new and updated skillsets (see Figure 2). For example, electricians are among the top five jobs projected to undergo the most technological augmentation by 2034, according to the Australian Computer Society.

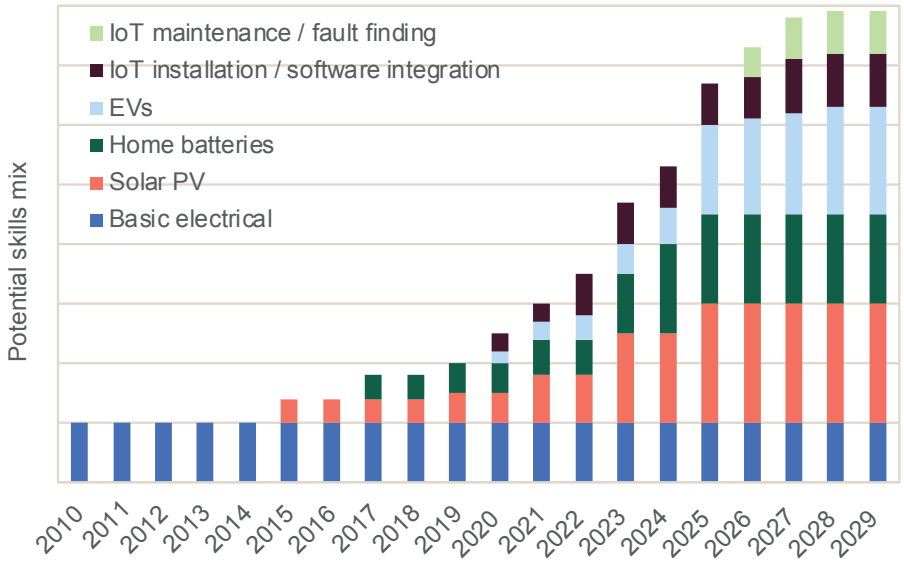
The Net Zero transition is creating new training needs at all stages of the workforce development pipeline – pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and post-apprenticeship. Yet the traditional training system is struggling to keep up, with slow adaptation of new units, delivery models, and limited flexibility.

The UEE – Electrotechnology training package, which covers over 95% of energy workers has been widely reported to PSO as outdated, overly complex, and slow to keep pace with evolving industry needs. These inefficiencies have been linked to slowing graduation times for energy workers, along with skill deficiencies.

For example, a potential shortage of units of competency in clean energy technologies has been recognised as a risk to the Net Zero transition. With growing consumer adoption of these technologies there is an urgent need for nationally recognised training to ensure safe and compliant installations.

PSO has already initiated a full review and update of the UEE training package, consulting with industry to deliver a more responsive, future-focused package.

Figure 2: Electricians (residential), evolving skills needs



Source: PSO (2025). Conceptualisation of qualitative stakeholder feedback.

Some of the key challenges in upskilling is the lack of post-apprenticeship programs and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) frameworks (and incentives) for qualified energy trades workers to remain current and advance their skills.

This directly affects the rollout of Net Zero technologies across the economy, such as electric vehicle infrastructure. It also hinders the growth of digital skills needed for tasks like configuring Internet of Things (IoT) systems and home automation, as well as the rising importance of soft skills, including advising customers on energy efficiency.

What deeper factors underpin the challenges?

The current culture in the energy trades – especially where it intersects with construction – poses a significant barrier to workforce development goals, with the prevailing 'brawn' culture creating challenges for diversity and inclusion.

An inconsistent and worksite dependent culture, fuelled by insufficient workplace policies and training programs, continues to hinder the attraction and retention rates of a more diverse energy trades workforce.

For example, women make up only 3% of energy trades workers, with lower apprentice completion and higher post-apprenticeship dropout rates than men. Many leave the industry within five years even after graduating. While complex to untangle, this appears to be driven by various issues such as policy gaps around flexible work, a lack of support networks (including role-models, allies and women in senior leadership positions), and inadequate on-site facilities and suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

First Nations participation also remains below average in both representation and apprenticeship completion, despite strong presence in Renewable Energy Zones (REZs). Despite a threefold increase in First Nations workers over the past 15 years, these individuals make up only 2% of the energy trades, falling below the 3.4% representation seen across all occupations.

Contributing factors included the underutilisation or underdevelopment of tailored training programs for First Nations communities (e.g. the Certificate II in Remote Area Power Supply Maintenance), and engagement from the renewable energy sector being limited overall or weakened by a lack of cultural awareness.

Together, these limit the industry's ability to both grow its workforce size and skills diversity via previously untapped demographics.

PSO's strategic response

The nature of these challenges calls for a coordinated, multifaceted response. Resolution demands a step change in workforce size and a parallel revolution in workforce capability and culture.

Simple approaches that focus solely on increasing workforce numbers without upskilling, or reskilling without growing the workforce, are insufficient. Likewise, wholesale inattention to cultural change risks missing a vital enabler of deep progress. To be effective, solutions must tackle key challenges simultaneously.

Similarly, an appropriately sized program of workforce planning is needed to match the scope and time horizon of the challenge. Both the time-critical and longer-term aspects must be considered. An approach that achieves quick wins while also addressing issues at a deep, systemic level. While further research is important in some areas, such as the potential for increased productivity gains to ease workforce demand, there is also a clear need for targeted workforce development projects, policy action and reform, and both strategic and efficiency-focused development of training products.

Without these varied elements in PSO's strategic response, the future energy workforce will not meet the profoundly complex labour demands engendered by the transition or the needs of our rapidly diversifying economy.

With these needs in focus, PSO has developed a strategic response that operates across multiple dimensions. Throughout the workforce planning process, PSO received over 100 recommendations and potential actions from stakeholders.

These have been workshopped and shortlisted in collaboration with various internal and external teams and partners, including PSO's Strategic Industry Advisory Body (SIAB). These working groups then assessed each recommendation against key implementation criteria such as priority, value, risk, and complexity.

A total of 31 actions form PSO's integrated and strategic responses to the constellation of labour market issues identified through the 2025 Workforce Planning process. Fifteen of these are already in progress, and 16 new actions are proposed.

The true strength of this strategic response lies not in a single action, but in its collective power for workforce planning: a deeply integrated, multi-layered approach, and a foundation built on solid evidence. It is shaped by a clear understanding of the challenges facing the sector, and the root causes behind them, ensuring that every action is targeted, meaningful, and aligned to solve a real issue.

PSO's strategic response

The PSO 2025 WFP has been shaped by our strategic priorities, which were both reaffirmed and further unpacked during its development.

PSO's five strategic priorities are:

01	Enhance career pathways for those looking to come into renewable energy jobs
02	Develop a sustainable and agile VET system that meets the demand of industry now and into the future
03	Ensuing PSO can accurately articulate the challenges within the energy sector for workforce planning
04	A culture of diversity and belonging in the energy sector where women and First Nations people are fairly represented. Attracting more people from these groups into the energy sector and offering them support when they come.
05	To inform and prepare industry and government for the emergence of new decarbonisation technologies in Australia

Many of the challenges identified align closely with addressing these priorities, and PSO's strategic responses have been intentionally and clearly connected to them. Moreover, the 2025 WFP process provided a valuable opportunity to explore these priorities in greater depth, engaging stakeholders to unpack their components and co-design actionable steps to effectively achieve them.

The WFP starts putting these strategic priorities into a plan of action, offering a clear and practical roadmap – all in one transparent document. With that foundation, the actions proposed by this WFP can be categorised into three workstreams:

Workforce and Training Projects

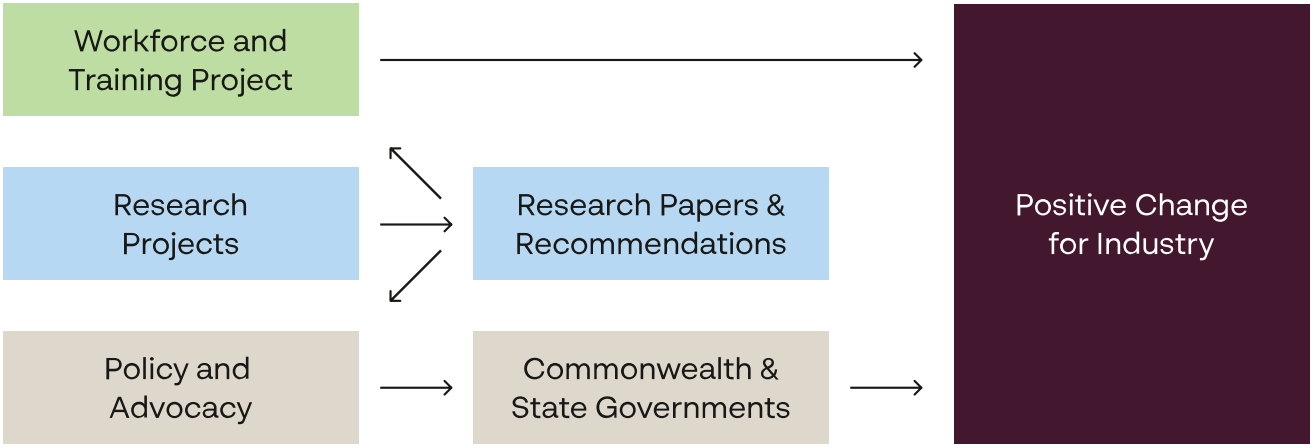
Projects which PSO will initiate to target and address specific areas of workforce capacity, capability or skilling.

Research Projects

Projects which PSO has identified as a critical topic or issue to address, however further research and data collation is required. These projects will lead to distinct research projects and may spawn further proposed actions.

Policy and Advocacy

Policy positions which PSO will develop or adopt on behalf of the energy sector (including employers and training providers) then advocate for to relevant state, territory or federal bodies.



List of proposed actions

The integrated prioritised action list details each action with its driver, intended outcomes, and implementation timeframes. We have grouped Action Focus Areas into three time Horizons:

Horizon 1
Immediate priorities carried out over the next 12 months to August 2026

Horizon 2
Short term strategic action focus areas – Two-year delivery timeframe

Horizon 3
Medium-term systematic reforms – Three-year delivery timeframe

#	Action Focus Area	Outcome Statement	Horizon
01	Apprenticeship Incentives	Improved visibility and recommendations for effective incentives	1
02	Apprenticeship Value Proposition for Employers	Clearer business case, increased apprenticeship uptake	1
03	Training Wait Times and Barriers	Reduced delays, more efficient workforce development	1
04	Apprentice Poaching	Data-driven policy and systemic solutions to reduce poaching and support retention	1
05	Safety Awareness	Immediate safety awareness for new entrants	1
06	Post-Trade Upskilling	Consistent, quality-assured upskilling pathways	1
07	Training/Workforce Locations and Future Demand	Strategic investment in training and regional workforce readiness	1
08	Mature-Aged Apprentices	Increased mature-aged participation and workforce diversity	2

The proposed actions listed are not yet prioritised or sequenced for delivery. The time horizons provided reflect the estimated duration of each action, not their relative importance to the sector or intended completion date.

Measures of success and intended impact will also be added to these actions as they progress to a detailed scoping phase through PSO's project governance framework. PSO recognises the importance of outcome evaluation, and developing meaningful success measures will be given due time and careful consideration.

#	Action Focus Area	Outcome Statement	Horizon
09	Pathways for Energy Trades	Position energy trades as a supported and valued pathway from school to skilled career	2
10	Workforce Modelling	Reliable data for planning and investment	2
11	Training Delivery Costs	Evidence-based funding and expanded training capacity	2
12	Open-Source Energy Training Resources*	Reduce duplication, increase consistency and expand training capacity	2
13	National Centre for Educator Innovation & Workforce Futures*	Increase innovation, trial new approaches, share learning, and shape system-wide improvement	2
14	Industry Partnerships and Accountability in VET*	Increase workforce development and educator capability. Align training to real-world energy sector needs	2
15	National Career Progression Framework for VET Educators*	Elevate the status of VET educators, improve retention, & position teaching as a viable & attractive long-term career	2
16	National Apprentice Register	Improved jobseeker-employer matching and sector participation	3

* Proposed in PSO's VET Workforce Blueprint

List of proposed actions

1. Map Apprenticeship Incentives Across Jurisdictions	
Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	PSO have identified that, while there are a range of national and jurisdictional apprenticeship incentives, there is inconsistent visibility and effectiveness in addressing the specific challenges faced by the energy sector. This includes both employer and apprentice incentives.
Action	PSO will map and review the effectiveness of incentives for employers and apprentices.
Outcomes	This action will deliver better visibility to industry and career seekers of the range of incentives that are applicable to their circumstances, with recommendations to government for more effective support specific to the energy sector. Critically, this will include the types of support for employers and apprentices.

2. Define the Apprenticeship Value Proposition for Employers	
Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	The energy sector requires significant workforce growth to meet future demand, which current data suggests will be delivered almost wholly via the apprenticeship system. The current volume and growth trend of apprentices employed by industry is not on track to meet these demands.
Action	PSO will research and articulate the business case for taking on an apprentice tailored by business size, energy subsector and jurisdiction. The role and value proposition of Group Training Organisations (GTOs) will also be considered.
Outcomes	PSO will leverage the results from this project to inform government and industry on how to effectively and more efficiently grow the volume of apprenticeship opportunities through a stronger understanding of the value proposition.

3. Identify and Reduce Apprentice Training Wait Times and Barriers	
Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	PSO have received ongoing and consistent reports about delays in commencement of apprentice training. These delays have resulted in concerns about safety, rate of professional development and ability to complete in the nominated timeframe for apprentices.
Action	PSO will investigate and address RTO capacity constraints to validate these reports, defining the scale, contributing factors and opportunities to mitigate this issue.
Outcomes	This will provide actionable evidence and recommendations to reduce training delays enabling more timely and efficient workforce development.

4. Quantify Apprentice 'Poaching' Through Data and Insights	
Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	The transfer or cancellation and recommencement of apprentices to new employers in late apprenticeship year levels (third and fourth year) can negatively impact the original employer who has invested in training of an early year apprentice. This issue disincentivises employers from engaging with the apprenticeship system and employing new apprentices.
Action	PSO will research the prevalence and impact of late-stage apprentice 'poaching' and develop mitigation strategies.
Outcomes	This action will result in data-driven insights and solutions to reduce apprentice 'poaching', supporting employer retention and system stability.

5. Develop an Industry-Relevant Apprentice/New Worker Safety Education Program (Open Source)

Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	Related to Action Focus Area 3, delays to commencement create a safety risk for new apprentices, their colleagues, and the public, particularly in the early stages of employment when formal training has not yet occurred.
Action	PSO will lead the creation and distribution of sector-specific safety materials for new apprentices and workers.
Outcomes	These materials will lead to immediate improvement in safety awareness for new entrants, reducing early-stage workplace risks before formal training is completed.

6. Clarify Post-Trade Training for Energy Workers

Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	Upskilling through micro-credentials, skill sets, manufacturer and non-accredited training plays a key role in upskilling existing workers, especially in adapting to new technologies. However, there are inconsistent practices and governance across these forms of training, along with both missed opportunities and emerging risks.
Action	PSO will analyse and provide guidance on the use and governance of skill sets, micro-credentials and other post-trade courses for upskilling.
Outcomes	This action will provide a consistent, quality-assured approach to short duration training, supporting rapid upskilling and adaptability in the workforce.

7. Map Training and Workforce Locations to Future Industry Needs

Timeline	Horizon 1
Driver	Future energy projects, particularly in REZ, will require a workforce that is regionally and geographically distributed in new ways. Stakeholders have raised concerns about a disconnect between the locations of current apprentices, existing training infrastructure, and future project locations.
Action	PSO will conduct geospatial analysis to align apprentice and training locations with future project demand, especially in REZs.
Outcomes	The resulting data-driven insights will guide strategic investment in training infrastructure and workforce mobility, ensuring regional workforce readiness.

8. Improve Support for Mature Aged Apprentices Through Policy and Incentives

Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	Mature aged apprentices contribute to increased workforce diversity, but face significant barriers to entry, particularly due to a limited number of apprenticeship opportunities offered by industry.
Action	Review and enhance policy and incentives to address barriers to entry and increase mature-aged apprentice participation. PSO also acknowledges the outsized impact that action in this area could produce (e.g. increasing diversity *while* growing the workforce) and will factor this into future prioritisation of all actions outlined in this workforce plan.
Outcomes	This project will investigate the policy environment and support systems for mature aged apprentices, with a focus on identifying improvements and supporting inclusive growth. This will contribute to workforce diversity and address workforce gaps.

List of proposed actions

9. Build Clear Pathways for Energy Trades	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	There is a perception among secondary students that an apprenticeship pathway is less prestigious or valuable career option compared to university pathways. This limits the pool of high-quality candidates and contributes to ongoing skills shortages in the energy sector.
Action	PSO will explore, mature and reframe the perception of energy sector career pathways. This includes raising the profile of energy sector trades, aligning messaging with student motivations, and improving how pre-apprenticeship and VET in schools training is positioned within the education system.
Outcomes	This will establish a clearly defined and communicated pathway into energy trades, enabling students, schools, and families to confidently navigate and pursue skilled career options with full visibility of the steps, supports, and opportunities available.

10. Energy Sector Workforce Supply and Demand Modelling	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	A lack of consistent, robust modelling to define the supply and demand dynamics of the energy sector workforce limits the sector's ability to plan and respond to future skills needs.
Action	PSO will develop robust, scenario-based workforce modelling for critical energy occupations.
Outcomes	This project will produce reliable forecasts to inform workforce planning, policy, and investment decisions across the sector.

11. Quantify Delivery Costs for Energy Training Qualifications	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	A critical barrier to expanding training delivery is the lack of clarity around the cost to establish and deliver high-volume, resource-intensive energy qualifications.
Action	PSO will analyse and report on the true cost of delivery for key energy sector qualifications.
Outcomes	This analysis will support evidence-based funding and investment strategies to expand training capacity and address resource constraints.

12. Create an Open-Source Repository of Energy Training Resources (Proposed in VET Workforce Blueprint)	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	RTOs and TAFEs across Australia face challenges in delivering high-quality training due to duplicated effort, high development costs, and inconsistent resource quality.
Action	A national, open-source repository of quality-assured training resources can streamline delivery, reduce duplication, and elevate consistency across the VET sector. These resources would be unit-aligned, adaptable for local contexts, and centrally maintained.
Outcomes	Improved access to shared training materials will reduce administrative burden on providers, enable faster course rollout, and improve training quality. This supports national capability-building and cost-effective growth in energy sector training delivery.

13. Establish a National Centre for Educator Innovation and Workforce Futures (Proposed in PSO's VET Workforce Blueprint)	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	The VET sector faces a need for scalable, innovative approaches to educator development and training delivery reform, particularly in response to rapid workforce shifts and digital disruption.
Action	A virtual national centre can facilitate collaboration, co-design, and experimentation to develop and test new tools, practices, and professional development models across the VET educator workforce.
Outcomes	Educators gain access to a structured platform for innovation, enabling them to trial new approaches, share learning, and shape system-wide improvement in teaching, credentialing, and digital pedagogy.

14. Strengthen Industry Partnerships and Accountability in VET Delivery (Proposed in PSO's VET Workforce Blueprint)	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	There is a lack of consistent and structured collaboration between industry and the VET sector, limiting training relevance and access to industry expertise.
Action	Creating co-investment models and national forums for joint planning can embed stronger partnerships and empower industry to support educator development, content relevance, and infrastructure access.
Outcomes	Enhanced industry engagement will drive shared responsibility for workforce development, increase educator capability, and ensure training is better aligned to real-world energy sector needs.

15. Develop a National Career Progression Framework for VET Educators (Proposed in PSO's VET Workforce Blueprint)	
Timeline	Horizon 2
Driver	A lack of clear career pathways contributes to low retention, limited professional recognition, and inconsistent development opportunities within the VET educator workforce.
Action	Designing a structured, national framework can outline clear progression routes from entry-level to leadership roles and support ongoing professional development.
Outcomes	The framework will elevate the status of VET educators, improve retention, and position teaching as a viable and attractive long-term career.

16. Establish a National Register for Connecting Apprentices to Employers	
Timeline	Horizon 3
Driver	There is a large volume of unsuccessful applicants to some apprenticeship recruitment opportunities who are not being further engaged by industry.
Action	PSO will lead the creation of a platform to connect unsuccessful apprenticeship applicants and jobseekers with employers across the energy sector.
Outcomes	This platform will improve matching of jobseekers to opportunities, reducing administrative burden and increasing workforce participation in the sector.

These 16 proposed actions are in addition to a further 15 actions which PSO is already progressing. Further details on these can be found in the full 2025 Workforce Plan.

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