

# ALGA FEDERAL BUDGET 2023-24 PRIORITY

## LOCAL JOBS, SKILLS AND TRAINING PROGRAM

### Commitment sought

Support for councils to employ up to **5,600 additional** apprentices, trainees, cadets and graduates over the next ten years.

### What is the issue?

The number of apprentices and trainees employed by Australian councils has halved over the past decade.

### Why does it matter?

Australian councils are facing significant jobs and skills challenges, and increased investment in training and upskilling the next generation of workers is vital.

### Additional information

ALGA is proposing a new program that will fund councils to employ up to 5,600 additional apprentices, trainees, cadets, and graduates over the next decade, which would restore the total numbers to 2012 levels.

This program would support councils to address skills shortages, while also training and upskilling Australia's future government and private sector workforce, helping address national workforce shortages.

In 2021, local governments employed more than 190,000 people, in approximately 400 different occupations.

However, the [2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey](#) shows that nine out of every ten Australian councils are facing jobs and skills shortages, particularly in some professions (engineers, urban and town planners, environmental health inspectors, building surveyors, and human resource professionals)

and across the trades and general workforce (supervisors, labourers, ICT technicians, truck drivers and accounts/payroll clerks), highlighting the need for increased investment.

Councils also employ a number of occupations listed on the National Skills Commission's 2022 Skills Priority List – including civil engineering professionals, aged carers, and gardeners.

Addressing skills shortages and training needs are a high priority for the Federal Government and ALGA participated in the Government's Job Summit in September 2022.

Given their activities, geographic diversity and connection to local community, councils have traditionally been an excellent provider of entry level employment, particularly for those seeking to acquire practical skills, training and nationally recognised qualifications as well as access to long term secure employment, particularly in rural and regional areas.

*Local government-trained and locally experienced employees are attractive and valued employees within local government, and to employers in the private sector throughout the nation.*

Local government has historically been a skills incubator for the nation, and many skilled workers in a diverse range of industries commenced their employment journey and career within a local council.

In 2012 local government employed more than 10,000 apprentices and trainees. However, in the past 10 years the number of apprentices and trainees in local government has halved.

Several reasons have been identified for this trend, including changes to incentives, revenue constraints, funding certainty, employment costs, lack of access to formal training arrangements and red tape.

