



Industry Skills Forecast Initial Snapshot

Key Points

- 1.** Seven in 10 respondents have experienced a labour shortage within the last year, with shortages most significant within Carpentry & Joinery, Plumbing, and Bricklaying.
- 2.** Six in 10 respondents have experienced skills gaps in the last year.
- 3.** Over half of industry and employer respondents are unhappy with the skills and training available within the CPC training package.
- 4.** Ensuring the incoming industry labour force is the chief concern shared by employers and registered training organisations for the next five years.

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2020 Industry Skills Forecast: Construction, Plumbing and Services

This summary is drawn from Stage 1 of the Artibus 2020 Industry Skills Survey. It is based on 133 responses submitted by the 3rd of December 2019. This summary provides a preliminary overview of trends, concerns, and interests of respondents. It is not designed to provide depth analysis. The underpinning logic of the 2020 survey was to:

- Provide a context where distinctive stakeholder roles, and the unique interests and concerns that go along with them, could be distinguished
- Invite substantive qualitative feedback, and allow individual concerns to be explored at the discretion of the respondent
- Identify emerging trends and broader issues of concern within the built environment, and the implications for training needs.

Labour Shortages

Labour shortages were experienced by 70% (75) of respondents (29% did not note a labour shortage). Shortages were noted in:

- Plumbing (28%)
- Carpentry & Joinery (27%)
- Bricklaying (27%)
- Gas fitting (17%)
- Painting and Decorating (16%)
- Plastering (13%)
- Concreting (11%)
- Fire Protections (11%)
- Waterproofing (11%).

The most frequent reasons identified for the shortage were the difficulty of attracting new workers (62%) and workers leaving the industry (46%). Over a quarter identified training issues as reasons for the shortage, including training availability, difficulty, and cost and time. Licensing and regulation, industry pay and reputation, and geographical location of work, were also considered relevant for between 15-23% of respondents.

Labour shortages occur when there are not enough workers to fill the required roles.

Skills gaps happen when current workers need new skills to meet employer needs.

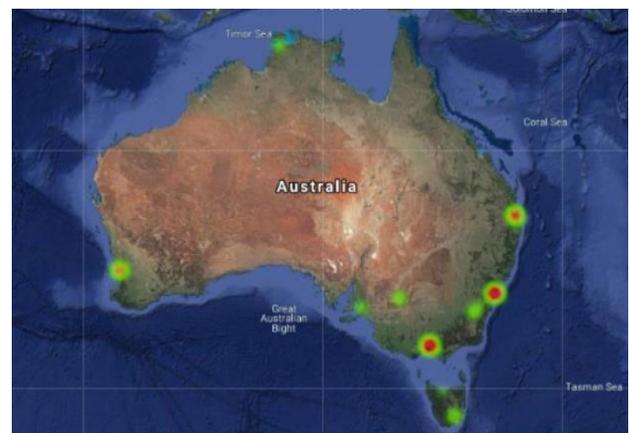
Skills Gaps

Skills gaps were experienced by 61% of respondents. The most frequently mentioned gaps were experienced in:

- IT and new technologies (14%)
- Gas (6%)

A range of skills gaps were identified, although only a few respondents nominated each gap. This means these trends are weak and require further research. Skills gap identified include: prefabrication, polywelding, waterproofing, heritage skills, insulation, bushfire, communication skills, and energy efficiency.

The reasons for skills gaps fell in to two main categories: training availability and business responsiveness. A lack of access to appropriate training (41%), the absence of an appropriate training product (31%), and the poor quality of training (24%), were the key training reasons given. Business reasons for a skills gap included the failure to increase workforce skills in response to new business opportunities (35%), a lack of planned staff training (32%), a skills lag in response to business decisions (24%), high staff turnover (19%), and insufficient induction of new employees (16%).



Survey response distribution as of the 3rd December 2019

Employers and Industry

Employers and industry respondents identified a range of concerns, but the chief factors were:

- attracting and retaining skilled staff
- the quality of their skill base.

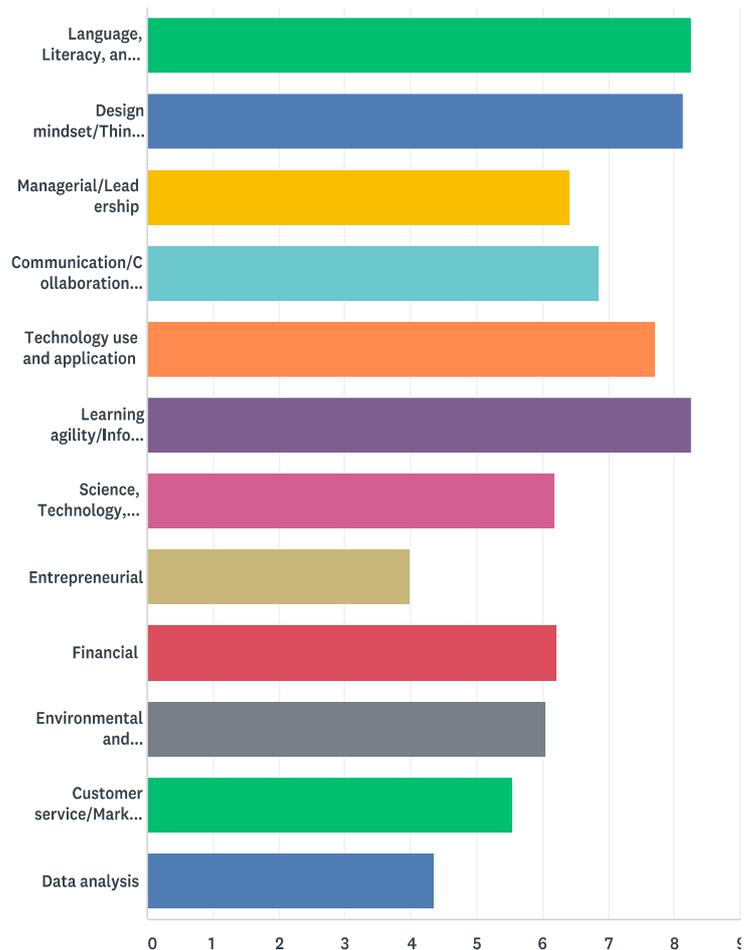
Affordability and approvals were also noted as impact factors, as was the speed of change. Responses were mixed regarding the sector’s response to changing conditions, with the majority (56%) of industry and employer respondents noting that the sector is responding poorly or slowly to new developments. Over half of these respondents were unhappy with the skills and training available within CPC. Reasons given for dissatisfaction include the difference between TAFEs and private providers, funding issues, and a perceived lack of regulation of RTOs. Employer respondents were mostly from small businesses (71%), with comparatively minimal input from medium (9%) and large (19%) organisations.

Registered Training Organisation

RTOs noted a range of concerns, but the key concerns from this stakeholder group for the next 5 years are:

- flexibility of training
- the specialisation of skills
- the insufficiency of current training.

Outside of these training-specific concerns, respondents from RTOs noted broader issues such as new technology; the security of payments; specialisation and fragmentation of work activities; prefabrication; sustainability; the alignment of training packages and industry needs; regulation; cost; labour shortages; dust-born disease; licensing; professional development; and differing generational expectations regarding the nature of work. New training needs were identified, with training in new tools, materials, and technologies and updating or greater flexibility in training the most frequently suggested changes. It should be noted that 10% of respondents did not feel that any changes were needed.



The 12 graded generic workforce skills result for the Construction, Plumbing and Services 2020

Suggested changes to the CPC training package were wide-ranging, but there was an emphasis on skills and the need for more electives to allow greater flexibility and specialisation (20%), a desire for more direct industry (15%) and assessor (7%) input and consultation in training development. Of the RTOs responding to this section of the survey, 67% were from TAFE, 27% were from private providers. Remaining RTOs were from community organisations, higher education, schools, adult education, and industry bodies.

Regulators and Licensing Authorities

The 5 respondents to this section of the survey emphasised the need to focus on the quality of trainers and the corollary quality of training as issues of the next 5 years. Concerns were expressed that these issues would lead to low standards and a possible exodus of people from the industry. Changes suggested to training and qualifications focused on greater alignment to standards and guidelines, regulation and oversight, more time for RTOs to deliver training, and closer alignment of trainer experience to Units of Competency



The 5 most important skills for the Construction, Plumbing and Services workforce for the next 3-5 years.

Representative Associations

The overall focus of those from representative associations was the incoming labour force and adapting to new products and technologies. Particular unmet training needs were specified, including:

- business training
- better understanding in standards and regulation
- technology use
- specific training in energy building methods.

More broadly, a lack of trainers, quality issues, and funding support were all noted.

Respondents were predominantly drawn from peak bodies (41%) and industry organisations (58%).

If you'd like to contact us regarding this survey, or our research, please email research@artibus.com.au