

Tuesday, 5 March 2024

David Turvey  
Acting Commissioner  
Jobs and Skills Australia  
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Via email: [SkillsPriorityList@jobsandskills.gov.au](mailto:SkillsPriorityList@jobsandskills.gov.au)

Dear Mr Turvey

### **2024 Skills priority list stakeholder survey**

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ), CPA Australia and the Institute of Public Accountants (the professional accounting bodies) make this joint submission in response to Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA) 2024 Skills Priority List (SPL) Stakeholder Survey.

The professional accounting bodies represent more than 300,000 accounting and financial professionals worldwide. We advocate in the interest of our members and in the public interest.

This submission is a preliminary outline of our views which we would like to discuss with you and the new JSA Commissioner Professor Barney Glover AO once he commences in April.

### **Key points**

Accounting, audit and financial professionals continue to be in shortage Australia-wide and in most states and territories. In the absence of change these shortages will become worse and will be inadequate to cover forecast demand.

Addressing the skills shortages impacting the profession is a top strategic priority for the accounting bodies. We would like to work closely with JSA on addressing these persistent shortages and developing a joint approach to solving them.

CA ANZ conducted a survey of 449 Australian members between 10 January and 15 February 2024 on occupation shortages and recruitment challenges experienced between January and December 2023 to help inform its response to the 2024 SPL stakeholder survey. Please refer to **Appendix A** and the slide presentation provided for further details on the survey methodology and key survey results.

### **The central role of the professional accounting bodies**

In Australia, there is a shared approach to regulation of the accounting profession. That is, there are the three professional accounting bodies that regulate and supervise their members, and multiple specialist regulators that regulate certain tasks that accountants in practice may offer the public. For example, the Tax Practitioners Board regulates tax agent services, ASIC regulates auditors of public companies and registered liquidators, the ATO supervises auditors of self-managed superannuation funds (SMSFs) and the Australian Financial Security Authority regulates bankruptcy.

The majority of accountants work in business and government and do not offer these regulated services. However, they are highly likely to be members of at least one of the professional accounting bodies, and subject to their oversight. Further, accountants offering regulated services are also highly likely to also be members of the professional accounting bodies.

People that hold the CA/CPA/IPA designation are also recognised in many Commonwealth and State/Territory laws to undertake certain engagements. Implicit in this is an expectation that the professional bodies frameworks support such legislative recognition. The central elements of our regulatory frameworks are minimum education standards for entry into the body, minimum requirements for ongoing learning, members in practice being obligated to submit to quality reviews, compliance with professional and ethical standards, and being subject to investigation and disciplinary action for possible breaches of those standards.

Given the central role of the professional accounting bodies, this submission represents the skills challenges being experienced across the whole profession and in specialist areas within the profession, both current and emerging, including areas like sustainability reporting and assurance. Australia's labour market will also require accounting knowledge and skills in areas such as risk management, governance, data analytics, artificial intelligence and the ethics of its application.

Submissions from regulators are important to informing JSA on skills shortages within specialist areas, but given their limited remit, only the professional accounting bodies are in a position to inform JSA on issues affecting the whole of the profession and other specialist areas.

### Meeting invitation

We would like to invite you and Professor Barney Glover AO to discuss our views in more detail. CA ANZ will contact your office to arrange a suitable time. We will also arrange a meeting with JSA's SPL Workforce Analysis Team.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the views in this submission, please contact:

- Sarah Davidson – Policy, Thought Leadership, Education, Skills and Migration Leader at CA ANZ on 02 9290 5639 or [sarah.davidson@charteredaccountantsanz.com](mailto:sarah.davidson@charteredaccountantsanz.com)
- Gavan Ord – Senior Manager - Business and Investment Policy at CPA Australia on 03 9606 9695 or [gavan.ord@cpaaustralia.com.au](mailto:gavan.ord@cpaaustralia.com.au)
- Philomena Leung – Director of Education at IPA on 02 8262 6001 or [philomena.leung@publicaccountants.org.au](mailto:philomena.leung@publicaccountants.org.au)

Sincerely,

#### Simon Grant FCA

Group Executive  
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# Appendix A

## CA ANZ Skills Priority List member survey

### Survey methodology

Between 10 January and 15 February 2024, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) conducted an online survey of 449 Australian members on occupation shortages and recruitment challenges experienced between January and December 2023.

The purpose of the survey was to help CA ANZ advise the Australian Government on policy responses to skills shortages and recruitment challenges and inform its response to Jobs and Skills Australia's 2024 Skills priority list stakeholder survey.

CA ANZ invited members to participate in the survey who have recruitment knowledge and experience and can provide evidence or insights about skill supply and demand.

Members were invited to provide input on seven Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) occupations:

- Finance Manager (132211)
- Accountant (General) (221111)
- Management Accountant (221112)
- Taxation Accountant (221113)
- Corporate Treasurer (221212)
- External Auditor (221213)
- Internal Auditor (221214).

The survey included questions for the period between January and December 2023 on:

- the proportion of job vacancies filled Australia-wide and in each state and territory
- vacancies advertised and filled (number, location, reasons vacancies not filled)
- the supply of suitably skilled workers available (undersupply, meets demand, oversupply)
- expected workforce demand in the next five years
- use of employer sponsored visas
- the experiences of migrants and international graduates of accounting.

A key component of the Skills Priority List is the assessment of occupational shortages. The primary measure of an occupational shortage is the inability of employers to fill vacancies or the proportion of vacancies that are filled i.e. the fill rate. There is a high likelihood of an occupation shortage when estimated fill rates are below 67%.

## Key survey results

### Vacancies filled Australia-wide

- More than 8 in 10 respondents who provided input on the proportion of vacancies filled Australia-wide said estimated vacancies filled were below 67%. This indicates a high likelihood of occupation shortages.
- Shortages were identified by respondents who provided input on vacancies filled Australia-wide for the occupations Internal Auditor (91%), Management Accountant (90%), Taxation Accountant (88%), Finance Manager (78%), Accountant (General) (75%) and External Auditor (71%).
- The survey found the largest number of responses indicating estimated vacancies filled Australia wide were below 67% were for the Taxation Accountant (52), Accountant (General) (45) and External Auditor (27).

### Vacancies filled in each state and territory

- Shortages were identified by respondents who provided input on vacancies filled in each state and territory for the occupations External Auditor (88%), Accountant (General) (79%), Taxation Accountant (78%), Finance Manager (73%), Internal Auditor (71%) and Management Accountant (69%).
- Most of the shortages were found in both metro and regional areas for External Auditors (47%), Finance Managers (44%) and Accountants (General) (38%), followed by regional areas for Taxation Accountants (43%) and Internal Auditors (25%), followed by metro areas for Management Accountants (27%).
- Shortages of External Auditors were found in all states and territories in both regional and metro areas, mostly in the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the ACT, where all respondents said vacancy fill rates were below 50%.
- Shortages of Accountants (General) were found in all states and territories, with the highest shortages in New South Wales (mostly in regional areas), Western Australia (mostly in metro areas), South Australia (mostly in metro areas), the Northern Territory (mostly in metro and regional areas) and the ACT (mostly in metro areas).
- Shortages of Taxation Accountants were found in all states and territories, mostly in regional areas, except in South Australia (mostly in metro areas) and Tasmania and the ACT (mostly in both metro and regional areas).
- Shortages of Finance Managers were found in the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia, mostly in metro and regional areas.
- Shortages of Internal Auditors were found in all states and territories except New South Wales and Victoria, mostly in regional and metro areas in Queensland and metro areas in Western Australia.
- Shortages of Management Accountants were found in the Northern Territory, the ACT and Tasmania (mostly in both metro and regional areas), Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia (mostly in metro areas).

## Skill supply and demand

- An undersupply of suitably skilled workers Australia-wide was identified by most of the respondents who provided input on the occupations Taxation Accountant (82%), External Auditor (80%), Internal Auditor (79%), Accountant (General) (78%), Management Accountant (65%) and Finance Manager (65%).
- Most respondents expect workforce demand to increase in the next five years for Internal Auditors (89%), External Auditors (76%), Taxation Accountants (73%), Management Accountants (60%), Accountants (General) (55%), Finance Managers (48%) and Corporate Treasurers (33%).

## Fill rates

- The survey found a total of 1,175~~4~~ job vacancies across all occupations surveyed, including 406~~7~~ auditor vacancies and 768 non-audit vacancies.
- The highest number of vacant roles were for the Taxation Accountant (611), External Auditors(377~~8~~) and Accountant (General) (129).
- The average numbers of positions filled in most of the occupations surveyed is less than the numbers of positions advertised.

## Employer sponsored visas

- The majority of respondents (60%) who provided input on use of employer sponsored visas did not use the visas between January and December 2023.
- Less than half (38%) of respondents said they plan to use this visa in the future.
- If respondents use the visa in the future, it will most likely be for recruiting Accountants (General) (63%), External Auditors (53%)and Taxation Accountants (41%).

## Employing migrant accountants and international accounting graduates

- The top four actions identified by the 216 respondents who provided input on what the Australian Government can do to make it easier to employ and best utilise the skills of migrant accountants and international accounting graduates were:
  - support reform proposals to improve the quality and coverage of the Accounting Professional Year (PY) work readiness program (39%)
  - support pre-employment services that help them find work matched to their professional skills and qualifications (39%)
  - provide more skilled visas for accounting, audit and finance professionals (37%)
  - improve recognition of overseas qualifications (34%).