

MANUFACTURING TRAINING, SKILLS AND WORKFORCE UPDATE

| MARCH QUARTER, 2025



HIGHLIGHTS

1. While there are quarterly fluctuations in workforce size, the average size over the last two years has been stable.
2. Queensland has recorded its highest value for people currently unemployed that were last employed in manufacturing, since February 2021.
3. Females are less than 20% of the training population but make up 25% of the workforce.
4. Strong enrolments in Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services), most significantly in Ipswich SA4.
5. 47% of all apprentice or trainee completions Butchers and Smallgoods Makers, Sheetmetal Workers or Mechanical Engineering Trades Workers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite economic challenges in 2024, Queensland's manufacturing sector has shown impressive resilience, maintaining a stable workforce. This continuity demonstrates the industry's underlying strength and adaptability in navigating market fluctuations while preserving valuable jobs and expertise across the state. The Machinery and Equipment industry continues to see strong workforce growth, up 14% from last year. Fluctuations in workforce size means there is always a population of unemployed people who last had a job in the manufacturing industry. On average, these individuals take 5 months (22 weeks) to find employment.

Growing and training talent from within Queensland is more important than ever. Training pathways are vital for these individuals who are without employment. 2024 NCVER data reveals that 89% of individuals are employed after training, rising to 95% for those in a trade occupation. Values are consistent across major cities, regional and remote areas. Manufacturing designs, creates and maintains products to solve problems within our communities and we need to ensure training matches the needs of industry. Manufacturing occupations are as varied as any industry, if not more so, but within Queensland apprenticeships are dominated by Butchers, Sheetmetal Workers and Mechanical Engineering Trades Workers. By understanding the inner profile of the industry, we can continue to invest in training and programs to grow, train and retain talent for Queensland manufacturing.

WORKFORCE SUMMARY



Jobs

- There were **171,800** employees in the Queensland manufacturing workforce in February 2025—a decrease of **12,800** since compared to this time last year.
- The average size of the workforce over the 12 months to February 2025, is the same as the 12 months to February 2024, indicating stability and consistency in the workforce.
- Queensland's workforce is **20.1%** of the total Australian manufacturing workforce, and **84.0%** are full-time.
- In the last 12 months:
 - Strongest workforce growth has been in the Printing and Machinery and Equipment sub-industries.
 - Polymer and Rubber and Beverage sub-industries have seen the highest workforce declines.



Job Vacancies

- In Queensland, there are **8,400** unemployed persons in which their last job was in the manufacturing industry (February 2025), the highest value since February 2021.
- Over the last 12 months, the average duration of job search for a Queenslander who last worked in the manufacturing industry was **22.1 weeks**.
- In February, manufacturing has **18,200** job vacancies across Australia (5.5% of Australia's vacant jobs). This means that there are approximately **3,700** vacancies in Queensland manufacturing, a job vacancy rate of **2.0%**.



Gross Value Added

- In the 2023/24 financial year, manufacturing in Queensland added **\$28.97 billion** to the economy. This represents **19.7%** of total value added to the economy by manufacturing across Australia. The percentage share has been stable for the past 12 financial years.



Earnings

- Expenditure and Income data for Queensland manufacturing, reveals the total compensation of employees and total factor income for the 2023/24 financial year. Applying those values to the average size of the workforce over the last two years, the average earning and productivity of each employee can be modelled.
- The average earning of each employee is **\$93,000**, and each employee provides an average of **\$159,000** of income to the business.

TRAINING AND SKILLS SUMMARY

Diversity

- In February 2025, Queensland manufacturing had 42,900 female employees, representing 25.0% of the workforce. This is the first time the total has increased in five quarters.
- For apprentices/trainees across the cohorts highlighted in the table below, manufacturing qualifications fall below the state average. The gap is most pronounced in the female population. It is important to note that they make up about 20% of the training population but are 25% of the workforce.

Cohort	Commencements		Completions	
	Manufacturing	Queensland	Manufacturing	Queensland
Females	20.1%	36.7%	19.2%	36.5%
First Nation people	7.4%	10.4%	5.8%	7.8%
People with a Disability	3.1%	4.6%	3.0%	4.1%

Skills Pipeline (by Region)

Data is based on apprenticeship and traineeship totals for the 12 months to 30 September 2024. Commencements are individuals started an apprenticeship/traineeship within the time period, and completions are individuals who completed a qualification within the time period.

- Compared to the 12 months to 30 September 2023, Australian Meat Processing has seen the highest increase in apprentice and trainee enrolments (+1,105), and Metal and Engineering (MEM) has seen the largest decrease (-445).
- Strongest increases in enrolments are seen in Ipswich, Logan and Townsville due to uptake in a Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services).
- Butchers and Smallgoods Makers, Sheetmetal Workers and Mechanical Engineering Trades Workers are the occupations held by 47% of all students who complete a manufacturing VET qualification.

Region	Qualification with highest completions	Commencements	Completions
Brisbane – East	Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	230	125
Brisbane – North	Certificate III in Food Processing	140	120
Brisbane – South	Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services)	285	140
Brisbane – West	Certificate III in Food Processing	85	35
Brisbane – Inner City	Certificate II in Food Processing	90	55
Cairns	Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	285	195
Central Queensland	Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)	735	560
Darling Downs - Maranoa	Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services)	390	305
Gold Coast	Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	510	295
Ipswich	Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services)	1110	410
Logan-Beaudesert	Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)	815	395
Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday	Certificate III in Engineering - Mechanical Trade	545	345
Moreton Bay – North	Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	270	195
Moreton Bay – South	Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	150	115
Queensland – Outback	Certificate III in Engineering - Fixed and Mobile Plant Mechanic	175	95
Sunshine Coast	Certificate III in Engineering - Fabrication Trade	335	175
Toowoomba	Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services)	395	305
Townsville	Certificate III in Meat Processing (Food Services)	445	255
Wide Bay	Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs)	500	350
Queensland Total		7,675	4,470

* 925 students commenced and completed in the 12-month period.

Skills Pipeline (by Training Package)

Training Package	Occupation with the highest completions	Commencements	Completions
Aeroskills (MEA)	Aircraft Maintenance Engineers	170	95
Australian Meat Processing (AMP)	Butchers and Smallgoods Makers	2,385	1,415
Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Refining (PMA)	Plant Operators	165	80
Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical (FBP)	Bakers and Pastrycooks	345	270
Furnishing (MSF)	Cabinet and Furniture Makers	740	330
Laboratory Operations (MSL)	Technicians	430	270
Manufacturing (MSM)	Motor Mechanics	60	70
Metal and Engineering (MEM)	Sheetmetal Workers	2,850	1,760
Plastics, Rubber and Cablemaking (PMB)	Machine Operators	105	55
Printing and Graphic Arts (ICP)	Printers	35	10
Sustainability (MSS)	Trades Workers	200	100
Textiles, Clothing and Footwear (MST)	Trades Workers	10	10
Queensland Total		7,495	4,470

** 925 students commenced and completed in the 12-month period

Sources: ABS (Labour Force, Australia, detailed, Job Vacancies, Australian National Accounts: State Accounts) and NCVET (Apprentices & Trainees and Student Outcomes), released 11 April 2025 10:00am AEST. Notes: Workforce Summary data is based on February 2025 data, unless stated. Training and Skills Summary data is based on totals for the 12 months to 30 September 2024 and utilises the 12 training packages associated with manufacturing and the usual residence of individuals, unless stated.