FINAL REPORT

2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Report

Remuneration and HRM Performance in employment services



Prepared for
National Employment Services Association

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Summary

This report presents the results of the 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and Human Resource Management (HRM) Performance. It has been commissioned by the National Employment Services Association (NESA) to provide evidence on the composition and location of the workforce, changes in workforce costs, and emerging workforce challenges and opportunities.

For the purposes of this report, the employment services workforce is defined as staff of organisations delivering Australian Government-contracted employment services funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Department of Social Services (DSS), or the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). Services delivered by Australian Government-contracted employment services include pre-employment support, case management, and specialist services.

Workforce overview

This report draws on the 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance, completed by 142 employment services providers. Not all providers answered all questions, and the number of provider responses is indicated as appropriate throughout this report. Those that reported staff headcount (n=54) employ 8,831 employment services staff, which is a lower bound estimate of workforce size.

More than half (57 per cent, n=48) of all staff manage a caseload and provide frontline services to clients. Back-office and leadership staff are a substantial part of the effort that goes into delivering employment services. Site or branch managers and operational roles spend around three-quarters of their working hours on employment services (n=28–36).

The workforce is spread across small and larger providers. Inclusive Employment Australia and Workforce Australia Services are the most widely delivered programs (n=142), and larger providers are more likely than smaller providers to deliver multiple programs (n=141). Providers with 300 or more staff employ 76 per cent of reported staff, and 15 per cent of providers employ fewer than 10 people (n=54). Most providers are not-for-profit organisations (n=81), although for-profit providers tend to employ more staff on average (n=53).

The workforce is spread across the nation, broadly in line with population shares, and around 13 per cent of reported sites are in remote or very remote areas (n=75).

Most sites are run by providers with only a few frontline staff per site. Forty-four per cent of sites (n=45) are run by providers that average two or fewer frontline staff per site, and

a further 53 per cent by providers with between two and five staff per site on average. Only 4 per cent of sites were run by providers averaging more than five staff per site.

Most staff have a vocational qualification (n=34), and investment in staff training averages $1,125 per person, per annum (n=24), or 30 hours per year (n=22).

Pay and conditions

Most roles in employment services are covered by a modern award (n=43), and reflecting labour market pressures, almost all (95 per cent, n=40) of respondents pay above award rates for at least some roles, mostly up to 10 per cent (n=31).

At 30 June 2025, the average full-time equivalent (FTE) base salary was approximately $74,000 for frontline staff (n=27) and $84,000 for all staff (n=26). Almost all employees have since received a pay increase, averaging around $2,000 for frontline staff (n=20) and $2,400 across all roles (n=21), implying average base salaries in 2026 of around $76,000 and $86,400 respectively. Annual earnings (n=25) are above those in retail trade and accommodation and food services, but below the average for other similar industries, including administrative and support services, and health care and social assistance.

Salary packaging is an important part of remuneration. Most respondents allow salary sacrifice (n=35), and fringe benefits tax (FBT)-free or exempt benefits average around $12,000 per employee (n=6). Cars are the most common fringe benefit (n=31).

Superannuation contributions are in line with the statutory minimum of 12 per cent, averaging around $9,900 (n=22) in 2025-26.

Most staff (79 per cent, n=53) work full time, and the share that are permanent full time has increased in recent years, reflecting a fall in part-time and casual positions.

Just over half of respondents offer flexible start or finish times (n=31), but structured options such as time off in lieu and purchased leave are less widely available (n=29).

Reflecting the exposure of the employment services workforce to challenging client behaviours, all respondents have systems to report aggression or violence towards staff (n=33). 97 per cent offer an Employee Assistance Program (n=35) to support staff wellbeing and safety.

Workforce challenges

Workforce shortages exist, particularly for frontline roles (n=42), and the vacancy rate of 6 per cent of employment services positions (n=30) is significantly higher than the Australian average of 2 per cent.

Annual turnover is very high at around 50 per cent of staff (n=26), and average tenure across the sector is around 2.9 years (n=29). Tenure is shortest in the frontline and training roles that make up most of the workforce.

Pay is the main reason staff leave. Most departures (80 per cent, n=28) are voluntary, and higher salary is the reason providers most often rank in their top three, both for staff

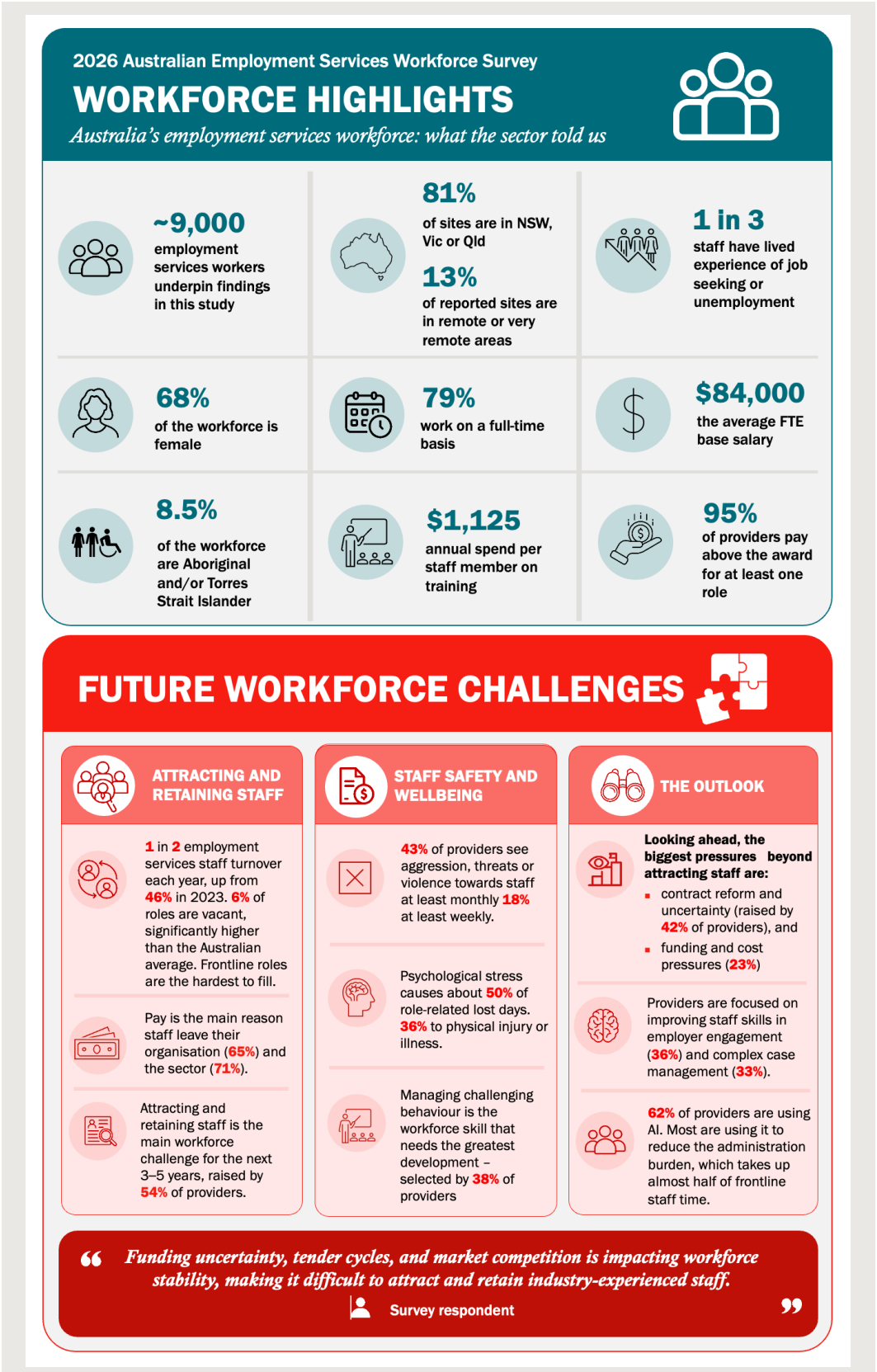
leaving their organisation, and for staff leaving the sector (n=31 and 28). Career change, job dissatisfaction and administrative burden also play a part.

The transition of Disability Employment Services to Inclusive Employment Australia has added to staff turnover. Nearly half of respondents reported more involuntary departures than in the previous year (n=29), and most made roles redundant because of the transition (n=14).

Threats to staff safety are an ongoing concern. Aggression, threats, or violence towards staff occur at least monthly at 43 per cent of respondents (n=28), and psychological stress accounts for around half of role-related lost working days (n=20). Managing challenging behaviour is the capability respondents most want to build (n=42).

An overview of the key findings is highlighted in chart 1.

1 Snapshot of the 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce



Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance.

1 About this report

This report provides insight into the employment services workforce, including its composition, skills, pay and conditions, recruitment and retention challenges, and employee welfare. It has been commissioned by NESA to provide an evidence base on the sector's workforce and identify areas where further support or strengthening may be needed.

Defining the workforce that delivers employment services

The employment services workforce comprises all staff employed by providers funded or commissioned by the Australian Government through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Department of Social Services (DSS) or the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to deliver:

- Workforce Australia Services
- Transition to Work
- Parent Pathways
- Inclusive Employment Australia, formerly Disability Employment Services
- Remote Australian Employment Services
- Career Transition Assistance
- Self-Employment Assistance
- Indigenous Skills and Employment Program
- Employability Skills Training
- National Panel of Assessors, and
- any other Commonwealth-contracted program whose primary purpose is employment assistance, employment preparation, skills development, job placement, employment retention or related participant support.

The employment services workforce includes frontline staff managing a caseload, as well as trainers, allied health professionals, employment engagement and business development staff, service-delivery managers, and corporate and support staff, such as finance, human resources, and IT staff, who work across employment services and the provider's other business lines.

Staff working solely on state-funded or unrelated services, and Australian Government departmental staff, are excluded. Where staff work across multiple programs, it was intended that only the share of their working time attributable to Commonwealth-contracted employment services be included.

Study methodology

The information in this report is based on the 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance, an online survey of employment services providers conducted between 4 August and 26 August 2026.

The survey was completed at the organisation level, generally by a HR manager on behalf of their organisation. It contained 65 questions covering:

- the organisation's programs, locations, and size
- workforce composition, including age, gender, diversity and lived experience
- qualifications, skills, and professional development
- industrial instruments, salaries, benefits and working arrangements
- recruitment, retention, turnover and workforce exit, and
- work health and safety, and current and emerging workforce challenges.

In total, 142 responses were received. Of these, 54 organisations reported detailed information on staff numbers. These organisations collectively employ 8,831 people.

Limitations and qualifications

We note the following qualifications and limitations:

- Results are based on a voluntary survey. Respondents may not be representative of the sector, particularly by provider size, program, or location.
- Sample size is limited for questions on pay, turnover and workforce challenges (typically answered by between 20 and 45 providers), impacting the generalisability of the findings. This reflects both that some questions did not apply to all providers, and that the survey's length is likely to have caused respondent fatigue. It is noted the NESA Australian Employment Services Renumeration Survey Report 2023 — the precursor to this 2026 survey, was based on responses from 20 organisations employing 8,749 employees.
- The 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance was distributed to providers by funding agencies, including the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Department of Social Services, and the National Indigenous Australians Agency. This is broader than previous surveys that were distributed to members of the NESA. Some comparisons are made between the results of the 2026 and former surveys, which do not take account of the potentially broader pool of respondents to the 2026 survey.
- Responses are self-reported by organisations and not been independently verified.
- Comparisons with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and other external benchmarks are indicative only, as definitions and reference periods may differ.
- It is noted that some data in this report is presented at the provider level, which equally weights results across providers. Some data is presented at the headcount level. Where this occurs, results are necessarily weighted towards responses from larger employers.

2 Providers and their workforce

Results from the 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance apply to 8,831 people employed in the Australian employment services sector. This does not represent all staff, only those working with providers that participated in the survey, and answered respective questions (Appendix A).

Most of the workforce (57 per cent) deliver frontline services to people seeking employment.

There are about 10 frontline staff for every team leader. Around half of surveyed providers only deliver one program, with Inclusive Employment Australia and Workforce Australia Services being the most widely delivered programs.

The workforce is mainly spread across a few large providers.

Workforce size

There is no official count of people working in the employment services sector. The 2022 wave of NESA's workforce survey estimated that around 20,000 people worked in the sector, including about 12,000 frontline staff and 1,500 service delivery managers. The remaining staff worked in areas such as administration, customer service, quality checks and compliance.[1] NESA's 2023 survey suggested the workforce may be larger, at around 25,000 people, with that survey indicating that the 20 participating organisations employ 8,749 staff in 1,267 branch offices 'representing approximately 35 per cent of the total estimated Australian employment services workforce'.[2]

These earlier estimates were made before several changes to employment services, including the move from Parents Next to Parent Pathways, Disability Employment Services (DES) to Inclusive Employment Australia, the Community Development Program to RAES, and changes to Workforce Australia Services licences. This report does not estimate total workforce size.

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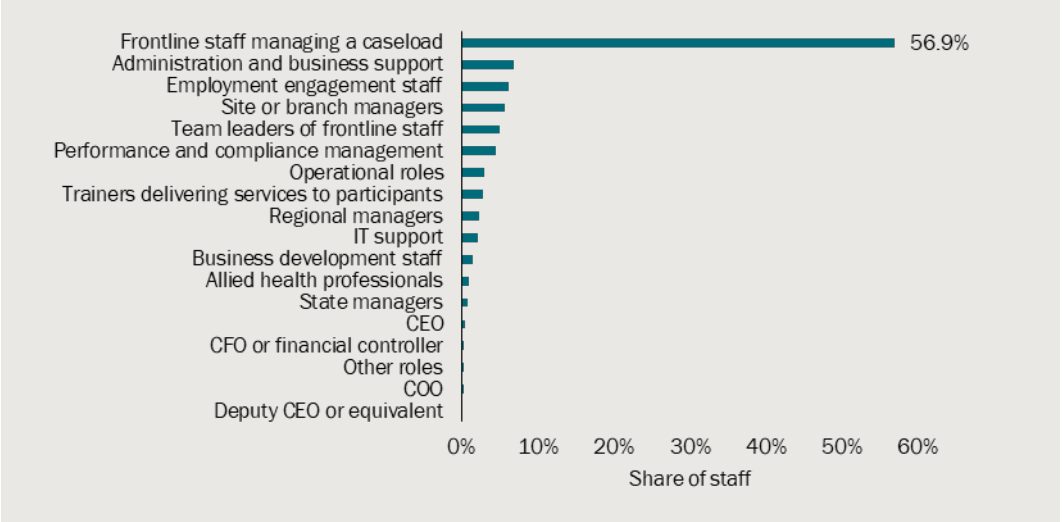
[1] NESA, Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey Report 2022, (NESA, 2022), p. 8. The estimate was based on the triangulation of information from the NESA Employment Services HR Performance and Remuneration Survey 2020; the NESA 2022 Membership Information — EFT Staff; Publicly available information of employment services contracts, and numbers of registered and active Employment Services System Users. .

[2] National Employment Services Association (NESA), *Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and Human Resource Management Performance 2023* (NESA, 2023), p. 6, https://nesa.com.au/employment-services-workforce-survey/..

Roles and occupations

Most staff work directly with job seekers. Of every 100 staff whose roles were reported by surveyed providers (n=48), around 57 manage a caseload of job seekers (chart 2.1). The next largest groups are administration and business support staff (7 per cent), employment engagement staff (6 per cent), site or branch managers (6 per cent) and team leaders (5 per cent). Across respondents, there are on average around 10 frontline staff for every team leader (n=48). At the median surveyed provider, the ratio was lower, at around 6 frontline staff per team leader (n=36). Surveyed providers (n=54) range from a handful of staff to almost 2,000, with a median headcount of around 40, so the gap between the average and median ratios indicates that larger providers have more frontline staff reporting to each team leader than smaller providers.

2.1 Reported staff by role



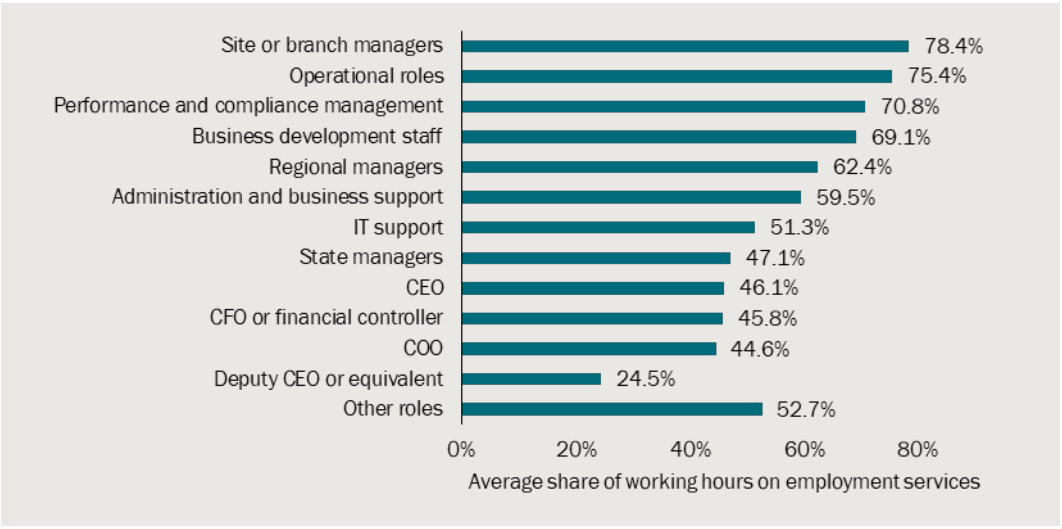
Note: Shares of the 7,415 staff reported by role across 48 surveyed providers. Includes back-office staff who work across employment services and other areas. The survey asked, "How many employment services staff does your organisation employ in each role (headcount, all staff)?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 48).

Back-office and leadership staff are a substantial part of the effort that goes into delivering employment services. Many providers also deliver services outside contracted employment services, such as training, disability or community services, so staff time can be split across activities. The shares below are intended to measure the portion of working hours spent on contracted employment services only. Site or branch managers and operational roles spend around three-quarters of their working hours on employment services (78 and 75 per cent on average), performance and compliance roles and business development staff around 70 per cent, regional managers 62 per cent, and administration and IT support roles 60 and 51 per cent (chart 2.2, n=28-36).

Senior leaders are responsible for the whole organisation, so their time is split across all the services their organisation delivers. Even so, they spend a large share on employment services, at 47 per cent for state managers, around 45 per cent for chief executives, chief financial officers and chief operating officers, and around a quarter for deputy chief executives (n=20).

2.2 Share of working hours on employment services by role



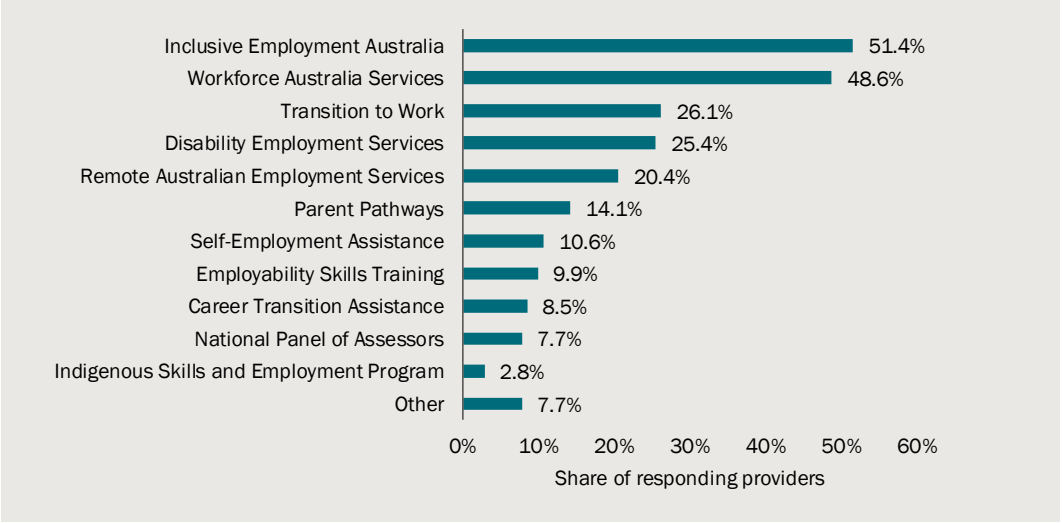
Note: Average of the shares reported by each surveyed provider. Between 18 and 36 providers answered for each role. The survey asked, "For each type of back-office role, what percent of working hours does the average employee spend on employment services specifically?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 40).

Broad range of services offered

Inclusive Employment Australia and Workforce Australia Services are the most widely delivered programs among surveyed providers (n=142). Around half of surveyed providers deliver Inclusive Employment Australia (51 per cent) and a similar share deliver Workforce Australia Services (49 per cent) (chart 2.3).

2.3 Programs delivered by surveyed providers in 2025-26



Note: Providers could select more than one program, so shares sum to more than 100 per cent. 'None of the above' (1 per cent) is not shown. The survey asked, "Which employment service programs has your organisation delivered during 2025-26? Please select all that apply".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 142).

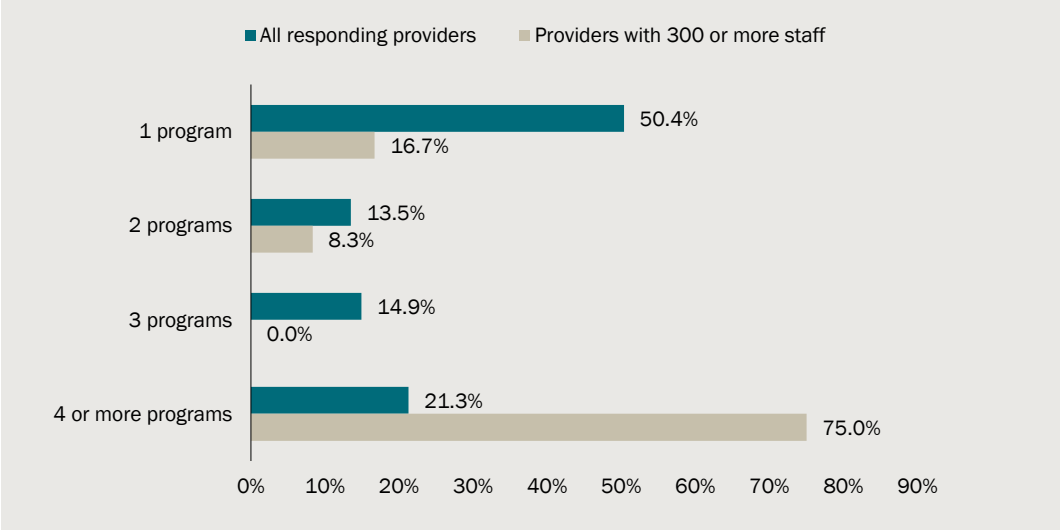
About one in four deliver Transition to Work (26 per cent) and one in five Remote Australian Employment Services (20 per cent), followed by Parent Pathways (14 per cent), Self-Employment Assistance (11 per cent), Employability Skills Training (10 per cent), Career Transition Assistance and the National Panel of Assessors (8 per cent each) and the Indigenous Skills and Employment Program (3 per cent).

One in four surveyed providers (25 per cent) also reported delivering Disability Employment Services, which ended in November 2025, most likely because they delivered it earlier in 2025-26 before the transition to Inclusive Employment Australia.

Half of surveyed providers deliver a single program, and program breadth rises with provider size. Of the 141 surveyed providers, 50 per cent deliver one program, 13 per cent deliver two, 15 per cent deliver three, and 21 per cent deliver four or more (chart 2.4).

Among the 12 surveyed providers with 300 or more staff, 9 deliver four or more programs and 2 deliver a single program. Breadth may give the larger providers some scope to move staff between programs as caseloads and contracts change, mainly for back-office roles or where the provider delivers several programs in the same location. In practice, frontline staff often move between providers rather than within them when contracts change, but single-program providers are left more exposed when a contract ends.

2.4 Number of programs delivered by provider size



Note: Count of programs selected, excluding 'None of the above', and 'Other' counts as one program. Of the 141 providers, 12 reported 300 or more staff. The survey asked, "Which employment service programs has your organisation delivered during 2025-26? Please select all that apply" and "How many staff working at your organisation directly deliver contracted employment and related services?".

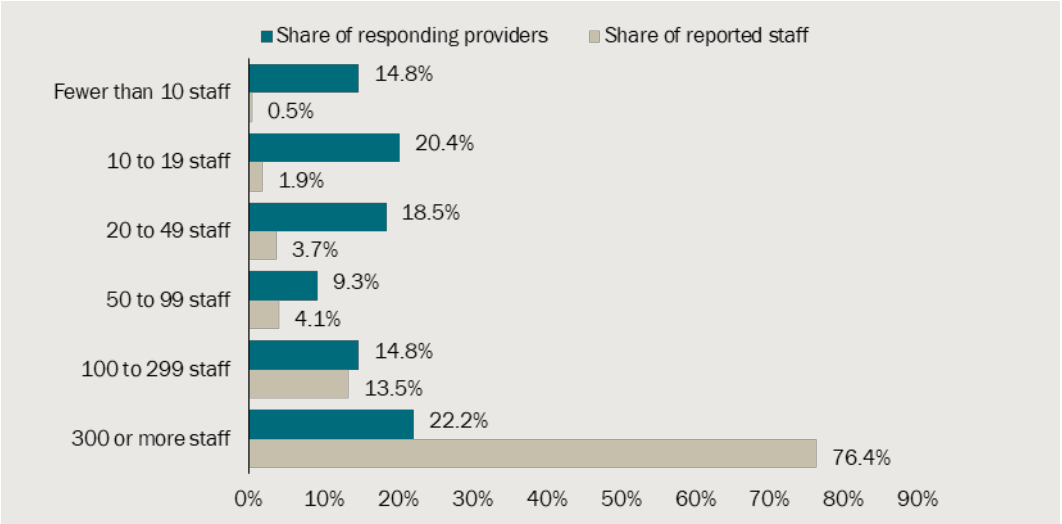
Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 141).

Broad range of providers offering services

Employment services providers range from small to large employers. Of the 54 surveyed providers that reported a headcount, 15 per cent have fewer than 10 staff delivering contracted employment services and 22 per cent have 300 or more (chart 2.5). The 29

providers with fewer than 50 staff make up 54 per cent of those reporting, but employ about 6 per cent of reported staff, and the 19 with fewer than 20 staff employ about 2 per cent. Providers with 300 or more staff employ 76 per cent of reported staff.

2.5 Surveyed providers and their staff by provider size

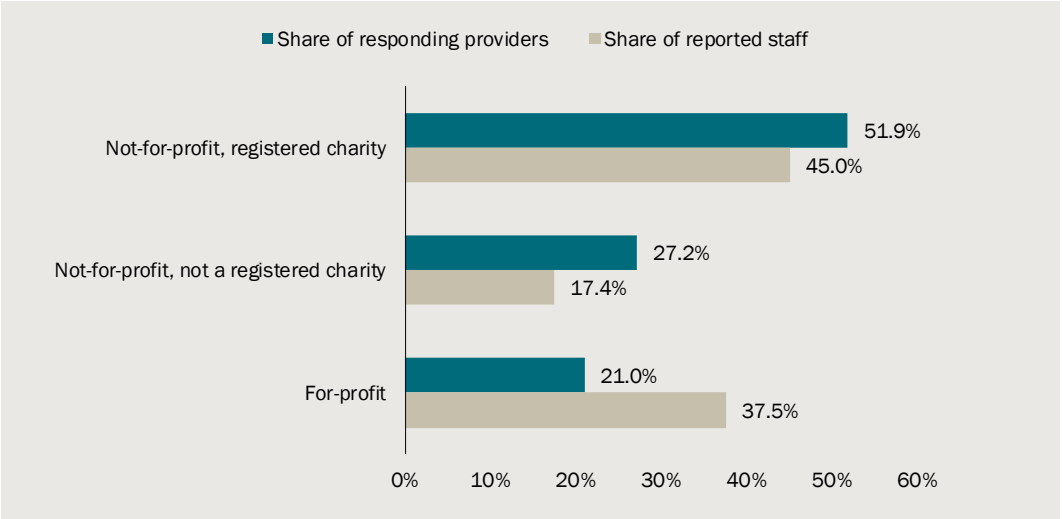


Note: Provider size is the headcount of staff directly delivering contracted employment and related services. The 54 providers employ 8 831 staff. Shares may not sum to 100 per cent because of rounding. The survey asked, "How many staff working at your organisation directly deliver contracted employment and related services?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 54).

Most respondents were not-for-profit. Of the 81 that stated their organisational type, 52 per cent are registered charities, 27 per cent are other not-for-profit providers and 21 per cent are for-profit (chart 2.6). For-profit providers tend to be larger, employing 38 per cent of staff (n=53), while representing 21 per cent of respondents.

2.6 Surveyed providers and their staff by provider type



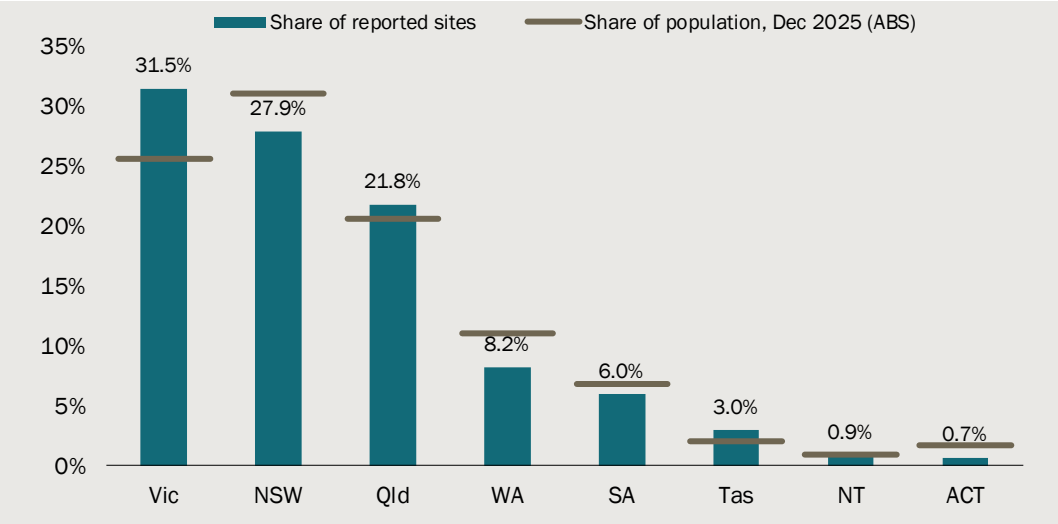
Note: Provider type was stated by 81 of the 142 surveyed providers, of which 53 also reported a headcount. Shares of staff are of the staff at those 53 providers. The survey asked, "Which of the following categories best describes the for-profit status of your organisation?" and "How many staff working at your organisation directly deliver contracted employment and related services?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 81).

Nationwide support

Workplace sites are concentrated in the three largest states, broadly in line with population. Surveyed providers reported 3,399 sites (n=82) delivering contracted employment services, of which 81 per cent are in Victoria (31 per cent), New South Wales (28 per cent) and Queensland (22 per cent) (chart 2.7).

2.7 Sites and population by state and territory

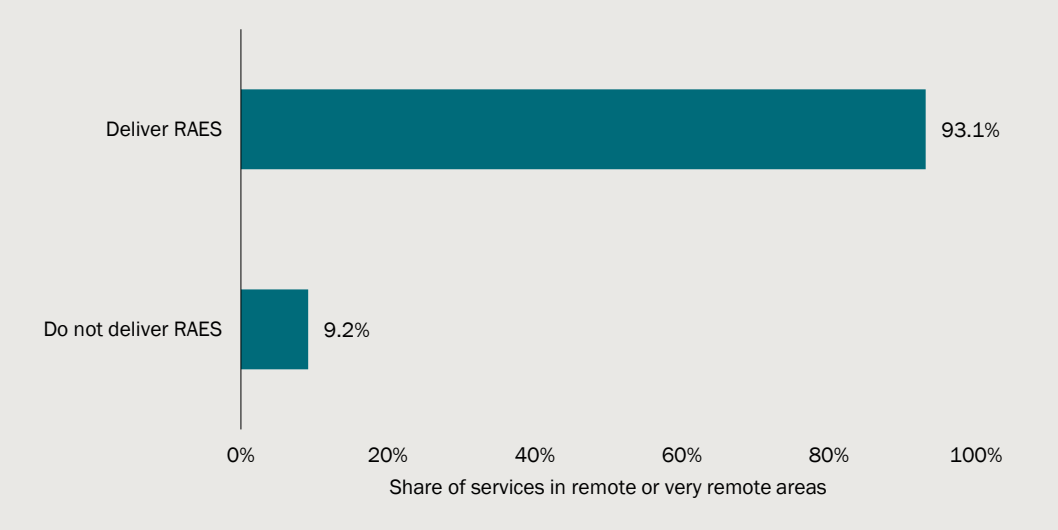


Note: Covers 3,399 reported sites. The external territories (2 sites) are not shown. Population is the estimated resident population at 31 December 2025. The survey asked, "Please indicate the number of branches or sites that your organisation delivers contracted employment services in each state and territory".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 82), and ABS, National, state and territory population, December 2025.

Around 13 per cent of reported sites are in remote or very remote areas (n=75 providers, 2,543 sites). This is estimated by applying each provider's reported share of services in remote and very remote areas to the number of sites it reported. All 24 RAES respondents reported some remote delivery, and remote areas account for 93 per cent of their services on average. Of the 51 other respondents, 15 reported some remote delivery, and remote areas account for 9 per cent of their services on average (chart 2.8).

2.8 Reported share of services in remote or very remote areas

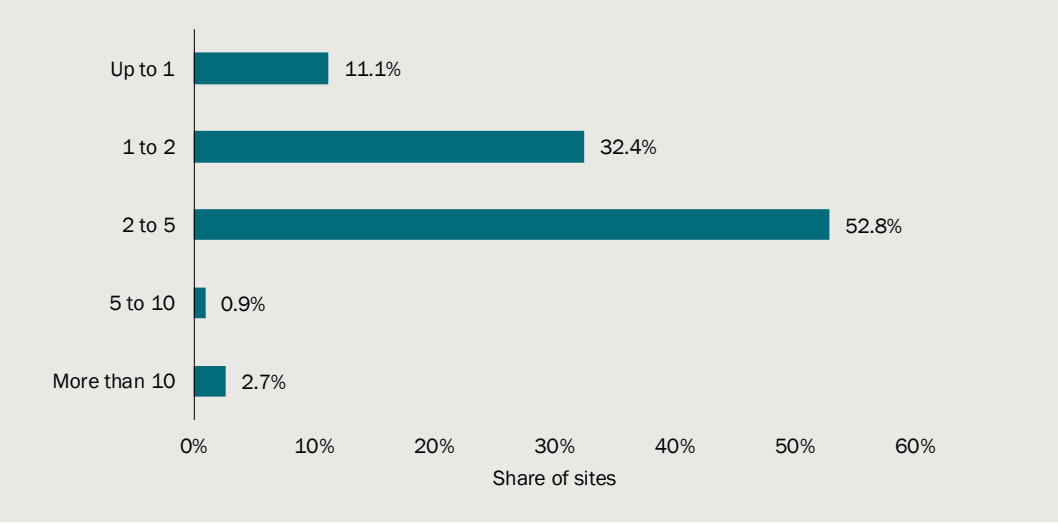


Note: Simple average within each group, with each provider counting equally. The survey asked, "Approximately what share of your organisation's contracted employment services are delivered in metropolitan, regional, rural, or remote areas?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 75, of which 24 deliver RAES).

Sites are typically run with only a few frontline staff per site. The 45 providers that reported both site and frontline staff numbers together account for about half of all sites reported in the survey. Among them, 44 per cent of sites are run by providers that average two or fewer frontline staff per site, and a further 53 per cent by providers with between two and five staff per site on average (chart 2.9). Only 4 per cent of sites were run by providers averaging more than five staff per site. Some of the smaller sites may be outreach and/or part-time.

2.9 Average frontline staff per site



Note: For each provider, frontline caseload staff divided by its total number of sites. The survey asked, "How many employment services staff does your organisation employ in each role (headcount, all staff)?" and "Please indicate the number of branches or sites that your organisation delivers contracted employment services in each state and territory".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 45).

3 Workforce composition

The employment services workforce is predominantly female, with 68 per cent estimated to be women.

Diversity within the employment services workforce is broadly matched to those seeking employment services, with the exception of gender. Around seven in ten staff are women. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people represent 8.5 per cent of staff. Staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with disability, are also well represented considering their share of the population.

Lived experience of unemployment is an important feature of the workforce. About one in three staff have been unemployed or a job seeker, and about one in ten work in a designated lived-experience role.

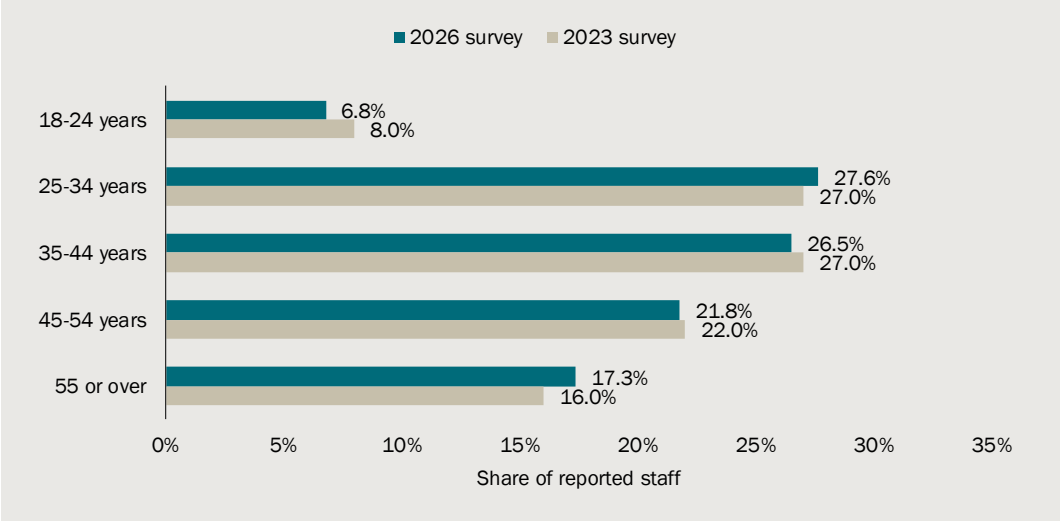
Employee characteristics

Around seven in ten staff at responding providers are women. Weighting each provider's gender mix by its headcount, women make up 68 per cent of staff and men 30 per cent (n=51), with a small share identifying with another term. NESA's 2023 survey reported 72 per cent women and 27 per cent men and noted that the proportions had remained steady since 2008.[3]

The surveyed workforce is concentrated in the middle of the age bracket range. More than half of reported staff (54 per cent) are aged 25 to 44 (n=48), 22 per cent are 45 to 54 and 17 per cent are 55 or over (chart 3.1). Few staff are under 25 (7 per cent, n=48). This is virtually unchanged since 2023, with little sign of an ageing workforce.

[3] NESA, *Workforce Survey 2023*, 12. The 2026 figures weight each provider's banded answer at its mid-point by its headcount (n = 51). The 2023 survey counted staff by gender across 20 providers.

3.1 Age profile of reported staff, 2023 and 2026 surveys



Note: 2026 shares are of the 6 947 staff reported by age group across 48 surveyed providers. 2023 shares are from NESA's 2023 report, which show whole percentages, and cover 20 providers employing 8 749 staff. The survey asked, "How many staff does your organisation employ in contracted employment services within the following age groups?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 48), and NESA, *Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and Human Resource Management Performance 2023*, pages 12 and 13.

Diversity

The employment services workforce is well represented across demographic groups.[4] Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people make up 8.5 per cent of reported staff (n=44), around twice their share of the population (chart 3.2).[5] Staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are 26 per cent of reported staff (n=36), a little above the 22 per cent of Australians who speak a language other than English at home.[6]

Staff who live with, or have lived with, a disability are 13.5 per cent of reported staff (n=35). This compares with the 6 per cent of Australians who need assistance with core activities, and the 21 per cent of Australians who have a disability.[7]

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[4] Benchmarks in this section are shares of the Australian population. First Nations people, people with disability and people from disadvantaged backgrounds make up much larger shares of the employment services caseload, so a staff share above the population benchmark may still be below their share of participants.

[5] ABS, *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, June 2021, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/estimates-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release.

[6] ABS 2022, Cultural diversity in Australia, https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/cultural-diversity-australia.

[7] ABS, "Profile of people with a core need for assistance in Australia," 29 July 2022, https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/profile-people-core-need-assistance-australia. ABS, "Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings," 4 July 2022, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release.

Of surveyed providers that deliver at least half of their services in remote areas, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are 45 per cent of reported staff (n=14), compared with 7 per cent at other providers (chart 3.3). Staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with disability, are more likely to work in regional or metropolitan areas.

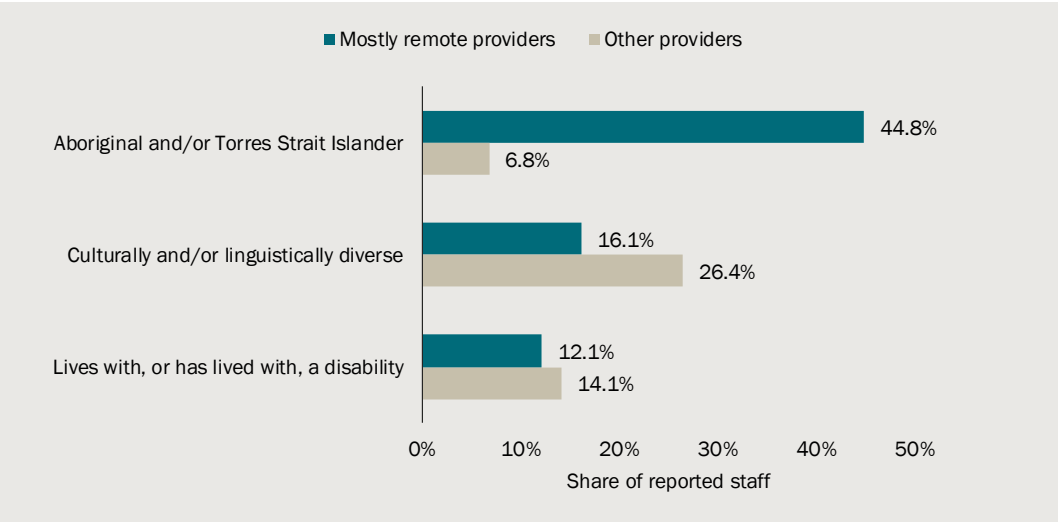
3.2 Diversity in the employment services workforce



Note: Shares of reported staff. The population benchmark for disability is the Census measure of people who need assistance with core activities. 'Don't know' answers and providers that did not report a headcount are excluded. The categories overlap and do not sum to 100 per cent. The survey asked, "What approximate share of your employment services workforce identify with the following genders?" and "What is the approximate share of your employment services workforce that…", followed by each group shown.

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 51 for women, 44 for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 36 for culturally and linguistically diverse and 35 for disability), and Australian Bureau of Statistics.

3.3 Workforce diversity, mostly remote and other providers



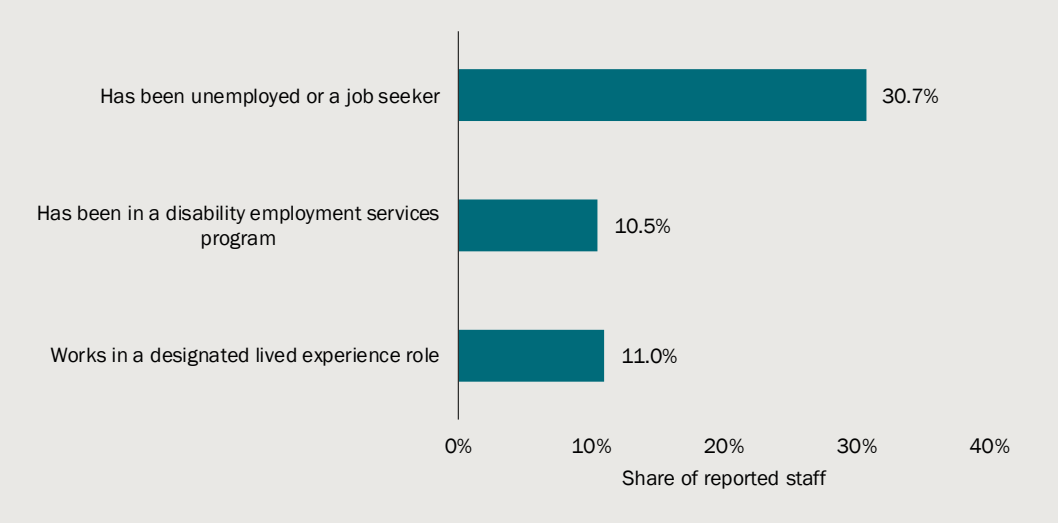
Note: Shares of reported staff. 'Mostly remote' providers deliver at least half of their services in remote areas. The survey asked, "What is the approximate share of your employment services workforce that…", followed by each group shown, and "Approximately what share of your organisation's contracted employment services are delivered in metropolitan, regional, rural, or remote areas?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 14 mostly remote and 28 other providers for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 10 and 25 for culturally and linguistically diverse, and 9 and 24 for disability).

Lived experience in the workforce

About one in three staff at responding providers have been unemployed or a job seeker themselves. Across the surveyed providers that track this, 31 per cent of reported staff have lived experience of unemployment or of being a job seeker, 10 per cent have been in a disability employment services program and 11 per cent are employed in a designated lived-experience role (chart 3.4, n=31, 25 and 32). Providers that track lived experience may also place more weight on it in recruitment, so these shares may overstate the average across all providers.

3.4 Lived experience among reported staff



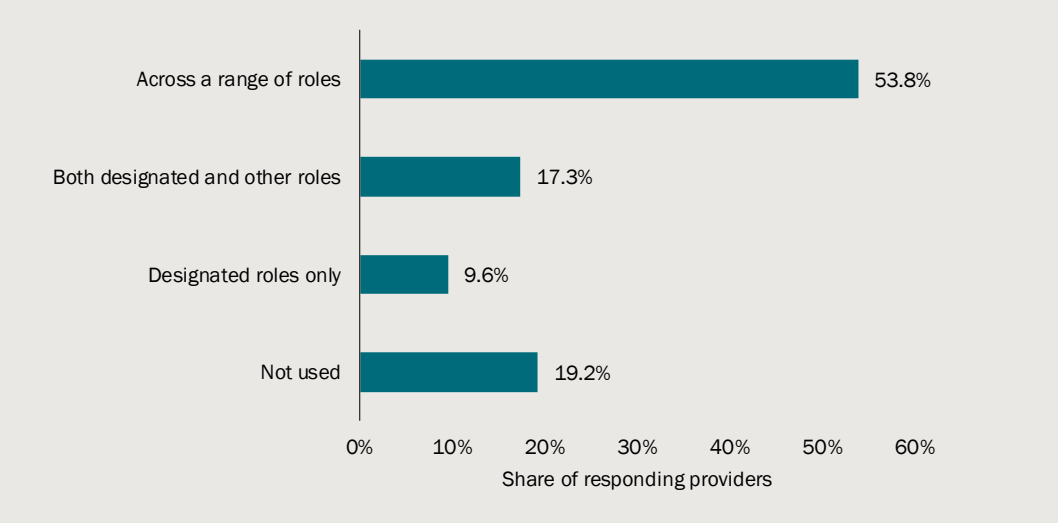
Note: Band mid-points weighted by provider headcount. 'Don't know' answers (15 to 35 per cent of providers, depending on the item) are excluded. The categories overlap. The survey asked, "What is the approximate share of your employment services workforce that…", followed by each lived experience item shown.

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 31, 25 and 32).

Most respondents draw on lived experience more generally rather than through designated positions. Of the 52 respondents that answered, 54 per cent use lived experience across a range of roles, 17 per cent use both designated and other roles, and 10 per cent use designated roles only, while 19 per cent do not use lived experience in their workforce model (chart 3.5).

Surveyed providers that deliver RAES report the highest shares of lived experience, with 45 per cent of their reported staff having lived experience of unemployment and 37 per cent working in designated lived-experience roles (chart 3.6, n=9 and 8). Workforce Australia providers report 33 per cent of staff with lived experience of unemployment (n=11) but only 3 per cent in designated roles, and providers of Disability Employment Services or Inclusive Employment Australia report 18 and 11 per cent. These splits rest on small numbers of providers, so they are indicative only.

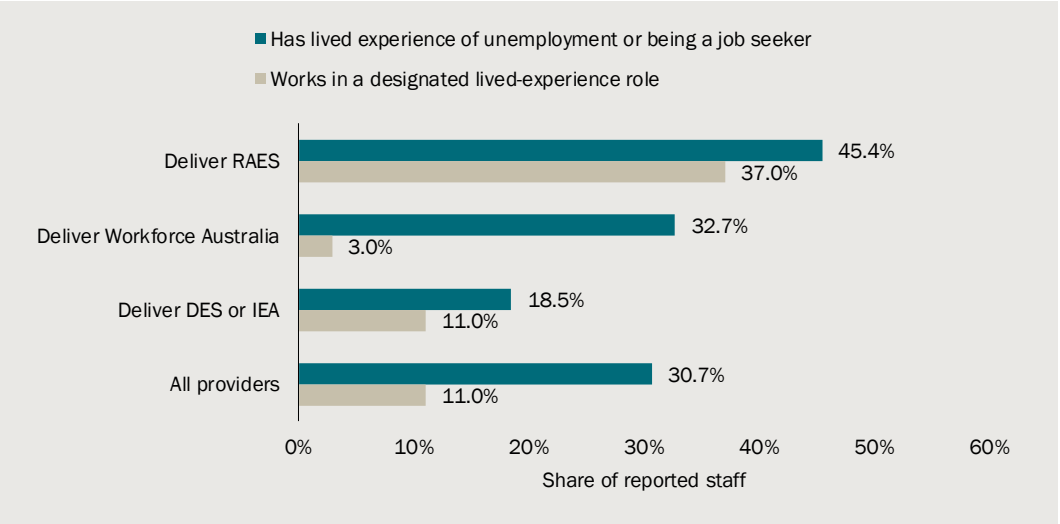
3.5 Use of lived experience in workforce models



Note: Providers chose one option. The survey asked, "Where is lived experience used in your workforce model?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 52).

3.6 Lived experience among reported staff, by program



Note: Shares of reported staff. Groups overlap because providers can deliver more than one program. The survey asked, "What is the approximate share of your employment services workforce that…", followed by each lived experience item shown, and "Which employment service programs has your organisation delivered during 2025-26? Please select all that apply".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 9 RAES, 11 Workforce Australia, 12 DES or IEA and 31 all providers for lived experience of unemployment, and 8, 13, 16 and 32 for designated roles).

Staff who have been job seekers bring a direct understanding of participants' circumstances and the barriers they face. There are tentative signs that surveyed providers relying more on lived experience also invest more in their staff. Surveyed providers where 30 per cent or more of staff have lived experience of unemployment report a higher median training spend per employee (around $1 200 to $1 500, against $500 to $800 at other providers, n=6 and 7). These providers also have slightly lower voluntary turnover (29 per cent against 33 per cent, n=5 and 9), while the share of funding for continuing professional development for frontline staff is the same (63 per cent). The samples behind these comparisons are very small, so the results are suggestive.

4 Professionalisation and development

Many frontline staff have a vocational qualification, mainly a Certificate III or IV, and one quarter hold a qualification specific to employment services. Roughly one third entered the role through experience rather than a formal tertiary qualification.

Employees typically learn specific skills on the job. The mix of vocational qualifications, degrees and experience-based entry helps keep these roles open to people with lived experience and people from diverse backgrounds.

Employers rate their current skill mix as effective, at around seven out of ten for delivering client outcomes.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is not yet standard practice. Only one in four respondents both require and fund CPD, and large providers are more likely to deliver it than small providers.

Training investment is relatively modest at a median of around $1,125 and 30 hours per employee a year.

Education and skills

Most frontline staff have a vocational qualification. Around three in ten frontline staff hold a Certificate III (30 per cent) and a similar share hold a Certificate IV (29 per cent, n=34), typically in employment services. Around one in six hold a diploma (17 per cent) and a similar share have a bachelor's degree (16 per cent), while few hold a postgraduate qualification (6 per cent, n=25).

A third of frontline staff (33 per cent, n=34) entered the sector through experience rather than a formal post-school qualification. This suggests that many staff learn the skills specific to employment services on the job. Relatively low formal entry requirements open the sector to diverse recruitment pathways, including people with lived experience, but also mean staff can move to other occupations relatively easily (low 'switching costs').

One quarter of frontline staff (25 per cent, or a median of 11 per employer, n=31 and 34) hold a nationally recognised qualification specific to employment services, such as a Certificate IV in Employment Services. These staff may have a stronger attachment to the sector, as their qualification is less transferable to other occupations.

Employers rate the skill mix of their current workforce as effective, giving it around seven out of ten on average (n=33) for delivering client outcomes. Four in ten (39 per cent, n=33) rate it at an eight or higher.

Professional development

CPD is not yet standard practice for frontline employment services staff. Only around one in four (25 per cent, n=28) respondents both require and fund CPD for frontline staff. Another 25 per cent fund but do not require CPD, 4 per cent require but do not fund and 46 per cent do not require or fund.

Large providers (200 or more staff) are more likely to fund and/or require CPD (67 per cent, n=9), compared with small providers (fewer than 50 staff, 36 per cent). This suggests that access to professional development for frontline staff depends partly on the size of their employer, with smaller providers less able to absorb its cost within contract funding. A sector-wide approach — for example, through the NESA Academy and recognition of CPD costs in contract pricing — could help close this gap.

Training investment is modest and uneven. In 2025-26, the median employer invested $1,125 per employee in training (n=24) and $55 in study (n=15), excluding mandatory training by contracting departments. This equated to a median of around 30 hours of additional training (n=22) and 20 hours of study per employee (n=13).

Investment varies widely between providers: 42 per cent of respondents invested less than $1,000 per employee in training (n=24), while 33 per cent invested over $10,000. Study support is similarly varied, with almost half of respondents (47 per cent, n=15) reporting no investment at all.

Training time is concentrated in a few providers. More than half of respondents (59 per cent, n=22) reported 30 hours or less per employee, while 27 per cent reported 100 hours or more.

There is a small, positive association between training investment and retention. Providers delivering more than the median 30 hours of training per employee had a median voluntary turnover rate of 25 per cent (n=8), compared with 32 per cent for those delivering 30 hours or less.

5 Pay and conditions

Most roles in employment services are covered by a modern award, mainly the Labour Market Assistance Industry Award 2020. Almost all (95 per cent) respondents pay above award rates for at least some roles, mostly up to 10 per cent.

The average FTE base salary at 30 June 2025 was around $84,000 (around $74,000 for frontline staff managing a caseload), and almost all employees have since received a pay increase, averaging around $2,400. Annual earnings are above those in retail trade, other services and accommodation and food services, but below the average for other similar industries, including administrative and support services, and health care and social assistance.

Salary packaging is an important part of remuneration. Most respondents allow salary sacrifice, and FBT-free or exempt benefits average around $12,000 per employee.

Most staff (79 per cent) work full time. Just over half of respondents offer flexible start or finish times, but structured options such as time off in lieu and purchased leave are less widely available.

All respondents have systems to report aggression or violence towards staff, and 97 per cent offer an Employee Assistance Program to support staff wellbeing and safety.

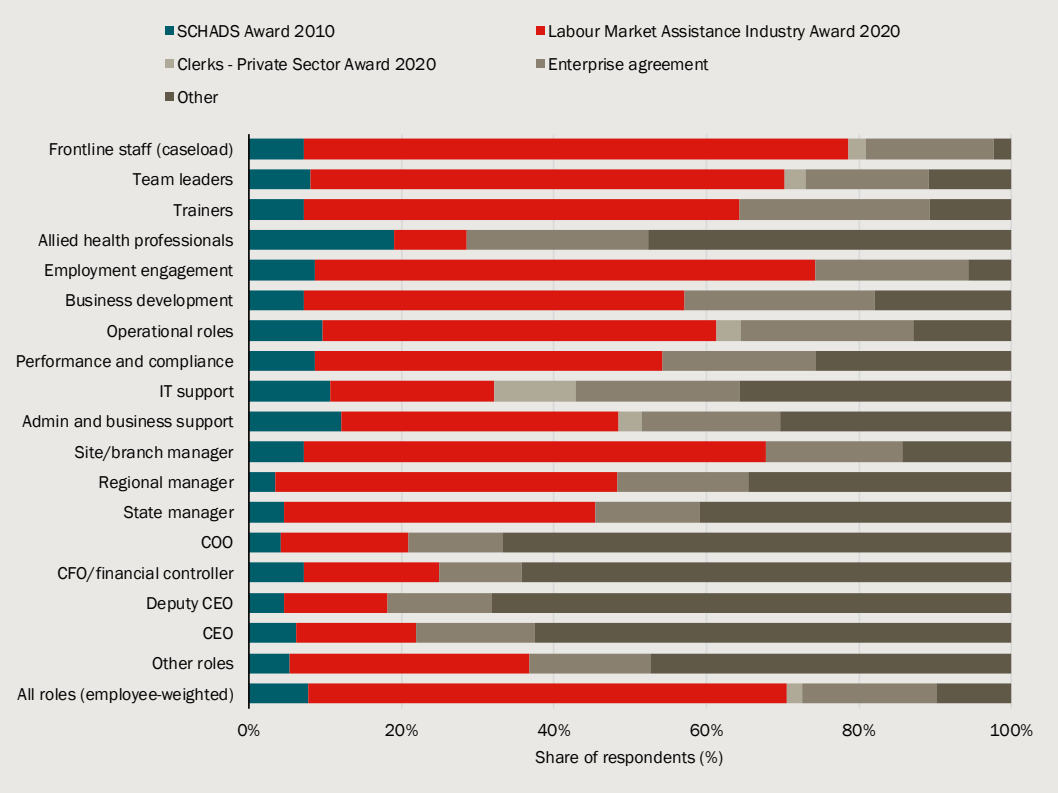
Industrial instruments covering the sector

Most employment services roles are covered by a modern award. A modern award is the industrial instrument that most commonly applies to roles covering around three-quarters (73 per cent, n=43) of employment services staff, principally the Labour Market Assistance Industry Award (63 per cent), followed by the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Award 2010 (8 per cent) and the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020 (2 per cent). This is consistent with 2023[8], when awards were also the dominant instrument and the Labour Market Assistance Industry Award the main award.

Enterprise agreements are less common. They are the instrument that most commonly applies to roles covering around a fifth (18 per cent, n=43) of employment services staff. The remaining 10 per cent of staff (n=43) are covered most often by other instruments, such as a common law contract. Arrangements outside awards and enterprise agreements remain concentrated in senior roles such as CEO, CFO and Deputy CEO.

[8] The 2023 survey asked which instrument regulated each individual key position holder's base salary, rather than which instrument most commonly applies to each role, so the shares in the two surveys are not directly comparable.

5.1 Most common industrial instrument by role



Note: The survey asked, "Which industrial instrument most commonly applies to each role in your employment services workforce?".
Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 43).

Reflecting competition for labour, almost all respondents (95 per cent, n=40) pay a premium above award rates, typically of up to 10 per cent (n=31):

- 26 per cent keep the premium to 5 per cent or less
- 42 per cent pay between 6 and 10 per cent
- 19 per cent pay between 11 and 15 per cent, and
- 13 per cent pay more than 15 per cent.

Some providers use individual flexibility arrangements to vary award or agreement terms for individual employees. Of the respondents (n=31), 42 per cent use them. This is lower than in 2023, when 53 per cent of providers had an individual flexibility arrangement in place with at least one employee.

Remuneration

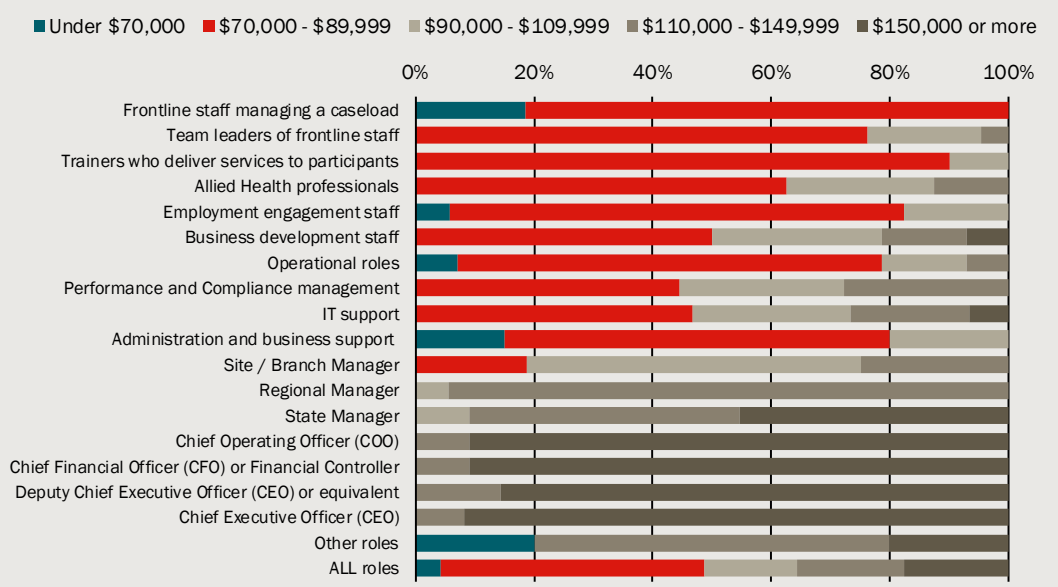
Employment costs make up most of providers' expenditure. On average, employment costs account for around two-thirds (65 per cent, n=20) of providers' total expenditure. This means changes in pay and conditions flow directly through to the cost of delivering services. This share is unchanged from 2023, when employment costs also averaged 65 per cent of total recurrent expenditure.

Salaries, allowances and bonuses

Across all roles, the average FTE base salary as at 30 June 2025 was $84,011 (n=26). Frontline staff managing a caseload averaged $73,981 (n=27), with most (81 per cent) earning between $70,000 and $89,999. This is around 2 per cent higher in real terms than the 2023[9] average base salary for comparable roles ($72,570 in 2025-26 dollars).

After adjusting for inflation, base salaries for other closely matched roles have risen by around 4 per cent (regional managers and chief financial officers, n=18 and 11) to around 12 per cent (site/branch managers) since 2023, while CEO base salaries have declined in real terms.

5.2 FTE base salary at 30 June 2025 (excluding superannuation) by role



Note: The survey asked, "For each role in your organisation, please report the average annual remuneration of a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee in employment services for 2025–26, broken down into the components below." Results are for FTE base salary as at 30 June 2025, excluding superannuation.

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 27).

Among responding providers (n=21), almost all employment services employees received a pay increase since 30 June 2025 (n=21). Since 30 June 2025, pay rose by around $2,400 on average across all roles (n=21), and by around $2,000 for frontline staff managing a caseload (n=20). This implies an average FTE base salary in 2026 of around $86,400 (around $76,000 for frontline staff).

Around half (45 per cent, n=8) of employees also received a work-related allowance, averaging around $1,600 per employee. Most frontline staff managing a caseload (57 per cent, n=7) received an allowance, generally under $1,000.

A similar share of employment services employees (44 per cent, n=21) received a bonus or performance payment in 2025-26. The average bonus was around $1,200 across all employees, and around $770 for frontline staff (n=21).

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[9] The 2023 figures were averaged across individual employees rather than providers, so these changes are indicative.

5.3 Salary, allowances, pay increases and bonuses by role

Role	FTE base salary at 30 June 2025	Work-related allowances during 2025-26	Average $ increase from 30 June 2025	Average $ bonus or performance payment for 2025-26
Frontline staff managing a caseload	$73,981	$375	$1,975	$774
Team leaders of frontline staff	$86,785	$791	$2,750	$1,250
Trainers who deliver services to participants	$82,500	$292	$2,287	$700
Allied health professionals	$91,875	$1,250	$2,928	$250
Employment engagement staff	$82,205	$2,916	$2,572	$2,021
Business development staff	$102,321	$2,917	$3,208	$2,416
Operational roles	$85,357	$1,166	$2,864	$1,187
Performance and compliance management	$97,916	$4,375	$2,830	$1,375
IT support	$101,000	$2,437	$3,125	$1,583
Administration and business support	$81,250	$4,531	$2,339	$1,200
Site / Branch Manager	$103,750	$5,000	$2,846	$1,538
Regional Manager	$121,666	$5,937	$4,114	$2,477
State Manager	$144,318	$2,083	$4,062	$2,900
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	$200,454	$7,500	$8,444	$7,722
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	$212,727	$5,250	$8,525	$10,450
Deputy CEO	$183,928	$5,833	$7,031	$4,250
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	$271,666	$4,375	$8,090	$15,591
Other roles	$129,500	$0	$2,583	$0

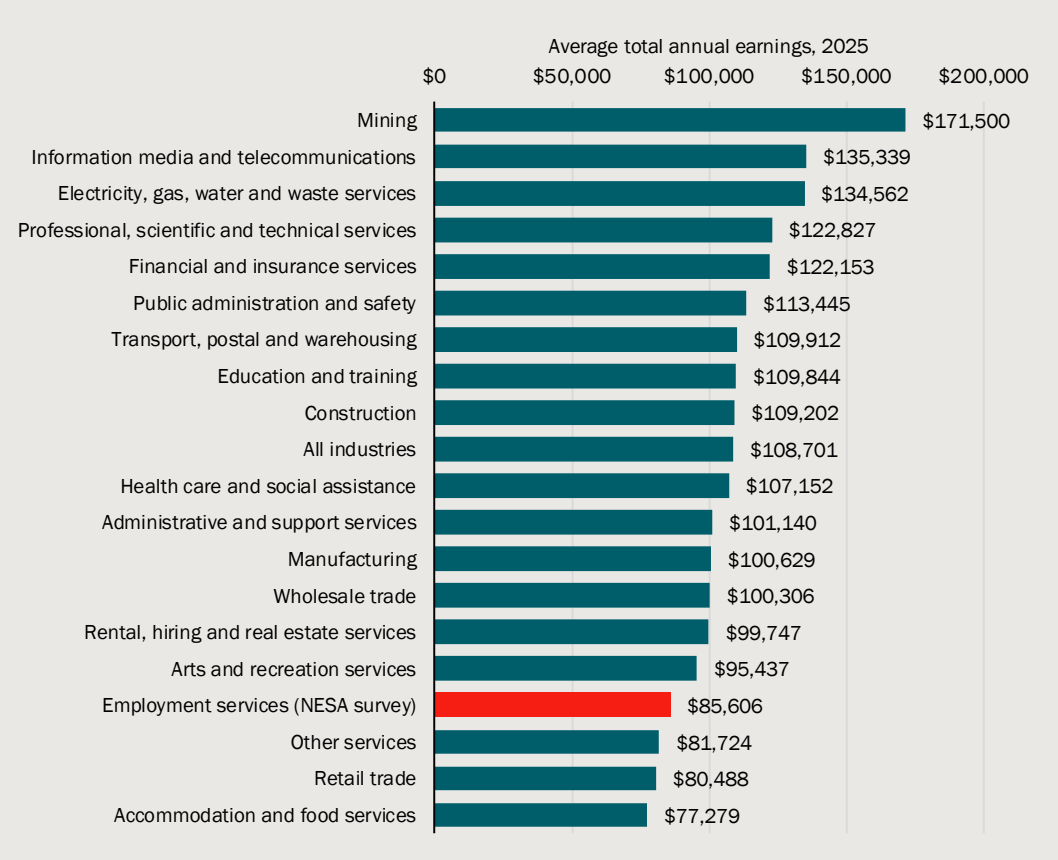
Note: The survey asked, "For each role in your organisation, please report the average annual remuneration of a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee in employment services for 2025–26, broken down into the components below." Results are for FTE base salary, work-related allowances, average $ increase from 30 June 2025 and average $ bonus or performance payment.

Source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 27 for base salary, 8 for allowances, 21 for pay increases and 21 for bonuses).

Average FTE annual earnings (base salary plus work-related allowances) in the employment services sector were around $86,000 (n=25) in 2025-26. This is above the average for FTE adult employees in other services ($82,000), retail trade ($80,000) and accommodation and food services ($77,000)[10]. It is below earnings in industries with similar roles and responsibilities, including administrative and support services ($101,000) and health care and social assistance ($107,000), and below the all-industries average ($109,000).

10 Industry comparisons use ABS Average Weekly Earnings, full-time adult total earnings, May 2025, annualised (52.18 weeks).

5.4 Average total annual earnings by industry comparison



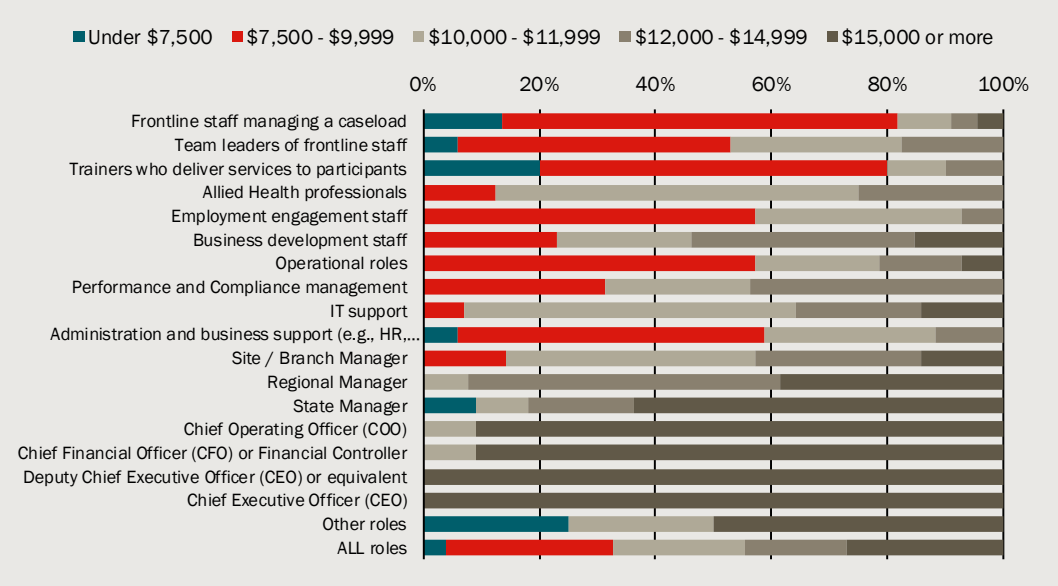
Note: Employment services annual earnings equals base salary plus allowances. n = 25 providers for base salary and n = 8 for allowances. The survey asked, "For each role in your organisation, please report the average annual remuneration of a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee in employment services for 2025–26, broken down into the components below." Results are for FTE base salary and work-related allowances.

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 25 for base salary and 8 for allowances), and ABS full-time adult average weekly total earnings by industry, May 2025.

Superannuation

Superannuation contributions are in line with the statutory minimum of 12 per cent, averaging around $9,900 in 2025-26. Frontline staff managing a caseload received an average of approximately $8,700 (n=22). This is higher than in 2023 ($6,866 for comparable roles, in 2025-26 dollars), largely reflecting the increase in the superannuation guarantee from 10.5 per cent in 2022-23 to 12 per cent in 2025-26.

5.5 Superannuation during 2025-26 by role



Note: The survey asked, "For each role in your organisation, please report the average annual remuneration of a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee in employment services for 2025–26, broken down into the components below." Results are for superannuation during 2025–26.

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 22).

Fringe benefits, exempt benefits and salary packaging

Cars are the most common fringe benefit[11]. Around two-thirds of responding providers (65 per cent, n=31) provide at least one employee with a car that is also available for private use, giving rise to a fringe benefits tax liability. Among these providers, a median of around 20 employees per provider had a car (n=20), around 18 per cent of their staff. The median purchase price of these cars was around $40,900 (n=18).

Other fringe benefits, such as car parking, private health insurance and gym membership fees, are less common. Most (82 per cent, n=10) role-level responses reported no other fringe benefits. The average across all employees was around $1,050 (n=10) in 2025-26 (or around $5,100 among employees who received them).

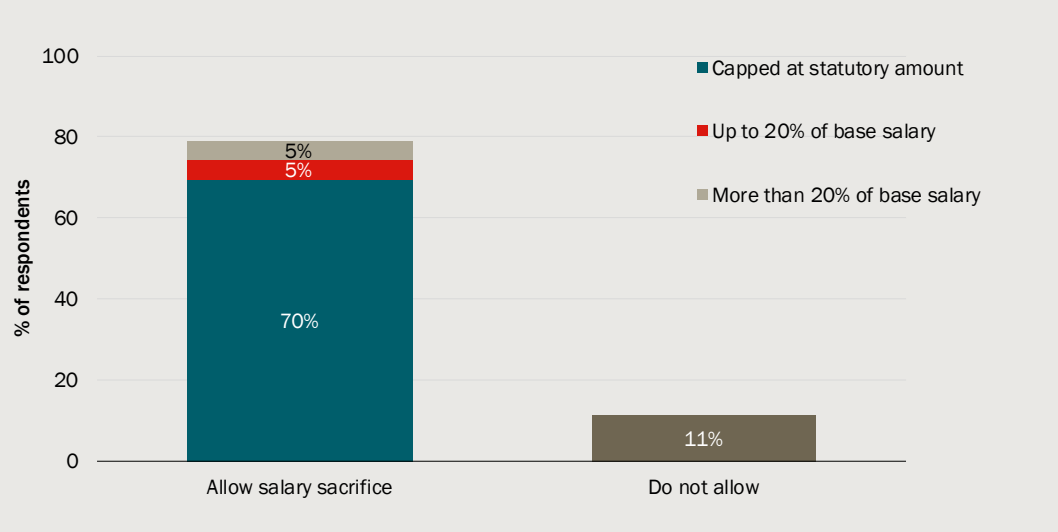
FBT-free or exempt benefits are a much larger part of remuneration. Around two-thirds (67 per cent, n=6) of employees received FBT-free or exempt benefits, which averaged around $12,000 per employee in 2025-26. Frontline staff managing a caseload received a similar amount, around $12,200 (n=6).

Most respondents to salary sacrifice questions offer salary sacrifice, usually up to the statutory cap. Nearly nine in ten (n=35) allow employment services employees to salary sacrifice for fringe benefits. Of these, most (88 per cent, n=25) limit salary sacrifice to the statutory cap rather than a percentage of base salary. Salary sacrifice is widely taken up where it is offered. All respondents that allow salary sacrifice and reported take-up had at least one employee salary sacrificing. Among these, a median of 36 employees per provider salary sacrificed (n=23), typically around 85 per cent of their staff.

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11 Fringe benefits are non-cash benefits an employer gives that attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and are not part of a salary sacrifice arrangement.

5.6 Salary sacrifice



Note: n = 35 providers for whether salary sacrifice is allowed, n = 25 for how it is limited and n = 2 for the percentage of base salary. The survey asked, "Do you allow employment services employees to salary sacrifice for fringe benefits as part of your remuneration arrangements?", "What was the salary sacrifice option most commonly limited to?" and "On average, what was the percentage of base salary?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 35, 25 and 2).

5.7 Superannuation, fringe benefits and exempt benefits by role

Role	Superannuation during 2025-26	Other fringe benefits during 2025-26	FBT-free or exempt benefits during 2025-26
Frontline staff managing a caseload	$8,704	$75	$12,233
Team leaders of frontline staff	$10,191	$0	$18,483
Trainers who deliver services to participants	$8,625	$0	$0
Allied health professionals	$11,281	$3,000	$1,250
Employment engagement staff	$9,964	$11,250	$12,500
Business development staff	$12,173	$0	$12,500
Operational roles	$10,392	$0	$12,500
Performance and compliance management	$11,515	$292	$13,862
IT support	$12,089	$0	$13,862
Administration and business support	$9,852	$0	$13,862
Site / Branch Manager	$12,035	$833	$6,816
Regional Manager	$14,692	$8,750	$12,500
State Manager	$15,409	$3,125	$11,667
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	$24,090	$0	$6,816
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	$25,318	$0	$6,816
Deputy CEO	$22,687	$0	$18,483
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	$32,291	$0	$13,862
Other roles	$14,500	$0	$0

Note: The survey asked, "For each role in your organisation, please report the average annual remuneration of a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee in employment services for 2025–26, broken down into the components below." Results are for superannuation, other fringe benefits and FBT-free or exempt benefits.

Source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 22 for superannuation, 5 for other fringe benefits and 6 for FBT-free or exempt benefits).

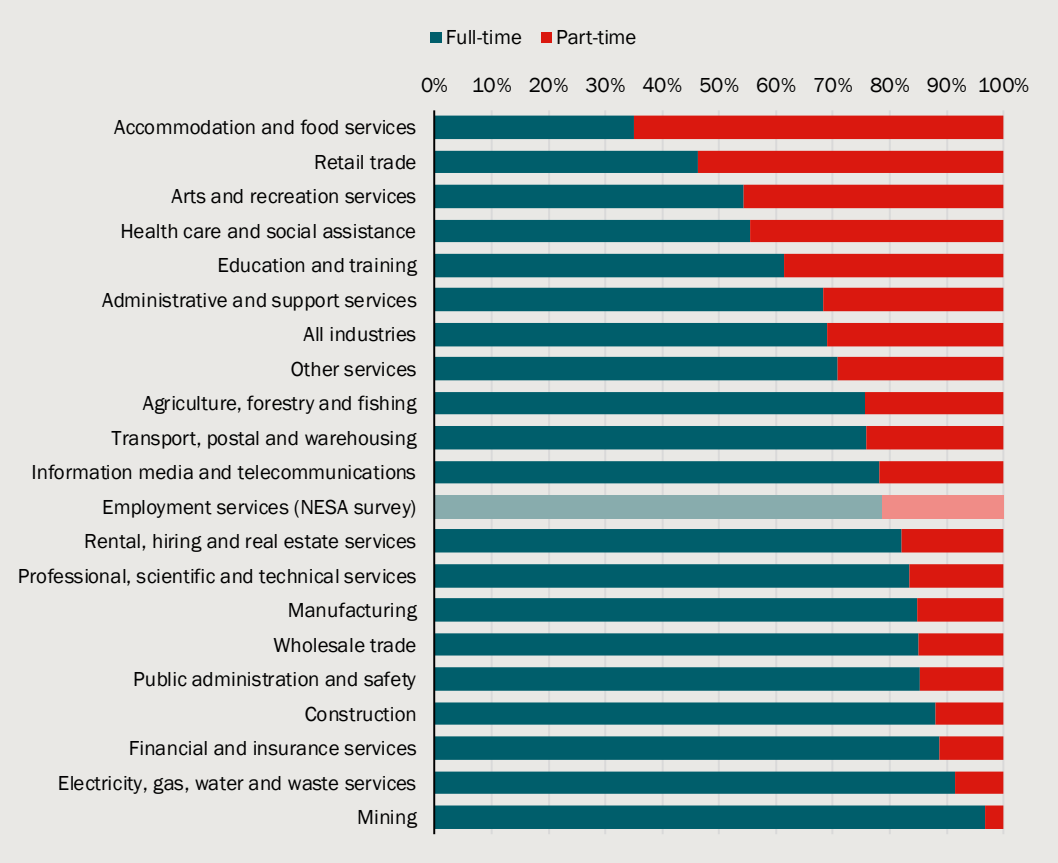
Hours of work

Most employment services employees work full time. Around four in five (79 per cent, n=53) work full time, mostly in permanent roles (70 per cent of all employees).

The share of employees in permanent full-time roles has increased since 2023, reflecting a decline in part-time and casual employment. Permanent full-time employment has risen from 62 per cent to 70 per cent (n=53), while permanent part-time employment has declined from 15 per cent to 13 per cent and casual employment has fallen from 13 per cent to 7 per cent. The share of staff on fixed-term contracts is broadly unchanged, at around 10 per cent in both years.

This share of full-time employment is well above the all-industries average. Around 69 per cent of employees across all industries work full time, as do 68 per cent in administrative and support services and 55 per cent in health care and social assistance[12].

5.8 Share of workers that are full- and part-time by industry



12 ABS, Working Arrangements, August 2025, Table 4 (employees by industry of main job).

Note: The employment services estimate is an upper bound estimate as it assumes all non-full-time workers (including casual workers) are part-time. The survey asked, "To allow us to better understand your workforce FTE profile, please provide a breakdown of the headcount in your answer to the previous question by workforce status. If a category does not apply, please enter 0.".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 53), and ABS Working Arrangements.

Most respondents offer some flexibility in working hours. Just over half of respondents (55 per cent, n=31) offer flexible start or finish times to employment services employees. This includes 29 per cent that provide flexible start or finish times to all employees and 26 per cent that use a mix of fixed and flexible times.

Accrued days off are less common. Around one in four respondents (28 per cent, n=32) offer an accrued day off, usually each fortnight.

Working from home is common. Most respondents (81 per cent, n=26) permitted at least one employee to work from home during 2025-26 — a significant increase from 2023. Among these providers, a median of 30 staff per provider (n=21) were allowed to work from home, typically around a quarter (25 per cent) of their staff.

Unpaid leave is universally available, but other leave options are less common. All respondents allow their employees to take unpaid leave (n=29). However, only six in ten (59 per cent, n=29) allow employees to accrue and take paid time off in lieu of an overtime payment. Just a third (34 per cent, n=29) of respondents allow employees to purchase additional leave. Compared with 2023, slightly more providers allow time off in lieu (up from 57 per cent[13]), but far fewer allow employees to purchase additional leave (down from 60 per cent).

Most staff returning from parental leave come back on reduced or flexible hours. Seven in ten respondents (70 per cent, n=30) had at least one employee return from parental leave in 2025-26. Among these providers, a median of 3 employees returned (n=21), or around 3 per cent of their staff. Around six in ten (59 per cent, n=18) staff returning from parental leave returned on reduced or flexible hours.

Access to Employee Assistance Program

Providers have taken clear steps to support the wellbeing and safety of employment services staff. All responding providers have a system to report and record incidents of aggression, threats, or violence towards staff (n=33). Almost all (97 per cent, n=35) offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is broadly similar to 2023 when all surveyed providers offered one. A median of 7 FTE staff per employer (n=18) used the EAP for work-related matters in 2025-26.

13 This figure has been adjusted to remove the share of providers who responded, "Don't know".

6 Competition for staff

Providers find it hard to fill employment services roles, particularly frontline roles. Around 6 per cent of positions were vacant when providers responded to the survey, significantly higher than the Australian average. Frontline staff managing a caseload are the hardest role to fill, and most vacancies are filled by recruiting from outside the organisation.

Annual turnover is around 50 per cent of staff, and average tenure across the sector is around 2.9 years. Tenure is shortest in the frontline and training roles that make up most of the workforce.

Pay is the main reason staff leave. Most departures (80 per cent) are voluntary, and higher salary is the reason providers most often rank in their top three, both for staff leaving their organisation and for staff leaving the sector. Career change, job dissatisfaction and administrative burden also play a part.

The Disability Employment Services to Inclusive Employment Australia transition has added to staff turnover. Nearly half of respondents reported more involuntary departures than in the previous year, and most made roles redundant because of the transition.

Challenges with attraction

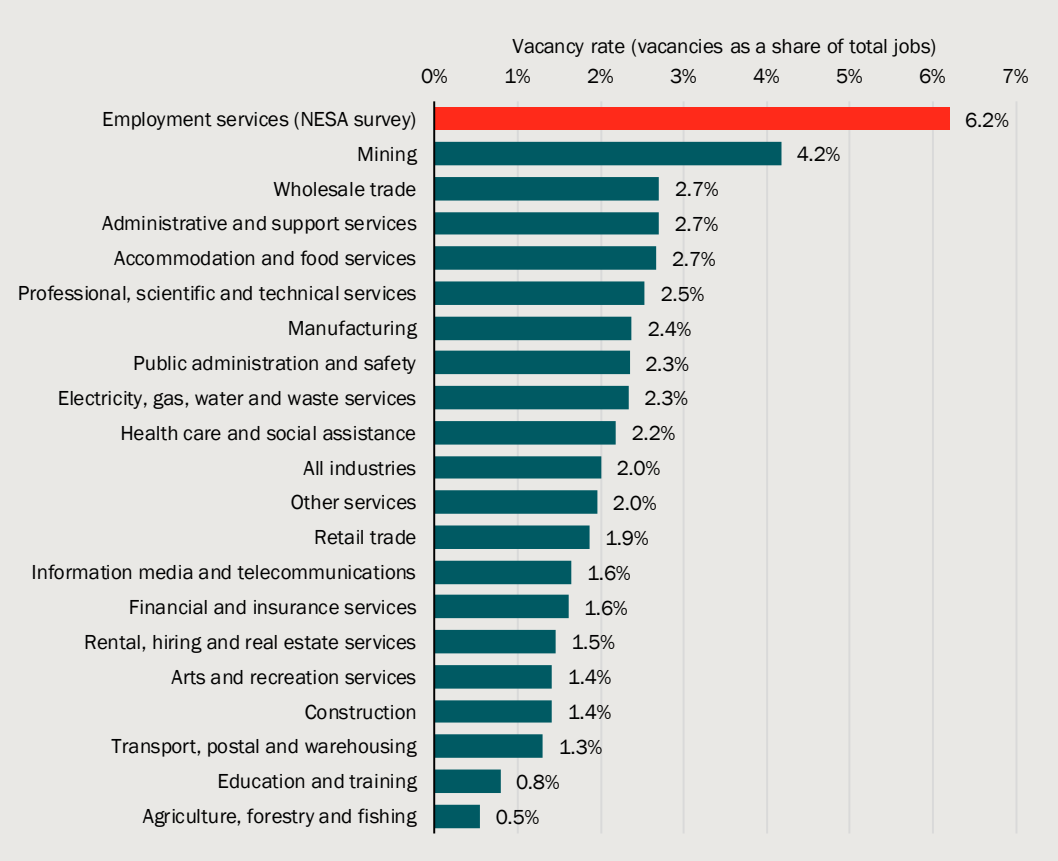
The vacancy rate is the 'stock' of positions unfilled on the day of the survey response. Responding employment services providers had a vacancy rate of around 6 per cent (n=30). This is higher than in any Australian industry (chart 6.1), including related industries such as administrative and support services (2.7 per cent), public administration and safety (2.3 per cent), and health care and social assistance (2.2 per cent).

A high vacancy rate can reflect delays in filling positions, positions opening up more often, or both. With annual turnover of around 50 per cent[14] (n=26), frequent openings are likely to explain part of the gap. The survey asked about staff during the transition period from Disability Employment Services (DES) to Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA), when providers were making roles redundant and recruiting new staff, which is likely to have increased both vacancy and turnover rates. Of the 31 providers that answered the question on vacancies, 26 had at least one. Together they reported 304

14 This is the pooled mean turnover rate: total staff exits divided by total headcount across all responding providers. The median provider's turnover rate is 44 per cent.

vacancies they intended to fill, a median of around 6–7 per provider with a vacancy, or 5 across all 31 respondents[15].

6.1 Vacancy rate by industry



Note: Employment services vacancy rate is vacancies as a share of headcount plus vacancies. Industry rates are vacancies as a share of total jobs (filled jobs plus vacancies). The survey asked, "How many current vacancies does your organisation have? Please only refer to vacancies which your organisation intends to fill. Please enter a number, or 0 if none." and "How many staff working at your organisation directly deliver contracted employment and related services?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 30), and ABS Labour Account Australia, June quarter 2026.

Providers rely mainly on external recruitment to fill vacancies. Of the 3,809 vacancies filled over the past year (n=29), 80 per cent were filled by external appointments and 20 per cent through internal promotions or transfers.

Frontline caseload roles are the hardest to fill: 71 per cent of respondents (n=42) selected frontline staff managing a caseload as one of their top three hardest roles to fill, followed by employment engagement staff (26 per cent) and team leaders of frontline staff (21 per cent).

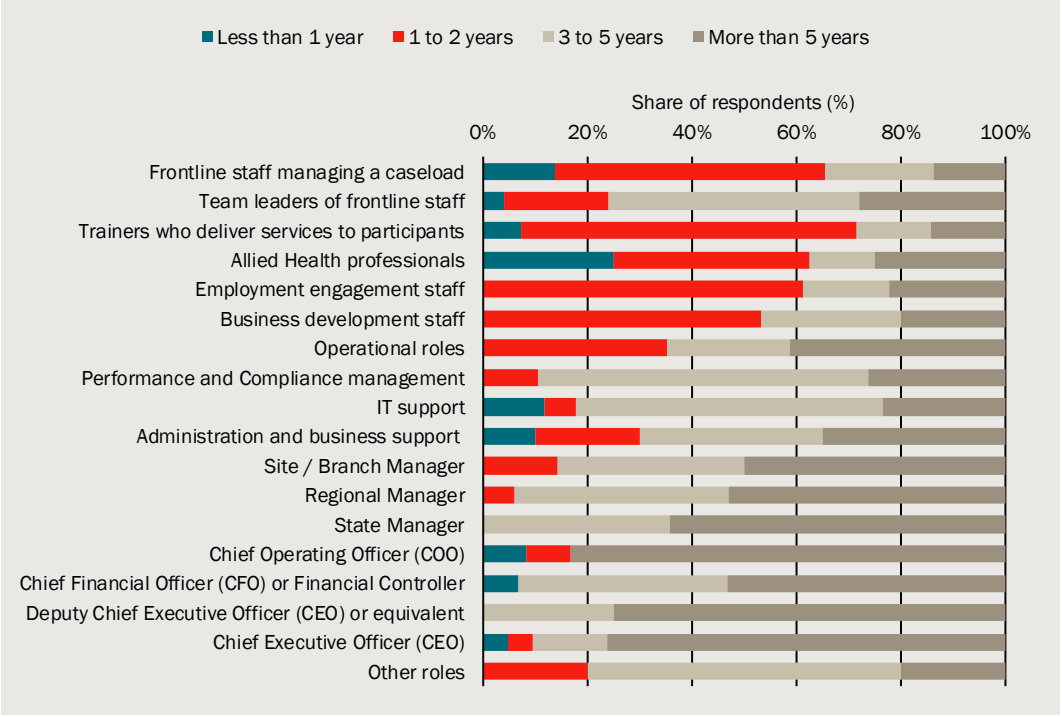
15 The vacancy rate is calculated for the 30 of these providers that also reported their headcount. Median is 6.1 per cent, mean is 8.0 per cent and pooled mean is 6.2 per cent.

Tenure

Nationally, 57 per cent of workers have been in their current job for less than 5 years[16]. In employment services, providers report typical tenure of under 5 years for most roles, including frontline staff, where 86 per cent of respondents report typical tenure of 5 years or less[17]. Weighted by headcount, average tenure in the employment services sector is around 2.9 years (n=29).

Tenure in the employment services sector increases significantly with seniority. Average tenure is shortest for trainers (around 2.3 years, n=14) and frontline staff managing a caseload (around 2.4 years, n=29), the roles that make up most of the workforce. Just over half (52 per cent, n=29) of respondents report that frontline staff typically stay 1 to 2 years. In contrast, around three-quarters of respondents report that CEOs (76 per cent, n=21) and Deputy CEOs (75 per cent, n=8) typically stay more than 5 years. Tenure for frontline staff has increased slightly since 2023, when comparable roles averaged one completed year of service (around one to two years in practice). The 2023 survey also found that tenure increased with seniority, with CEOs averaging eight completed years.

6.2 Typical average tenure by role



Note: The survey asked, "What is the typical average tenure of each of the following roles at your organisation? Please count the time a staff member spends in the role, whether they then leave your organisation or move into a different internal role.".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 29).

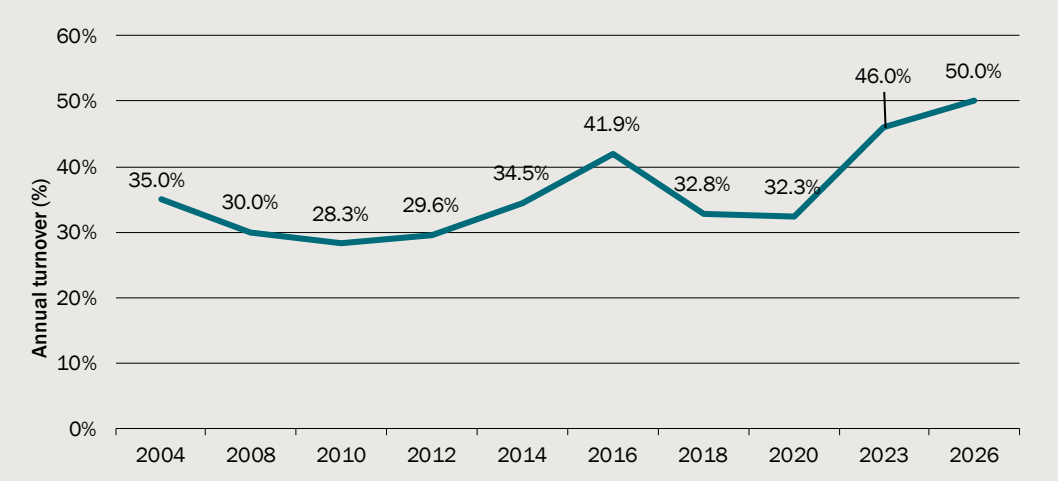
16 ABS, Job mobility, February 2026, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/latest-release.

17 The national figure is the share of workers who have been in their current job for less than 5 years, whereas the survey asked providers about the typical tenure of each role. Directly comparable worker-level tenure data are not available for the employment services sector.

Turnover and workforce exit

Turnover is the flow of staff leaving an organisation over a year. It shows how often providers need to recruit, onboard and train new staff. Annual turnover in employment services is high, running at around 50 per cent (n=26)[18] of staff. This is higher than the 46 per cent recorded in the 2023 survey, which was itself the highest turnover rate since the survey series began.

6.3 Annual turnover in the employment services sector



Note: The survey asked, "What was the FTE number of staff who departed from your organisation over the past year? Please enter a number for each, or 0 if none." and "How many staff working at your organisation directly deliver contracted employment and related services?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 26), and NESA's 2023 survey.

Most departures are voluntary. Of the 2,648 FTE staff who left responding providers in 2025-26, 80 per cent (2,131 FTE) left voluntarily (n=28), a median of 10 FTE per provider. Voluntary departures were broadly stable: similar shares of respondents reported more (29 per cent, n=28), the same (36 per cent) and fewer (36 per cent) voluntary departures than in the previous 12 months.

Involuntary departures rose, driven partly by the Disability Employment Services to Inclusive Employment Australia transition. Involuntary departures in 2025-26 totalled 517 FTE (n=28) (median of 5 FTE per provider). Nearly half of respondents (48 per cent, n=29) reported more involuntary departures than in the previous 12 months, compared with 17 per cent reporting fewer.

Redundancies made up 58 per cent of involuntary departures (n=28) (299 FTE) and dismissals 42 per cent (218 FTE, median of 2 FTE). Redundancies were concentrated among a few providers: fewer than half (13 of 28) reported any, and three providers accounted for around two-thirds of all redundancies. The transition from Disability Employment Services (DES) to Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) was a direct

18 This is the pooled turnover rate, which combines staff exits and headcount across all responding providers. The median provider's turnover rate is 44 per cent.

cause: 9 of the 14 providers that answered made roles redundant as a result, affecting 381 employees[19].

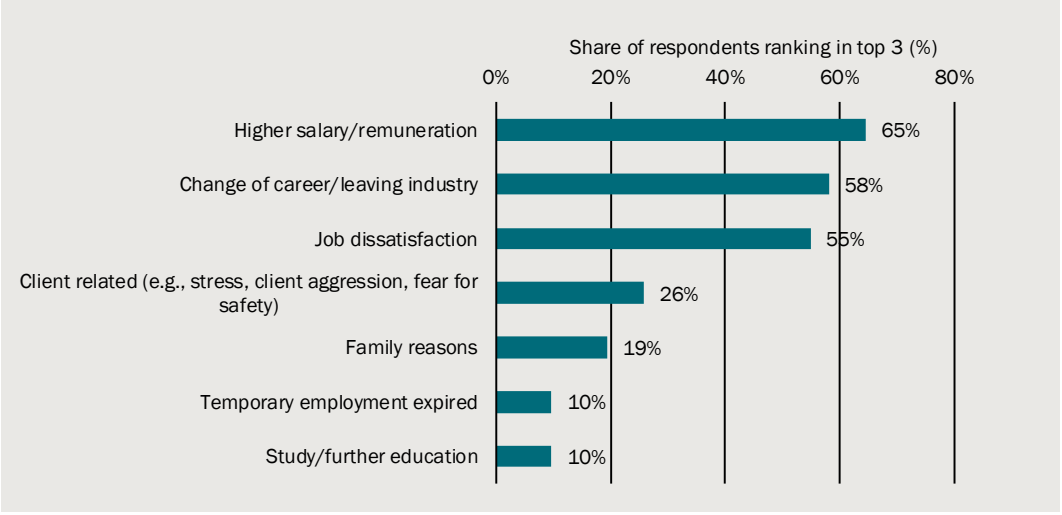
Redundancies from the transition came at a substantial cost for providers. Of the 7 providers that reported the cost of their transition-related redundancies, the median cost was around $175,000 per provider, or around $11,500 per employee made redundant.

Providers perceive turnover in employment services to be similar across metropolitan and regional areas. Three-quarters (75 per cent, n=20) of respondents[20] reported no difference in turnover between regional/remote and metropolitan locations, 20 per cent reported higher turnover in the regions and 5 per cent reported lower turnover.

Drivers of turnover

Employment services staff leave both their organisation and the sector in search of higher pay. Higher salary/remuneration was the reason providers most often ranked in their top three, for staff leaving their organisation (65 per cent, n=31) and for staff leaving the sector (71 per cent, n=28).

6.4 Reasons staff leave their organisation



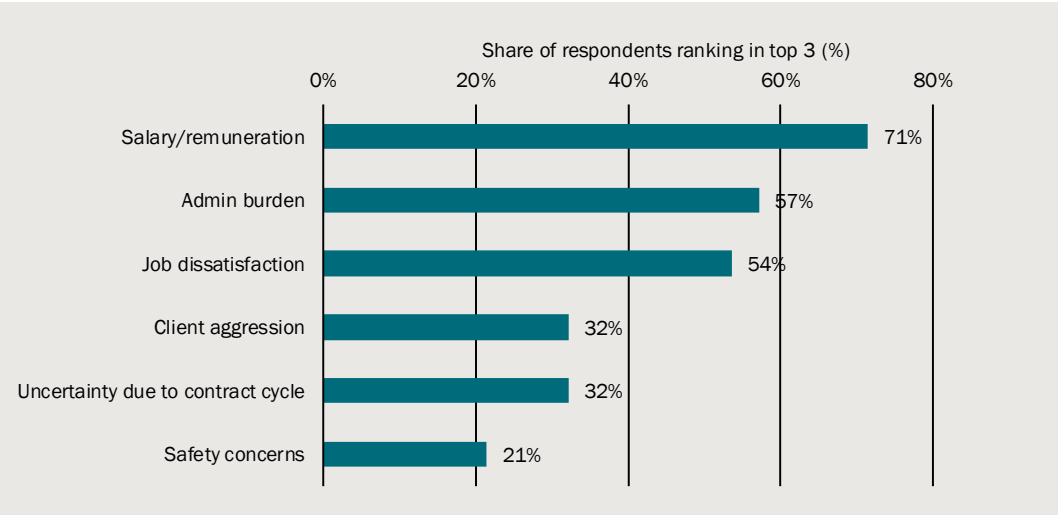
Note: The survey asked, "Rank the reasons you believe staff leave your organisation, where 1 is the most important and 7 is the least important.".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 31).

19 This includes one large provider that did not report its total departures, so the figure is not directly comparable with the 299 FTE total redundancies.

20 This includes 71 per cent of providers who operate regionally and 80 per cent of providers who operate in regional and metropolitan areas.

6.5 Reasons staff leave the sector



Note: The survey asked, "Rank the reasons you believe staff leave the sector, where 1 is the most important and 6 is the least important.".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 28).

Non-pay factors also matter. For staff leaving their organisation, a change of career (58 per cent, n=31) and job dissatisfaction (55 per cent) ranked close behind pay. For staff leaving the sector, administrative burden (57 per cent, n=28) was the main non-pay reason, followed by job dissatisfaction (54 per cent).

Client-related factors were ranked in the top three less often: client-related stress or safety (26 per cent, n=31) for staff leaving their organisation and client aggression (32 per cent, n=28) and safety concerns (21 per cent) for staff leaving the sector.

Uncertainty from the contract cycle was cited by almost all respondents but less commonly as a top three reason (32 per cent, n=28)[21]. Almost all respondents (94 per cent, n=31) collect exit data, so these rankings are likely to reflect what departing staff report. This is up from 85 per cent in 2023.

[21] It is noted that providers were not asked to rank factors. We make no inference about any ranking outside of what was reported in the top three.

7 Current and emerging challenges

Recruitment, retention, and contract uncertainty and funding are providers' greatest challenges. Around four in ten respondents (42 per cent) see tender cycles and reform as impacting job security and making it harder to keep experienced staff, while funding is often too low to pay competitive salaries.

Staff safety is a persistent pressure. Aggression, threats, or violence towards staff occur at least monthly at 43 per cent of respondents. Managing challenging behaviour is the capability respondents most want to build.

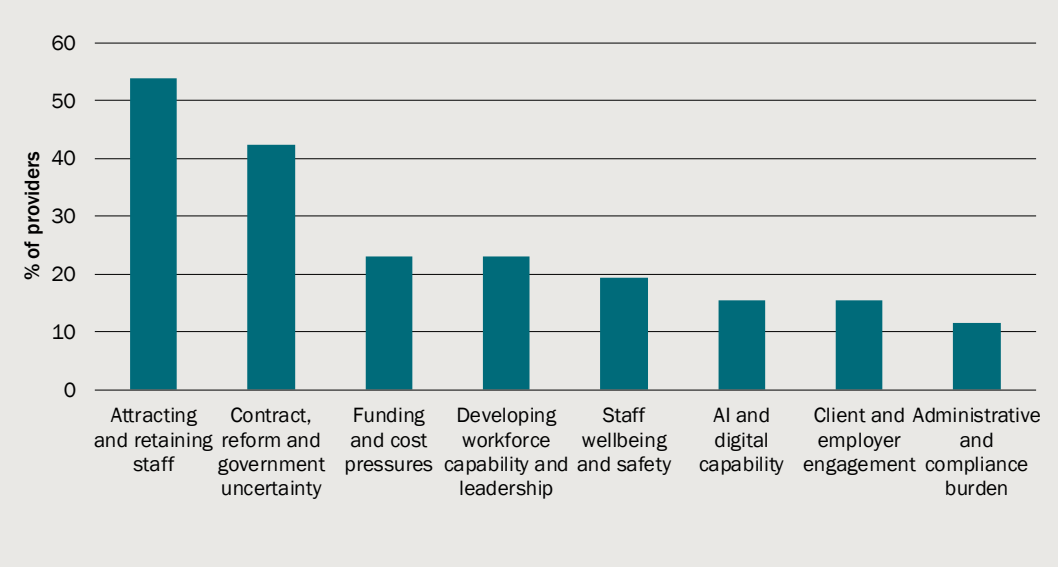
Administrative work takes up almost half of frontline staff time. Most respondents already use AI, but mainly for administrative tasks rather than case management, and many see building staff digital capability as a development need.

Providers want to strengthen core skills and leadership. Employer engagement and complex case management are the most common development needs after challenging behaviour, and some providers highlighted the need to develop future leaders and plan for succession.

At a glance

Providers were asked to describe their most substantial workforce challenges over the next three to five years. The most pressing challenge was attracting and retaining staff (mentioned by 54 per cent of respondents, n=26). This was followed by contract reform and government uncertainty, funding and cost pressures and developing workforce capability and leadership.

7.1 Most substantial workforce challenges in the next three to five years



Note: Open-text responses were grouped by CIE based on theme. The survey asked, "What are the most substantial workforce challenge(s) facing the organisation over the next 3-5 years?".

Data source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance (n = 26).

Attraction and retention of skilled staff, building workforce capability and contract knowledge in an ever-changing environment, leadership and succession planning, adapting to sector and funding changes, workforce engagement, wellbeing and accountability.

Attracting and retaining skilled frontline staff, particularly in regional and hard-to-fill locations, [including] attraction to our industry, building digital and AI capability across the workforce to improve productivity, service delivery, and customer experience, competing for talent across the employment, training, community services, and disability sectors, adapting to changing government policies, funding models, and compliance requirements while maintaining high-quality service delivery, and driving workforce productivity through process improvement, automation, and system integration to enable sustainable growth.

Contract uncertainty and funding pressures

Uncertainty about contracts and reform was the second most common challenge respondents raised (42 per cent, n=26). Some providers linked tender cycles and reform directly to workforce stability. When providers cannot confirm whether contracts will continue, it is harder to attract and keep experienced staff, with existing staff looking for more permanent roles. Uncertainty due to the contract cycle was ranked among the top three reasons staff leave the sector by 32 per cent of respondents (n=28). Further, each

change to contracts and servicing requirements also adds to staff workload, as providers must retrain staff on new performance frameworks and processes.

Funding and cost pressures were raised by 23 per cent of respondents (n=26) as a key challenge. Many said funding is too low to pay competitive salaries, adding to the pay pressures that drive staff to leave the sector. Rising inflation and operating costs further limit what providers can offer staff.

Funding uncertainty, tender cycles, and market competition is impacting workforce stability, making it difficult to attract and retain industry-experienced staff… Maintaining a stable, capable workforce while responding to changing program requirements and business growth will be a key challenge.

[Major challenges include] sufficient funding to pay market competitive salaries and retention due to ongoing reform uncertainty.

Staff safety and wellbeing

Aggression, threats, and violence towards staff are a common risk in employment services. Frontline staff are particularly exposed because they engage directly with participants, who are often experiencing severe financial stress, compliance pressures (such as payment suspensions) and complex personal challenges.

Around four in ten respondents (43 per cent, n=28) report that their sites experience aggression, threats or violence from participants or members of the public at least monthly, including 18 per cent at least weekly. Only 11 per cent report no incidents that they are aware of. Providers see this as one factor in staff leaving the sector: 32 per cent ranked client aggression (n=28) among the top three reasons staff leave, although none ranked it as the single most important reason.

Exposure to challenging behaviour reduces staff wellbeing and contributes to role-related absences. Employees lost a median of around 7 working days each (n=20) to illness or injury in 2025-26. Providers estimate that around a fifth (22 per cent, n=20) of these days were directly related to the role. Around half (50 per cent, n=20) of role-related lost days were due to psychological stress and anxiety, and around a third (36 per cent) to physical injury or illness.

This burden is concentrated where aggression is most frequent[22]. Among providers whose sites experience aggression at least monthly, psychological stress accounted for

[22] We note that 30 providers reported how often their sites experience aggression, threats or violence (Q63). Of these, 12 experience it at least monthly (including 5 at least weekly) and 16 less often (never or occasionally). The other 2 answered 'don't know' and are excluded. The lost-days comparisons cover only providers in each group that also reported lost working days: 8 of the 12 at least monthly providers and 12 of the 16 others.

around three-quarters (74 per cent) of role-related lost days, compared with around a third (34 per cent) among other providers (n=20). These providers also lost more days per employee (a median of 9, compared with 6).

Providers recognise the need to equip staff for these situations. Dealing with challenging and aggressive behaviours was the capability area most often nominated as needing development (38 per cent of respondents, n=42), and 19 per cent of respondents raised (n=26) staff wellbeing and psychosocial safety as a major workforce challenge for the coming years.

Maintaining employee wellbeing and resilience in a high-demand, outcomes-driven environment.

[The main workforce challenge is] retention of staff and staff mental health.

Administrative burden and technology

Administrative and compliance work takes up a large share of frontline time. Providers estimate that, on average, almost half (48 per cent, n=28) of frontline staff and team managers' working time is spent on administrative and compliance tasks. This limits the time staff can spend with clients and contributes to staff leaving the sector: administrative burden was the second most common reason providers gave for staff leaving the sector, ranked in the top three by 57 per cent of respondents (n=28). Around one in eight respondents (12 per cent, n=26) raised administrative and compliance burden as a major workforce challenge for the coming years.

34 respondents reported that they already use AI tools, mainly for administration. Around six in ten respondents (62 per cent) use AI tools. Around half (53 per cent) use AI-assisted administrative tools such as meeting transcription, note-taking, scheduling and drafting correspondence. Far fewer (21 per cent) use AI-assisted case management tools such as case note summarisation, job matching or decision support. Providers also use other technologies to support service delivery, including data analytics or caseload management dashboards (29 per cent), digital intake, triage or assessment tools (15 per cent) and participant portals (12 per cent). Around one in four respondents (26 per cent) reported using none of these tools.

Making better use of technology will depend on building staff capability. Digital and AI tools capability was nominated as a development need by 29 per cent of respondents (n=42), and 15 per cent raised (n=26) AI and digital capability as a major workforce challenge for the coming years.

Compliance with RFFR, ISO, QAF [are] massive burdens for a small organisation.

Reducing administrative and compliance burden so staff can spend more time supporting customers and employers.

Key capability development priorities

Respondents have a clear view of where they want to build their workforce's capability next. Employer engagement (36 per cent, n=42) and complex case management and coordination (33 per cent) were among the development needs respondents most often nominated, followed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander engagement and mental health capability (26 per cent each). Around one in five respondents also nominated (n=42) leadership and supervision, trauma-informed practice, working with highly disadvantaged cohorts, and communication and interpersonal skills.

Looking ahead, providers are focused on developing their future leaders. Around a quarter of respondents (23 per cent, n=26) identified developing workforce capability and leadership as a key workforce priority for the next three to five years. Some referred specifically to developing future leaders and succession pipelines to manage turnover and organisational growth.

Developing future leaders and succession pipelines to address workforce turnover and organisational growth.

Upskilling staff to meet changing customer needs, including more complex barriers to employment and increased demand for tailored support.

A Survey response rate

The 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and Human Resource Management (HRM) Performance received 142 responses. Not every respondent answered every question: some questions were shown only to respondents who gave a particular answer to an earlier question, and many respondents completed only part of the survey. Table A.1 lists every question in the survey (questions 1 to 65), with its response options and the number of respondents who answered it (n).

A.1 Survey questions, response options and number of responses

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
1	What is the name of your organisation?	*Free text* Responses identify the organisation and are not reported.	n=123
2	Which employment service programs has your organisation delivered during 2025-26? Please select all that apply. (Required)	*Multiple choice (select all that apply), with 'Other (please specify)' text box* None of the above; Workforce Australia Services; Transition to Work; Parent Pathways; Inclusive Employment Australia; Disability Employment Services; Remote Australian Employment Services (RAEs); Career Transition Assistance; Self-Employment Assistance; Indigenous Skills and Employment Program; Employability Skills Training; National Panel of Assessors; Other (please specify)	n=142 for total responses and n=141 for programs delivered by provider size.
3	Please share your contact details.	*Free text (multiple text boxes)* Items: Your name; Your email Responses identify the organisation and are not reported.	n=109
4	Please indicate the number of branches or sites that your organisation delivers contracted employment services in each state and territory. Please enter a number for each, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: New South Wales; Queensland; Victoria; Western Australia; South Australia; Tasmania; Northern Territory; Australian Capital Territory; External territory (e.g., Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Norfolk Island, Coral Sea Islands, Ashmore and Cartier Islands, and Heard and McDonald Islands)	n=82

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
5	Approximately what share of your organisation's contracted employment services are delivered in metropolitan, regional, rural, or remote areas? Please enter numbers only, without the % sign. Your figures must add up to 100.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Major City; Inner Regional; Outer Regional; Remote; Very Remote	n=75. The share of reported sites in remote or very remote areas (section 2) combines Q4 and Q5 for the 75 providers that answered both questions, covering 2,543 of the 3,399 sites reported in Q4.
6	Which of the following categories best describes the for-profit status of your organisation? If your organisation delivers services through more than one legal entity, please base your answer on the entity that delivers the largest share of your organisation's contracted employment services, measured by revenue.	*Single choice* For profit; Not for profit - registered charity; Not for profit - not a registered charity	n=81 for total responses and n=53 for the share of staff employed by for-profit providers.
7	What was your organisation's annual revenue for contracted employment services in the most recent financial year (2025-26)?	*Single choice* $0; $1 - $249,999; $250,000 - $499,999; $500,000 - $999,999; $1,000,000 - $2,999,999; $3,000,000 - $9,999,999; $10,000,000 or more; Prefer not to say; Don't know	n=79
8	How many staff working at your organisation directly deliver contracted employment and related services? Full-time equivalent (FTE) can be calculated based on the hours worked relative to a full-time (38 hour) week. For instance, a part-time/casual employee working 19 hours a week is 0.5 FTE, and an employee working 2 days a week (15.2 hours) is 0.4 FTE.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Headcount; FTE	n=55 for total responses and n=54 for headcount.
9	To allow us to better understand your workforce FTE profile, please provide a breakdown of the headcount in your answer to the previous question by workforce status. If a category does not apply, please enter 0.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Permanent - full-time; Permanent - part-time; Fixed-term contract - full-time; Fixed-term contract - part-time; Casual employee - fixed hours; Casual employee - sessional hours; Other	n=53
10	How many staff does your organisation employ in contracted employment services within the following age groups?	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55 or over	n=48
11	What approximate share of your employment services workforce identify with the following genders?	*Grid (one response per item)* 0% (none); 1-9%; 10-19%; 20-29%; 30-39%; 40-49%; 50-59%; 60-69%; 70-79%; 80-89%; 90-99%; 100%; Don't know Items: Female; Male; Another term (e.g., nonbinary, gender-diverse)	n=54 for total responses and n=51 for providers that also reported a headcount.

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
12	What is the approximate share of your employment services workforce that…	*Grid (one response per item)* 0% (none); 1-9%; 10-19%; 20-29%; 30-39%; 40-49%; 50-74%; 75-99%; 100%; Don't know Items: Is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; Is from a Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse background; Lives with a disability or has previous experience of living with a disability; Has lived experience of unemployment or being a job seeker; Has lived experience accessing a disability employment services program; Is employed in a designated lived-experience role (i.e., employed specifically to draw on lived experience in their work)	n=50 for total responses, n=44 for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff, n=36 for culturally and linguistically diverse staff, n=35 for staff with disability, n=31 for lived experience of unemployment, n=25 for experience of a disability employment services program and n=32 for designated lived-experience roles.
13	Where is lived experience used in your workforce model?	*Single choice, with 'Other (please specify)' text box* Designated roles only (positions that require lived experience of a relevant issue); Across a range of roles (not specifically designed); Both; Not used; Other (please specify)	n=53 for total responses and n=52 excluding one respondent that completed only the 'Other (please specify)' text box.
14	How many employment services staff does your organisation employ in each role (headcount, all staff)? Please include back office staff who work across employment services and other areas. Please refer to the role descriptions above as they set out what each role covers and give typical job titles. If a role does not apply, please enter 0.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Frontline staff managing a caseload; Team leaders of frontline staff; Trainers who deliver services to participants (e.g., CTA, EST, and SEA trainers); Allied Health professionals; Employment engagement staff (including reverse marketing, employer liaison and post-placement support); Business development staff (including developing partnerships, securing referrals, or promoting CTA, EST, SEA, RTO, or other services to third parties); Operational roles (e.g., performance managers, training services managers and call-centre managers); Performance and Compliance management; IT support; Administration and business support (e.g., HR, finance/payroll, reception); Site / Branch Manager; Regional Manager; State Manager; Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Controller; Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent; Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Other role	n=48 for total responses and n=36 for the median ratio of frontline staff to team leaders.
15	If you entered a number against the 'Other role' above, please give the job title and a one-line description of what each role does.	*Free text*	n=11

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
16	For each type of back-office role, what percent of working hours does the average employee spend on employment services specifically? Please enter a number between 0 and 100 for each role, without the % sign.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Business development staff; Operational roles; Performance and Compliance management; IT support; Administration and business support (e.g., HR, finance/payroll, reception); Site / Branch Manager; Regional Manager; State Manager; Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Controller; Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent; Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Other roles listed above	n=40 for total responses, n=28 to 36 for individual back-office roles and n=20 for senior leaders.
17	What share of your organisation's frontline employment services staff have the following qualifications?	*Grid (one response per item)* 0% (none); 1-9%; 10-19%; 20-29%; 30-39%; 40-49%; 50-59%; 60-69%; 70-79%; 80-89%; 90-99%; 100%; Don't know Items: No formal post-school qualification; Certificate III level qualification (e.g., in Employment Services or a related field); Certificate IV level qualification (e.g., in Employment Services or a related field); Diploma level qualification (e.g., Community Services, Counselling, or a related field); Bachelor degree (any field); Postgraduate qualification	n=40 for total responses, n=34 for Certificate IV and no formal post-school qualification and n=25 for postgraduate qualifications.
18	Of your frontline staff, approximately how many hold a nationally recognised qualification specific to employment services (e.g., Certificate IV in Employment Services or equivalent)?	*Numeric entry*	n=34 for total responses and n=31 for the share of frontline staff holding a qualification specific to employment services.
19	Which industrial instrument most commonly applies to each role in your employment services workforce?	*Grid (one response per item)* Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award 2010; Labour Market Assistance Industry Award 2020; Clerks - Private Sector Award 2020; Enterprise agreement; Other; Don't know Items: Frontline staff managing a caseload; Team leaders of frontline staff; Trainers who deliver services to participants; Allied Health professionals; Employment engagement staff; Business development staff; Operational roles; Performance and Compliance management; IT support; Administration and business support (e.g., HR, finance/payroll, reception); Site / Branch Manager; Regional Manager; State Manager; Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Controller; Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent; Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Other roles	n=45 for total responses, n=43 excluding don't know and n=42 for frontline staff managing a caseload.

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
20	Modern awards and enterprise agreements allow employers and individual employees to vary the application of certain terms of the award or enterprise agreement to meet the genuine needs of the employer and employee. Did your organisation have a written Individual Flexibility Arrangement (IFA) in place with any employee in 2025-26?	*Single choice* Yes; No; Don't know	n=46 for total responses and n=31 excluding don't know.
21	Do you commonly pay above-award rates for employment services roles?	*Single choice* Yes, across most roles; Yes, for some roles; No; Don't know	n=46 for total responses and n=40 excluding don't know.
22	On average, how much do you pay above award rates for employment services roles?	*Single choice* Up to 5%; 6-10%; 11-15%; 16-20%; More than 20%; Don't know	n=37 for total responses and n=31 excluding don't know.
23	For each role in your organisation, please report the average annual remuneration of a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee in employment services for 2025-26, broken down into the components below. Please select the band that best describes the average for each role, and leave a row blank if the role does not apply. FTE base salary: yearly full-time equivalent salary or wage as at 30 June 2025, excluding any fringe benefit, allowance, superannuation, leave loading, bonus, or performance payment. Superannuation: amount the organisation contributes to the superannuation fund on behalf of the individual during 2025-26, including SGC. Do not include any amount contributed by the employee from pre-tax salary under a salary sacrifice arrangement. Average $ increase: increase to base salary since 30 June 2025 due to award increases, annual salary increments, scheduled increases under enterprise agreements, or internal reviews. It does not include bonus or performance payments, or salary increases arising from a promotion to a new position. Average $ bonus or performance payment: variable payments for 2025-26, such as profit-sharing, sales commissions, bonus or other schemes based on productivity or business outcomes, made in addition to base salary. Work-related allowances: funds given to pay for expenses incurred during work-related activities during 2025-26, such as meals, travel, and car operating costs.	*Grid (one drop-down band per role for each component)* Roles: Frontline staff managing a caseload; Team leaders of frontline staff; Trainers who deliver services to participants; Allied Health professionals; Employment engagement staff; Business development staff; Operational roles; Performance and Compliance management; IT support; Administration and business support (e.g., HR, finance/payroll, reception); Site / Branch Manager; Regional Manager; State Manager; Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Controller; Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent; Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Other roles FTE base salary as at 30 June 2025 (excluding superannuation): Under $50,000; $50,000 - $54,999; $55,000 - $59,999; $60,000 - $64,999; $65,000 - $69,999; $70,000 - $74,999; $75,000 - $79,999; $80,000 - $84,999; $85,000 - $89,999; $90,000 - $94,999; $95,000 - $99,999; $100,000 - $109,999; $110,000 - $119,999; $120,000 - $129,999; $130,000 - $139,999; $140,000 - $149,999; $150,000 - $164,999; $165,000 - $179,999; $180,000 - $199,999; $200,000 - $224,999; $225,000 - $249,999; $250,000 - $299,999; $300,000 - $349,999; $350,000 - $399,999; $400,000 - $499,999; $500,000 or more; Don't know	n=29 for total responses, n=27 excluding don't know (base salary), and n=22 for superannuation, n=21 for pay increases (n=20 for frontline staff), n=21 for bonuses, n=8 for allowances (n=7 for frontline staff), n=6 for FBT-free or exempt benefits, n=5 for other fringe benefits and n=25 for annual earnings. Comparisons with 2023 for regional managers and chief financial officers use n=18 and n=11.

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
	Other fringe benefits: other benefits during 2025-26 (not under a salary sacrifice arrangement) that incur Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT), such as car parking, payment of private health insurance and gym membership fees. FBT-free or exempt benefits: other benefits during 2025-26 that do not incur FBT, such as a personal or notebook computer, mobile phone, remote area housing, or meal entertainment. Where your organisation does not provide a component, for example if no bonus is paid or no fringe benefits are provided, please select $0 for that component.	Superannuation during 2025-26: $0; Under $6,000; $6,000 - $6,499; $6,500 - $6,999; $7,000 - $7,499; $7,500 - $7,999; $8,000 - $8,499; $8,500 - $8,999; $9,000 - $9,499; $9,500 - $9,999; $10,000 - $10,999; $11,000 - $11,999; $12,000 - $12,999; $13,000 - $13,999; $14,000 - $14,999; $15,000 - $16,999; $17,000 - $18,999; $19,000 - $21,999; $22,000 - $24,999; $25,000 - $29,999; $30,000 - $39,999; $40,000 - $49,999; $50,000 or more; Don't know Average $ increase from 30 June 2025: $0; $1 - $499; $500 - $999; $1,000 - $1,249; $1,250 - $1,499; $1,500 - $1,749; $1,750 - $1,999; $2,000 - $2,249; $2,250 - $2,499; $2,500 - $2,999; $3,000 - $3,499; $3,500 - $3,999; $4,000 - $4,999; $5,000 - $5,999; $6,000 - $7,499; $7,500 - $9,999; $10,000 - $14,999; $15,000 - $19,999; $20,000 or more; Don't know Average $ bonus or performance payment for 2025-26: $0; $1 - $499; $500 - $999; $1,000 - $1,499; $1,500 - $1,999; $2,000 - $2,999; $3,000 - $3,999; $4,000 - $4,999; $5,000 - $6,999; $7,000 - $9,999; $10,000 - $14,999; $15,000 - $19,999; $20,000 - $29,999; $30,000 - $49,999; $50,000 - $99,999; $100,000 or more; Don't know Work-related allowances during 2025-26: $0; $1 - $249; $250 - $499; $500 - $749; $750 - $999; $1,000 - $1,499; $1,500 - $1,999; $2,000 - $2,999; $3,000 - $3,999; $4,000 - $4,999; $5,000 - $7,499; $7,500 - $9,999; $10,000 - $14,999; $15,000 or more; Don't know Other fringe benefits during 2025-26: $0; $1 - $249; $250 - $499; $500 - $749; $750 - $999; $1,000 - $1,499; $1,500 - $1,999; $2,000 - $2,999; $3,000 - $3,999; $4,000 - $4,999; $5,000 - $7,499; $7,500 - $9,999; $10,000 - $14,999; $15,000 - $19,999; $20,000 or more; Don't know FBT-free or exempt benefits during 2025-26: $0; $1 - $249; $250 - $499; $500 - $999; $1,000 - $1,999; $2,000 - $2,999; $3,000 - $3,999; $4,000 - $4,999; $5,000 - $6,999; $7,000 - $8,999; $9,000 - $10,999; $11,000 - $12,999; $13,000 - $15,899; $15,900 - $19,999; $20,000 - $29,999; $30,000 or more; Don't know	

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
24	What percentage of total expenditure was spent on employment costs (e.g., salaries, annual leave loading, allowances, superannuation, fringe benefits and payroll tax) for employment services roles in 2025-26? Please enter a number between 0 and 100, without the % sign.	*Numeric entry*	n=20
25	Do you allow employment services employees to salary sacrifice for fringe benefits as part of your remuneration arrangements?	*Single choice* Yes; No; Don't know; Prefer not to say	n=41 for total responses and n=35 excluding don't know.
26	How many employment services employees salary sacrificed for fringe benefits under the terms of their employment in 2025-26? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=23
27	What was the salary sacrifice option most commonly limited to?	*Single choice* The statutory 'capped amount'; A percentage of base salary; Not applicable - no FBT exemption or rebate applies to my organisation; Don't know	n=28 for total responses and n=25 excluding don't know.
28	On average, what was the percentage of base salary?	*Single choice* 20% or less; 21% to 30%; 31% to 40%; More than 40%	n=2
29	During the 2025-26 FBT year, how many employment services employees had access to a vehicle designated as a tool-of-trade vehicle that was available for private use and therefore gave rise to an FBT liability for the organisation? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=31 for total responses and n=20 for the number of employees with a car, among providers that provide one.
30	What was the average purchase price of the cars provided? Please enter a dollar amount, numbers only.	*Numeric entry*	n=18

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
31	In your organisation, which workforce capability areas currently require the greatest development? Please select between one and five. Note that these are listed in alphabetical order, so please review all before selecting. (Required)	*Multiple choice (select all that apply), with 'Other (please specify)' text box* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander engagement; Action planning; Business management and development; Communication and interpersonal skills; Complex case management and coordination; Compliance and assurance; Cultural awareness capability; Data literacy and reporting; Dealing with challenging and aggressive behaviours; Digital and AI tools capability; Disability support capability; Employer engagement; Evidence-based practice and outcome measurements; Labour market knowledge; Leadership and supervision; Mental health capability; Operational program knowledge; Participant/Apprentice engagement; Risk assessment; Trauma-informed practice; Vocational assessment; Working with highly disadvantaged cohorts; Other (please specify)	n=42
32	Excluding mandatory training by contracting departments, on average approximately how much did your organisation invest per employment services employee in the following learning and development activities in 2025-26? Please enter dollar amounts, numbers only, without the $ sign or commas.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Training; Study	n=24 for total responses (training) and n=15 for study.
33	Excluding mandatory training by contracting departments, on average approximately how many hours per employment services employee were spent on the following training and development activities in 2025-26? Please answer in hours, numbers only.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Training; Study	n=22 for total responses (training), n=13 for study and n=8 for the association between training hours and turnover.
34	Does your organisation fund or require structured/continuing professional development (CPD) for frontline staff (e.g., through the NESA Academy)?	*Single choice* Yes - both required and funded; Yes - funded but not required; Yes - required but not funded; No; Don't know	n=36 for total responses, n=28 excluding don't know and n=9 for large providers (200 or more staff).
35	How effectively does your current workforce skill mix support outcomes for your clients? Please rate from 1 to 10, where 1 = skill gaps frequently limit our ability to achieve targeted client outcomes, and 10 = workforce skill mix achieves best possible client outcomes.	*Rating scale* 1 to 10	n=33

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
36	Which of the following technology or AI-assisted tools does your organisation currently use to support service delivery or reduce administrative workload? Please select all that apply.	*Multiple choice (select all that apply), with 'Other (please specify)' text box* AI-assisted administrative tools (e.g., meeting transcription, note-taking, scheduling, drafting correspondence); AI-assisted case management tools (e.g., case note summarisation, job matching, decision support); Data analytics or caseload management dashboards; Digital intake, triage, or assessment tools; Participant portals (self-service booking, secure messaging); None of the above; Other (please specify)	n=34
37	How many current vacancies does your organisation have? Please only refer to vacancies which your organisation intends to fill. Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=31 for total responses and n=30 for providers that also reported a headcount (vacancy rate).
38	Which roles do you find hardest to fill? Please select between one and three role groups. (Required)	*Multiple choice (select all that apply), with 'Other (please specify)' text box* Frontline staff managing a caseload; Team leaders of frontline staff; Trainers who deliver services to participants; Allied Health professionals; Employment engagement staff (including reverse marketing, employer liaison and post-placement support); Business development staff (including developing partnerships, securing referrals, or promoting CTA, EST, SEA, RTO, or other services to third parties); Operational roles; Performance and Compliance management; IT support; Administration and business support (e.g., HR, finance/payroll, reception); Site / Branch Manager; Regional Manager; State Manager; Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Controller; Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent; Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Other (please specify)	n=42
39	How many vacancies did you fill over the past year through the following mechanisms? Please enter a number for each, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Internal appointments (promotions or transfers); External appointments (new staff to your organisation)	n=29
40	What was the FTE number of staff who departed from your organisation over the past year? Please enter a number for each, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Voluntarily (e.g., resigned or departed due to the expiry of a fixed term contract); Involuntarily - due to dismissal or termination (including performance, conduct or suitability-related exits); Involuntarily - due to redundancy (including restructuring or funding-related exits)	n=28 for total responses and n=26 for the annual turnover rate.

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
41	Did your organisation make any employment services roles redundant during 2025-26 as a direct result of the DES-to-IEA transition?	*Single choice* Yes; No; Don't know	n=14
42	Approximately how much did your organisation spend on these redundancies (i.e., those attributable to the transition)? Please include gross redundancy/severance payments.	*Numeric entry*	n=7
43	How many employees were made redundant because of the transition?	*Numeric entry*	n=9
44	How does the number of staff who departed voluntarily over the past year compare with the previous 12 months?	*Single choice* Higher; The same; Lower; Don't know	n=33 for total responses and n=28 excluding don't know.
45	How does the number of staff who departed involuntarily over the past year compare with the previous 12 months?	*Single choice* Higher; The same; Lower; Don't know	n=32 for total responses and n=29 excluding don't know.
46	In a typical year during the contract cycle, is staff turnover notably different in your regional/remote locations compared to metropolitan locations?	*Single choice* Yes, higher in regional/remote locations; Yes, lower in regional/remote locations; No, no difference; Don't know; Doesn't apply	n=32 for total responses and n=20 excluding don't know and doesn't apply.
47	What is the typical average tenure of each of the following roles at your organisation? Please count the time a staff member spends in the role, whether they then leave your organisation or move into a different internal role.	*Grid (one response per item)* Less than 1 year; 1 to 2 years; 3 to 5 years; More than 5 years Items: Frontline staff managing a caseload; Team leaders of frontline staff; Trainers who deliver services to participants; Allied Health professionals; Employment engagement staff; Business development staff; Operational roles; Performance and Compliance management; IT support; Administration and business support (e.g., HR, finance/payroll, reception); Site / Branch Manager; Regional Manager; State Manager; Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Financial Controller; Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or equivalent; Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Other roles	n=29 for total responses and n=14 for trainers.
48	Does your organisation collect exit data on why employees leave?	*Single choice* Yes; No	n=31
49	Rank the reasons you believe staff leave your organisation, where 1 is the most important and 7 is the least important.	*Ranking* Rank options: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; N/A Items ranked: Change of career/leaving industry; Client related (e.g., stress, client aggression, fear for safety); Family reasons; Higher salary/remuneration; Job dissatisfaction; Study/further education; Temporary employment expired	n=31

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
50	Rank the reasons you believe staff leave the sector, where 1 is the most important and 6 is the least important.	*Ranking* Rank options: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; N/A Items ranked: Admin burden; Client aggression; Job dissatisfaction; Safety concerns; Salary/remuneration; Uncertainty due to contract cycle	n=28
51	Which of the following patterns of ordinary hours were staff in your organisation employed to work in 2025-26? Please select as many as apply.	*Multiple choice (select all that apply), with 'Other (please specify)' text box* Flexible daily start or finish times; Fixed daily start and finish times; Accrued day off each fortnight; Accrued day off every 4 weeks; Other (please specify)	n=32 for total responses and n=31 for flexible start or finish times (respondents that selected fixed and/or flexible times).
52	How many employees engaged in a job share arrangement in 2025-26? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=28
53	How many employees were permitted to work from home any time in 2025-26? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=26 for total responses and n=21 for the median number of staff permitted to work from home.
54	How many employees returned to work from parental leave in 2025-26? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=30 for total responses and n=21 for the median number of employees who returned from parental leave.
55	How many employees returned to work from parental leave on reduced or flexible working hours in 2025-26? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=26 for total responses and n=18 for providers that also reported returns from parental leave (question 54), excluding inconsistent responses.
56	In 2025-26, were employees permitted to do the following? Please select as many as apply.	*Multiple choice (select all that apply)* Purchase additional leave; Take unpaid leave; Accrue and take paid time off work in lieu of overtime payment	n=29
57	Across the 2025-26 financial year, approximately how many employee working days were lost to absences due to illness or injury? Please enter a number.	*Numeric entry*	n=20
58	Of these lost working days, approximately what proportion do you estimate were directly related to the role? For example, caused by client aggression, work stress, or workplace conflict.	*Single choice* 0-19%; 20-39%; 40-59%; 60-79%; 80-99%; 100%; Don't know	n=22 for total responses and n=20 excluding don't know.
59	Of the role-related lost days, approximately what proportion were due to the following? Please enter a number between 0 and 100 for each, without the % sign. Your figures must add up to 100.	*Numeric entry for each item* Items: Psychological stress and anxiety; Physical injury or illness; Other	n=20
60	Does your organisation offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to staff?	*Single choice* Yes; No	n=35
61	How many FTE staff used the EAP in 2025-26 for work-related matters? Please enter a number, or 0 if none.	*Numeric entry*	n=18

No.	Question	Question type and response options	n
62	Does your organisation have a system to report and record incidents of aggression, threats, or violence toward staff?	*Single choice* Yes; No; Don't know	n=33
63	In 2025-26, on average, approximately how often do your employment services sites experience aggression, threats or violence from participants or members of the public?	*Single choice* Never, or none that we are aware of; Occasionally (less than 12 times during the year); At least monthly; At least weekly; Don't know	n=30 for total responses and n=28 excluding don't know.
64	On average, approximately what share of your frontline staff's and team managers' working time is spent on administrative and compliance tasks? Please enter a number between 0 and 100, without the % sign.	*Numeric entry*	n=28
65	What are the most substantial workforce challenge(s) facing the organisation over the next 3-5 years?	*Free text*	n=26

Note: n is the number of respondents who answered at least part of each question, out of 142 survey responses. Where the report uses a smaller base, the n column also gives the n excluding 'don't know' responses and the n for other subsets used in the report. Response counts vary across questions because of skip logic and partial completion. Questions 1 and 3 collected organisation names and contact details, which are not reported. Figures weighted by staff numbers also exclude providers that did not report a headcount.

Source: The CIE, 2026 Australian Employment Services Workforce Survey of Remuneration and HRM Performance.



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