# WA Workforce Strategy
## Western Australia

### Clean Energy + Building and Construction

What are the challenges and risks in securing the workforce needed for the clean energy sector over the next 5 to 10 years?

- Skills Shortages in Key Trades – particularly electricians, battery installers, solar technicians, and HV specialists
- Training Capacity – Demand for apprentices exceeds the number of host employers willing/able to take them on
- Ageing Workforce / Retirements – experienced tradespeople exiting the industry faster than new entrants are fully qualified
- Regional Workforce Gaps – difficulty attracting and retaining workers in rural and remote clean energy project locations.
- Competition Within Industry – Larger organisations are able to outbid small and medium contractors for advanced apprentices and qualified electricians by offering higher wage packages, particularly in government procurement and fixed-term regional projects. This dynamic is further tightening an already constrained skills pool.
- Migration Constraints – limited or slow skilled migration pathways for qualified overseas workers.
- Gender Diversity Constraints – Persistent perceptions of the electrical and construction industries as male-dominated continue to deter female participation, limiting access to a broader talent pool that could help address critical workforce shortages.

What are the most significant levers overall for the clean energy sector to secure the required workforce capabilities and capacity?

The below is a high-level list of key levers critical for supporting workforce development. More detail can be found in our response to Q4.

- Procurement policy settings for apprentices
- Workforce training support policies (financial and non-financial) for employers and employees.
- Systemic education and training reform (for example - secondary school subjects and utilisation of digital training tools during apprenticeship).
- Forward project and workforce demand planning
- Regulatory efficiency and red-tape reduction

## How can your organisation and the broader industry contribute to the growth of the WA clean energy workforce?

- Industry Collaboration – Work in partnership with government, training providers, and key industry stakeholders to ensure small and medium electrical contractors are effectively represented in workforce planning and policy development, recognising MEA as a key communication and engagement channel for SMEs in the sector.

- Industry Support and Advocacy – Provide targeted communication, guidance, and advocacy support to electrical contractors to help them navigate workforce challenges, access training pathways, and implement best-practice apprenticeship and workforce development strategies.

- Non-Accredited Training and Skills Development – Support the delivery of non-accredited and short-course training to complement formal qualifications, including supervisor development, mentoring capability, and practical skills programs to improve apprentice supervision and workplace training quality.

## How can the State Government, working in partnership with industry and other stakeholders, ensure Western Australia is successful in building and sustaining the required workforce for the clean energy sector?

- Sustained Employer Training Support Mechanisms - Existing employer training support frameworks should be maintained and continuously refined to ensure they remain responsive, accessible, and effective; particularly for small and medium contractors carrying the bulk of apprentice training responsibilities in the clean energy transition.

- Procurement Policy – Strengthen the *Priority Start Policy* apprenticeship provisions by refining the current 11.5% target training rate requirement. While the policy establishes a minimum proportion of apprentices and trainees within in-scope construction trades, it does not differentiate between apprentice stages. As a result, large contractors may meet obligations by relying disproportionately on higher-level apprentices (e.g. 3rd and 4th year) often lured from small businesses through higher wages, rather than contributing to early-stage apprentice commencements. This dynamic can shift workforce development responsibility onto small businesses, reduce overall apprenticeship commencements, and limit net workforce growth. Consideration should be given to introducing a minimum requirement for first- and second-year apprentices to ensure larger contractors contribute directly to apprentice intake and foundational workforce development.

- National Licensing Harmonisation – Participate in, and implement, a national licensing framework allowing interstate mobility for licenced electrical workers.

- Project Workforce Planning Requirements – Future plan government construction contracts allowing for sufficient workforce planning time – especially important for rural and regional projects.

- Mobile and Digital Training – Government facilitate greater uptake of digital training for suitable course components, reducing pressure on limited training resources, improving access for remote and rural apprentices, and helping the sector offer a skilled workforce capable of meeting demand

efficiently.

- Subsidised Provision of Female-Appropriate Workplace Facilities – Incentivised funding to assist employers, particularly SMEs and regional contractors, to provide appropriate amenities (including sanitation and change facilities), addressing a practical barrier to increasing female participation in trades.

- Skilled Migration Pathways – Increase the number of skilled migration visas for qualified electricians, streamlining training and supervision requirements in line with best practice across Australia, and supporting regional workforce development through secure employment and temporary housing solutions for skilled migrants.

- Secondary School Subjects – Introduction of a senior schooling subject be introduced (which could be a redesigned existing subject such as Engineering) as an ATAR-scaled subject that integrates practical content on electrotechnology, sustainable energy, and relevant engineering applications. The subject could be named something like 'sustainability technologies'.