



Working Future

The Employment White Paper – at a glance

Our vision is for a dynamic and inclusive labour market in which everyone has the opportunity for secure, fairly paid work and people, businesses and communities can be beneficiaries of change and thrive.

Our economy is changing ...

Five major forces will shape Australia's economy in the coming decades.

- Our population is ageing. We can expect to live longer and spend more years in good health.
- The demand for quality care and support services is rising.
- The use of digital and advanced technologies is increasing.
- Global actions to address climate change mean Australia is one of the countries best positioned to benefit from the net zero transformation.
- Rising geopolitical risk and fragmentation is disrupting supply chains and increasing the importance of resilience.

These forces are reshaping our industrial base and changing how we live and work.

...along with our labour market

Australia's labour market has seen significant shifts in its composition, the jobs people are doing and their experiences at work. Today's labour market is far more inclusive, flexible, services-oriented and productive than in previous eras.

While a greater share of our population is in paid work than ever before, there's still considerable untapped potential with around 3 million Australians who would like more work. People's experiences in the labour market vary significantly and can be affected by where they live, their gender and if they experience disadvantage. Workforce shortages are holding back

businesses and our economy and long-term solutions will be needed to meet growing workforce demands in sectors such as care and support services.

The White Paper provides a Roadmap to position the Australian labour market for the future, through investments in the skills and capabilities of our people, expanding opportunities to work, and boosting labour productivity.

Five ambitious labour market objectives to realise our vision

Delivering sustained and inclusive full employment

We want everyone who wants a job to be able to find one without searching for too long. A new and broader objective of sustained and inclusive full employment is at the heart of our agenda. It requires more than just strong macroeconomic management. We are placing a greater emphasis on addressing the sources of structural underutilisation in the labour market. This includes helping people to acquire the skills and capabilities needed for the jobs of the future and breaking down barriers that prevent people from realising their potential.

Promoting job security and strong, sustainable wage growth

A safe and harassment-free workplace, job security and flexibility with fair pay are the key parts of a decent job for many people. In the long term, real wage growth depends on productivity growth, a dynamic and competitive labour market and effective wage-setting institutions.

Australia's system of minimum wages, bargaining and a culture of genuine workplace cooperation can support both higher productivity and higher wage growth for workers.

Reigniting productivity growth

Productivity growth is the key to delivering strong and sustainable wage growth over the long term, but it has been declining over recent decades.

Reigniting productivity growth requires a broad-based approach that promotes investments in human capital, infrastructure, competition and dynamism, and leverages the big transformations underway in our economy.

We are investing deeply in our best asset – our people – to drive future productivity growth. Workers will need the right skills and capabilities to be ready for the opportunities in the net zero and digital transformation and the jobs of the future.

Filling skills needs and building our future workforce

Preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades needs substantial growth in our high-skilled workforce. Responsive education and training systems, and a migration system which complements them, are pivotal to creating a resilient workforce.

Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunity

The opportunities generated by Australia's sustained strong economy have not always been shared equally. Too many communities still face concentrated unemployment and entrenched disadvantage.

Targeted, place-based approaches can put opportunity in reach of more people, together with support from different services as they transition through life.

Our Roadmap

The Roadmap in this White Paper sets out new policies and new reform directions, as well as the work the Government has done and is doing, to achieve this vision. The Government's Roadmap is focused on 10 areas:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Reforming the migration system through better targeting skilled migration, improving the employment outcomes of international students and realising the employment potential of migrants.

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.

Reducing barriers to work by addressing disincentives to participate, improving the quality of support for people with disability, and promoting gender equality.

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.

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.