National Survey of Local Government Skills and Workforce 2022

Commissioned by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Michelle Tjondro, SGS Economics and Planning

Population, Housing and Workforce Skills Panel

National General Assembly, June 2022

Acknowledgement of Country

SGS Economics and Planning acknowledges the Ngambri, Ngarigu, and Ngunnawal people, the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, on whose Country we live and work.

We also acknowledge the First Nations Peoples of Australia, whose knowledge, wisdom and voice strengthen the Australian local government sector.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and acknowledge their stewardship of Country over thousands of years.

A suitably skilled workforce is essential for local governments to function competently and for the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

In recent years, skills and workforce issues have been a growing concern for the Australian local government sector.
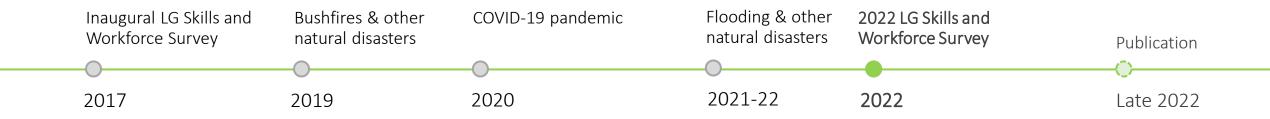
The 2022 survey spotlights skills and workforce at a critical time for the Australian Local Government sector

Where are there skills gaps and shortages?

Which occupational areas are most affected?

How has this changed since 2017?

What factors are shaping these trends?

How are local governments responding?

Inaugural LG Skills and Workforce Survey	Bushfires & other natural disasters	COVID-19 pandemic	Flooding & other natural disasters	2022 LG Skills and Workforce Survey	Publication
2017	2019	2020	2021-22	2022	Late 2022

We surveyed what matters to organisational capacity

How we surveyed -

1. Survey questionnaire

2. State-level focus groups

3. Interviews with industry groups and peak bodies

Backed by research – LGiU UK

The sector workforce in 2022

Industry context • Employment numbers • Employment categories • Gender profile • Turnover rates • Length of service • Workplace diversity • Age profile • Occupational profile •

Skills gaps, shortages, and drivers

Occupational skills shortages • Drivers of skills shortages • Hardest to fill occupations • Skills gaps and additional skills required • Drivers of skills gaps • Strategies to address skills gaps • Time to fill vacancies • Strategies to fill vacancies •

Training needs and enablers

Uptake of training arrangements • Unmet training needs • Joint training and development • Training expenditure • Preferred delivery mode •

Macrotrends and emerging considerations

Factors impacting future skilling needs • Changing roles and requirements • Impacts of recent events •

Looking ahead

Anticipated workforce profile by employment category • Strategies to meet future skills needs • Supports and resources •

Early insights
Based on responses from 210 councils nationally

1. **Occupational skills shortages**

   Engineers, urban & town planners, building surveyors, environmental health officers, supervisors and team leaders

2. **Underlying drivers of skills gaps**

   Ageing workforce, lack of trainees, inability to compete with private sector remuneration

3. **Unmet training needs**

   Almost 2/3 respondents experienced unmet training needs (slight increase from 2017)

4. **Employment by gender**

   Full-time, apprentices and trainees predominantly male, higher proportion of women in part-time and casual roles

Workforce planning

A third of respondents were analysing and/or forecasting changing roles and skill requirements

Resource sharing

Almost half of all respondents said they shared resources with other councils

Diversity

- Indigenous representation in NT Local Government

- Gender parity in the VIC Local Government workforce

+

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Skills shortages

Over 90% respondents said they experienced skills shortages in 2021-22, compared to 69% in 2017

Prevalence of skill shortage areas

More councils reported the top skill shortage areas in 2021-22

Unplanned turnover

Rural councils experiencing the highest rates of unplanned turnover

Considerations for the future Local Government workforce

To skill and/or to hire?

~50% — Informal on-job training; Acting up/ across other roles

Almost three quarters — Engaged with State or Federal education, training initiatives

Demand for soft skills

For a post-pandemic workplace; a digitally transformed workplace

Reimagining role structure and recruitment processes

Building a skills collective

More inclusive hiring practices for organisational diversity

Housing

Climate change and natural disasters

Funding certainty

LGA preparedness and growth

Digital transformation

A holistic view of skills trends and drivers

MACRO ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING GAPS & SHORTAGES

EMERGING FOCUS AREAS

SKILLS BASE & WORKFORCE

Sources of insight:

National survey

Workforce Censuses

Commissioned studies

Skills summits

Industry associations

Peak bodies

Next steps

1. Additional consultation
2. 2021 ABS Census data
3. Finalising reporting

Get in touch

Michelle Tjondro

mtjondro@sgsep.com.au

SGS would like to thank the 2022 survey respondents, DITRDCA, ALGA and the Local Government Workforce Development Group for their valued contributions.