

## Skills Shortages as reported by ACCI Members

- Pharmacy Guild of Australia** - Community Pharmacies are facing chronic workforce shortages and skilled migration is a valuable solution used to address community pharmacy workforce shortages. The employment of overseas pharmacists is an option for community pharmacies to explore when they have exhausted all efforts to recruit from the domestic market. Internal Guild supply and demand modelling conducted in January 2020 indicates there will be a workforce shortage of 1,786 by 2028. This does not consider the impacts of the pandemic on the profession, including fatigue and stress, due to being on the frontline during COVID-19, with little respite due to workload, border closures, anxiety regarding individual health and safety, as well as dealing with angry and abusive consumers (due to medicine shortages, or supply restrictions). There is a very real threat of movement out of the profession by pharmacists affected by these issues, therefore amplifying, and expediting the forecast shortages.
- Accommodation Association of Australia, Restaurant and Catering Australia, Tourism Accommodation Australia, Australian Hotels Association** – Chefs (351311), Cooks (351411), Accommodation and Hospitality Managers (141999), Café and Restaurant Managers (141111) have all been reported as in shortage. A large percentage of the 3097 Restaurant, Café & Catering businesses with \$2 million in revenue or higher, require staff with world class educations and skills in the hospitality industry, relying on highly skilled migrants to fill the top management and trade waiter positions in their venues. As TAFE & VET enrolments for hospitality and events management have dropped for years, Australia does not have the professionals with the skills and experience base needed to rebuild the Restaurant, Catering and Accommodation segment of the industry.
- Consulting Surveyors Australia** – Surveyor (232212). The investment in infrastructure and the property and construction sector has caused significant increase in workload for surveyors around the country. While it takes about seven years to turn out a qualified, capable surveyor, firms who have an immediate need are unable to import skills. The VET system is also letting the industry down with Queensland cancelling the courses in surveying and spatial information most recently. The industry is seeking to address this issue but needs immigrant skills immediately to continue to build projects such as Sydney's second airport, Brisbane's Cross River Rail, Melbourne's Gateway, Inland Rail, New House and Land Packages for home owners. Business Example: As a small-medium survey company engaged in 4 of the biggest infrastructure projects currently under construction in Australia, the survey company is unable to engage skilled Surveyors. The sheer volume of major infrastructure underway at this time, together with the closing of international borders is a major factor in this. Right now, the company could do with 2 Surveyors in Brisbane and another 2 in Sydney as a minimum, providing status quo is maintained with current staff and no further work is secured. The company currently has 2 Seek ads running for Brisbane and Sydney. These ads have been live for 7 days with 7 applicants for Brisbane and 8 applicants for Sydney. Of the 7 applicants for Brisbane, 1 is living in Australia with suitable experience, 2 have no qualifications and the remaining 4 are all living overseas and require sponsorship and an exemption to get to Australia. Of the 8 applicants for Sydney, 1 is an Australian Citizen who is still studying and can only work part-time (not suitable for infrastructure works) and the remaining 7 are all living overseas and require sponsorship and an exemption to get to Australia. Based on previous experiences with Seek, the company would have received 45 to 50 applications at this same

stage. The company also has a recruitment agent constantly looking for Surveyors. They are reporting a lack of Surveyors looking for work. They have jobs to fill on behalf of many firms and no one to fill them. Covid-19 has been problematic in many ways but Surveyors are more hesitant to leave the security of their current employers and lose accrued leave balances. The company recently engaged an experienced tunnel Surveyor from New Zealand. The Surveyor was due to arrive on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The flight got cancelled due to the Australian Government closing that travel bubble from midnight 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021. There is no guarantee when the Surveyor will arrive in Australia. There are many examples of suitable candidates overseas who cannot get to Australia under the current restrictions.

- **Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry** – Motor Mechanics (321211). A national survey of 1,000 automotive businesses conducted in October 2020 by VACC on behalf of its federal body – the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) shows that there is extreme shortage of skilled motor mechanics, which is estimated to be approximately 22,000 positions nationally. This represents the highest deficit for a single occupation ever experienced by the automotive industry and is having a crippling effect on automotive repair businesses. This shortage has been caused by:

  - The growing annual fleet of vehicles on road – currently standing at 19.8 million vehicles on road and growing by 300,000 to 400,000 vehicles per annum. This is placing huge constraints on the capacity of the sector to service and maintain this growing fleet in a timely manner.
  - A sharp decline in the supply of local apprentice motor mechanics over the past few years
  - Technological change - rapidly emerging new technologies in electric and hybrid vehicles have left a major skills gap across the industry for suitably trained motor mechanics
  - A massive uptake of second-hand vehicles by consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 requiring repairs and maintenance.
  - The consequences of this shortage is that automotive workshops have an enormous backlog of work, and not enough skilled mechanics to service and repair vehicles in a timely manner. In many instances, this has meant waiting periods of eight weeks or more for consumers to get their car repaired which is unacceptable. Business owners are under severe stress, working long hours and weekends, and are desperate to sponsor skilled migrants to alleviate the pressures they are facing and be able to meet the needs of consumers.
- **Australian Veterinary Association** – Veterinarian (234711). The COVID crisis has caused a marked increase in demand for veterinary services. Pet adoption throughout the pandemic is up by 45%, and our members are reporting unprecedented caseloads. However, this coincides with a relative shortage of clinical veterinarians within the Australian workforce. This is putting existing veterinarians under enormous pressure, taking a toll on their mental health, putting veterinary businesses at risk of closure, and also posing a broader risk to Australia's animal industries. Veterinarians provide essential services to ensure not only the health and welfare of the community's companion animals, but also service the livestock industries, protect Australia's favourable biosecurity status, ensure the continuity and safety of the food we eat, and protect society from zoonotic diseases. The shortage is currently critical; while AVA is working on long-term solutions to the issue, we also believe that an urgent short-term solution

is needed - we believe that this could be met by placing overseas trained veterinarians on the PMSOL list, to enable the fast-tracking of their visas.

- **Consult Australia and Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry** - Civil Engineers, Structural Engineers (or Bridge Engineers), Civil Engineering Drafters, Transport Engineers (or Traffic Engineers), Hydrogeologists, Electrical Engineers. Consult Australia's 2020 Skill Shortages Pulse Survey<sup>1</sup> took a deep dive into the occupations most affected by shortages in the current market to understand the business impacts from skill shortages. Their participating members were asked to identify the top three businesses that they find difficult to recruit in and to provide detail regarding the impacts on their businesses because of these shortages. It was also found that their members find it most challenging to recruit for mid-level to senior/principal positions in these occupations, often having to alter the position to find a suitable candidate. The shortages identified align with the significant spending by governments across the country, but most particularly in NSW and Victoria, on public infrastructure. Given this, there is an urgent need and assistance in accessing the global market to address the skill shortages they are facing to meet demand.

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<sup>1</sup> Consult Australia 2021, 2020 Skills Shortages Pulse Survey, [https://www.consultaustralia.com.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/consult-australia-report--skill-shortages-\(dec-20\).pdf?sfvrsn=dd8c5f27\\_2](https://www.consultaustralia.com.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/consult-australia-report--skill-shortages-(dec-20).pdf?sfvrsn=dd8c5f27_2).