

Jobs and Skills Australia

On the 1st and 2nd of September 2022, governments, employers, unions, and civil society met at Parliament House to discuss the shared economic challenges that these groups face at the Jobs and Skills Summit. Read Hawker Britton's Occasional Papers on the Summit [here](#), and its findings [here](#).

Treasurer Chalmers used much of the Summit to inform the content of the Employment White Paper, upon the release of which, he said it outlined the governments vision for "a more dynamic and inclusive labour market in which more people have opportunities for secure, fairly paid work." The Paper itself is available [here](#), and Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper is available [here](#).

The Summit identified ways in which the migration system could be improved to support the alleviation of skills shortages. Since the end of the Summit, the government has provided additional funding to accelerate visa processing and reduce the backlog of visa applications, and released its migration strategy, Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper for which is available [here](#).

Another focus area of the Summit was equality of pay and opportunity for women. The Summit's opening address, given by Danielle Wood, addressed women's participation in the workforce. The organisers of the Summit also stressed the importance of having an equal gender split among attendees.

Since the Summit, the Albanese government has introduced more extensive requirements for workplaces with more than 100 employees to report their gender pay gap. This data was first published in February 2024 by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, and is available [here](#). Minister Gallagher described the release of the data as "a historic step towards transparency and accountability in addressing gender equality. Her media release is available [here](#). The government has also introduced 10 days of paid leave for victims of family and domestic violence, a cohort which is overwhelmingly composed of women.

Following the Summit, the Albanese government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Business Council of Australia to develop a pilot program aimed at providing employment and career pathways to workers with a disability. The program was launched in November of 2023, under the Career Pathways Pilot name, by Minister Rishworth, whose statement is available [here](#).

The government committed to changes to the Fair Work Act 2009 at the conclusion of the Summit. These reforms came in two tranches, called the Closing Loopholes Bill, numbers one and two. Read Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on the Closing Loopholes Bill [here](#).

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One of the significant changes to come out of the Summit was the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia, an independent body intended to provide advice on current, emerging, and future



workforce, skills, and training needs. Jobs and Skills Australia falls under the portfolio responsibilities of Ministers Burke, O'Connor, and Leigh.

In January 2023, Minister O'Connor announced that Professor Barney Glover AO would replace David Turvey as Commissioner in April 2024.

So far, Jobs and Skills Australia has delivered five large scale studies to assess particular dimensions of Australia's workforce needs. A significant publication of Jobs and Skills Australia is the Skills Priority List, which compiles skill shortage information on a state-by-state basis according to ANZSCO Codes. It also includes information on the projected demand for skills, according to their ANZSCO Code.

Jobs and Skills Australia Ministerial Advisory Board

On the 27th of March 2024, Minister O'Connor announced the establishment of the Jobs and Skills Ministerial Advisory Board. Broadly, the Board is intended to represent the interests of state and territory governments, employers, and employees. As such, its membership consists of representatives from these three groups, with some additional members, chosen for their knowledge of other key government priorities in this space.

This inaugural board is chaired by Cath Bowtell, an experienced professional in the superannuation sector. She is currently the Chairperson of Industry Fund Services, and a director of IFM Investors.

The Board's inaugural Deputy Chairs are Megan Lilly, Executive Director of the Australian Industry Group's Centre for Education and Training, and Liam O'Brien, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

Representatives for state and territory governments are Lisa Healy, from Victoria's Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regulation, and Jodie Wallace, from WA's Department of Training and Workforce Development.

Employer group representatives are Luke Achterstraat CEO of the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia, Bran Black, CEO of the Business Council of Australia, and Natalie Heazlewood, Director of Skills, Employment and Small Business at the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Employee representatives are Annie Butler, Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Andrew Dettmer, National President of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, and Correna Haythorpe, Federal President of the Australian Education Union.

Other members of the board, listed below, were selected for their knowledge and insights of certain key government priorities in the jobs and skills space, namely gender equality, and economic inclusion of First Nations Australians, Australians from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, or Australians with a disability.



Professor Jack Beetson, Executive Director of the Literacy for Life Foundation and Ngemba Aboriginal man, his work has focused on both adult education and the interests of First Nations Australians.

Professor Rae Cooper AO, from Sydney University's Australian Centre for Gender Equality and Inclusion @ Work. Her research interests include several key areas across the subject of gender equality at work, as well as the wellbeing of frontline workers.

El Gibbs, Director of Policy at Disability Advocacy Network Australia. She has extensive experience in policy and communications consulting with respect to the rights of people with a disability. She is a person with a disability herself, and frequently appears in the media to provide comment on disability employment issues.

Nyadol Nyuon OAM, Executive Director at Victoria University's Sir Zelman Cowan Centre. She is also a lawyer and human rights advocate, and moved to Australia in 2005 as a refugee. Her work at Victoria University involves research and education related to cultural diversity and the law. She is also on the board of the Chisholm Institute, a TAFE provider in Melbourne's south east.

Minister O'Connor's statement on the appointment of the Jobs and Skills Australia Ministerial Advisory Board is available [here](#).

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