

Employment White Paper

On the 25th of September 2023, Treasurer Jim Chalmers released the Employment White Paper, [available here](#).

The White Paper, led by Anthony Albanese and Jim Chalmers and informed by senior cabinet ministers from various portfolios such as finance, employment, education, social services, migration, and industry, expands upon the outcomes of the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit.

It outlines the Government's vision for an inclusive and dynamic labor market. This vision aims to provide all individuals with opportunities for secure and equitable employment, while also facilitating positive outcomes for people, businesses, and communities in the face of societal change.

The Government's vision is underpinned by **five key objectives**:

1. Delivering sustained and inclusive full employment
2. Promoting job security and strong, sustainable wage growth
3. Reigniting productivity growth
4. Filling skills needs and building our future workforce
5. Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunity

Jim Chalmers has stated that the White Paper will serve as a guiding document and complement current government policies to achieve these goals. The Government's Roadmap is focused on 10 policy areas:

1. **Strengthening economic foundations** by placing full employment at the heart of our institutions and policy frameworks, progressing a five-pillar productivity agenda and strengthening the foundations for secure, fairly paid jobs.
2. **Modernising industry and regional policy** so people, communities and businesses are positioned to withstand the challenges and reap the benefits as we strive to become a renewable energy superpower, realise the opportunities of technological change and broaden and deepen Australia's industrial base.
3. **Planning for our future workforce** by coordinating skill priorities and policies, and meeting workforce needs in the context of a growing care and support economy, the net zero transformation and technological change.
4. **Broadening access to foundation skills** by charting a course towards universal access to affordable, quality early childhood education and care, improving school outcomes and expanding access to adult learning opportunities that help people find and keep a secure, fairly paid job.
5. **Investing in skills, tertiary education and lifelong learning** by increasing the share of Australians studying in areas of high skills need, improving collaboration between the

vocational and higher education sectors, and removing barriers to learning across the course of people's lives.

6. **Reforming the migration system** through better targeting skilled migration, improving the employment outcomes of international students and realising the employment potential of migrants.
7. **Building capabilities through employment services** by setting out clear principles for future reform and implementing changes in an evidence-based way that applies learnings from evaluations and accounts for the needs of local labour markets and individuals.
8. **Reducing barriers to work** by addressing disincentives to participate, improving the quality of support for people with disabilities, and promoting gender equality.
9. **Partnering with communities** to achieve genuine place-based change informed by community needs, deepening ties with social enterprise and partnering with First Nations people to support economic development.
10. **Promoting inclusive, dynamic workplaces** by working with employers to foster workplace diversity, collaborating with businesses through the employment services system and improving the quality and transparency of data to measure workplace performance.

As part of the White Paper, the Government announced nine new policy initiatives including:

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – \$31 million to fast-track up to six TAFE Centres of Excellence nationally to begin in 2024, working with states and territories to bring together industry and education and training providers – including universities – to design world-leading skills and curriculum.
- **Advancing Higher and Degree Level Apprenticeships** – developing more widely accessible degree-level higher apprenticeships that can be delivered by VET providers to meet industry needs in priority areas such as clean energy, care and support and digitalisation.
- **\$9 million for the National Skills Passport** – defining the scope, outcomes and benefits of a National Skills Passport in consultation with industry, unions, tertiary institutions and across governments to help people more easily demonstrate their skills to employers and reduce barriers to lifelong learning.
- **Addressing Disincentives to Work in the Income Support System** – extending the nil rate period to allow income support recipients to retain access to concession cards and other supplementary benefits for longer, to smooth the transition to work.
- **Enhancing the Work Bonus** – providing an ongoing upfront credit of \$4,000 to the Work Bonus income bank of new pensioners over Age Pension age and eligible veterans and permanently lifting the maximum Work Bonus balance from \$7,800 to \$11,800.
- **Reforming the Local Jobs Program** – embedding best-practice place-based policy design principles in the program, and expanding eligibility to more people seeking work.
- **First Nations Economic Partnership** – collaborating with the Coalition of Peaks and First Nations stakeholders to scope an economic partnership.

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- ***Backing Social Enterprises*** – identifying ways to provide more employment and training opportunities for Australians who face disadvantage.
- ***Addressing Data Gaps*** – funding enhanced labour market data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and analytics capability in the Treasury as we take forward our policy agenda.

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