



Submission to Jobs and Skills Australia – Draft Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL)

May 2024

Industry Bodies, Associations and Associates



Australian Peak Shippers Association Inc. (APSA)



SMALL BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS AUSTRALIA



**Submission to Jobs and Skills Australia –
Draft Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL)**

1.0 Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC)

- 1.1 AMIC is the peak body representing red meat and pork retailers, wholesalers, processors, and smallgoods manufacturers across the country. Our industry is one of the largest manufacturers in Australia today. We exist for a clear reason: to help our members achieve and maintain profitability and ensure our members are recognised for the crucial role they play in the agribusiness supply chain.
- 1.2 We are the only industry association representing the post-farmgate Australian meat industry. We work with members, governments, and industry groups to influence policy and provide technical and other services to the industry.
- 1.3 Our overriding goal is profitability for our members. To help our members achieve and maintain profitability, we work hard to solve our industry's key challenges and provide a range of services that make it easier for our members to run their businesses, from finding staff to complying with legislation.
- 1.4 The Australian Meat Industry Council is the voice of Australian businesses in the crucial and complex post-farmgate meat industry. Our 1500 plus members employ tens of thousands of people and are significant contributors to their local economies.
- 1.5 We are continually working towards a more competitive and prosperous meat and livestock supply chain that is good for members, good for industry and good for communities. We do this by advocating for effective and strategic policy, supporting our industry on important issues and providing members with tools to build and grow their businesses so they remain competitive and profitable within the Australian and global supply chain.
- 1.6 AMIC acknowledges the importance of core skills for our industry, and the impacts that this potentially has for attraction and retention of our workforce. Without the appropriate skills our industry faces uncertainty of workers and will rely heavily on

the various overseas programs. Whilst this is a solution, it is not a long-term solution and is costly to say the least. It is also very administrative and compliance heavy for most of our members and therefore the overseas options are not a wholistic solution for our industry. We must have avenues that allow us to engage new people to industry as well as, provide career pathways for our existing workforce.

2. In consideration of whether migration is an appropriate path to address the identified shortages, considering how well migrants do in the labour market upon arrival, reliance on sponsored skilled visa holders relative to employment size and vacancy data, the likelihood of domestic supply for those occupations and the market salary for occupations.

With the latest deed and guidelines for the PALM scheme, our members are overwhelmed and concerned. The increased costs and administrative burdens now in place are forcing them to rethink if they continue to engage in migration schemes. Most medium and small enterprises are struggling for workers. Whilst the migrations schemes are on offer as a solution, they simply cannot keep up with all the requirements or provide the significant level of support needed.

Employers wear all the costs, all the administrative burden and all the accountability of ensuring they comply to legislative demands and requirements. Despite everyone's attempts to advise of the issues around the migrant workforces, no one appears to be listening. Industry is trying to remain respectful, but is getting tired of the lack of support and the genuine commitment to come to the table to work through the issues.

Industry acknowledges there is a place for overseas workers, but we also need to have a solution that supports our domestic workforce as this is by far, cheaper, provides growth in our economy, reduces unemployment and reliance of government, assists with the housing crisis, as domestic workers will have access to accommodation in most cases. It is also a more sustainable long-term solution.

Having the appropriate inclusion of core skills is key critical and we will address these with the following statements.

3.0 For the purpose of this submission AMIC will focus on 6 occupations within the meat industry that are included in the “For consultation list”

These occupations are.

133512 Production Manager (Manufacturing)

139916 Quality Assurance Manger

149999 Abattoir Manager

311314 Primary Products Quality Assurance Officer

311312 Meat Inspector

351211 Butcher or Smallgoods Maker

3.1 133512 Production Manager (Manufacturing)

AMIC proposes to include this occupation in the CSOL.

Within the Meat Industry, Production Managers carry out crucial roles such as scheduling production, liaising with all departments ensuring customer requirements and specifications are adhered to, and many more associated responsibilities. The current ANZSCO list this occupation as a shortage in Tasmania and Northern Territory, and no shortage for all other states or territories, we acknowledge the occupation is not limited to the meat industry. The meat industry competes with all other food production/manufacturing, agriculture and horticulture, mining/resources, construction and traditional manufacturing industries to fill these skills gaps and roles. Remembering the Australian unemployment rate has been steady at around 3.4% - 3.8% in recent times across Australia, there is simply not enough suitably qualified and experienced people looking to fill the roles and skills gaps within the meat industry. AMIC notes that in the 2023 SPL Snapshot of stakeholder survey responses September 2023, 88% of occupations in shortage in the Managers major group. We would concur with this information.

AMIC is informed by industry, these roles are sourced via Graduate Programs, Migrants undertaking or completed varying studies at universities, as well as from within industry roles with the support of sufficient upskilling and training, which may also include employees from a non-Australian background. Therefore, AMIC submits to have 133512 Production Manager (Manufacturing) included in the CSOL.

3.2 139916 Quality Assurance Manger

AMIC proposes to include this occupation in the CSOL.

Commonly known as a QA Manager within the meat industry, we acknowledge the occupation is not limited to the meat industry, these roles are across many industries. The current ANZSCO list this occupation as a shortage in Tasmania and Northern Territory, and no shortage for all others.

AMIC has been able to substantiate with our members that there is a significant skills gap within the meat industry for QA Managers. The meat industry competes with all other food production/manufacturing, agriculture and horticulture, mining/resources, construction and traditional manufacturing industries to fill these skills gaps and roles. As previously outlined the Australian unemployment rate has been steady at around 3.4% - 3.8% in recent times across Australia, there is simply not enough suitably qualified and experienced people looking to fill the roles and skills gaps within the meat industry. Quality Assurance Managers in the meat industry are responsible for the safe production of product from animal arrival at an enterprise, to the frozen and chilled product leaving site in a suitable vehicle. This includes ensuring that the enterprise meets Australian, exporting country and customer requirements in areas such as animal welfare, HACCP, quality and hygiene programs, refrigeration and chilling requirements, sampling and microbiological testing/reporting, transportation and meat transfer certificates. Along with participating in many audits ensuring all regulatory requirements are maintained.

There is no university degree or trade certificate to becoming a Quality Assurance Manager (QAM) within the meat industry. We have within the VET system the AMP (Australian meat industry training package) which incorporates units at a cert III, cert IV and up to diploma levels relating to QA and other areas. There are also many other specialised areas that a QAM would need to undertake training in, such as auditing, MSA requirements, corporate social responsibility and Aus-Meat accreditation.

AMIC notes that in the 2023 SPL Snapshot of stakeholder survey responses September 2023, 88% of occupations in shortage in the Managers major group. We would concur with this information.

Industry advises there has been an increase of migrants applying for and being successful in these roles in recent times. Therefore, AMIC submits to have 139916 Quality Assurance Manger included in the CSOL.

3.3 311314 Primary Products Quality Assurance Officer

AMIC proposes to include this occupation in the CSOL.

As in the prior QA Manager section, this occupation is throughout many other industries, within the meat industry the occupation is commonly known as an QA Officer, and as above they are responsible for implementing, recording, and overseeing the tasks mentioned in the prior QA Manager section.

Whilst there is no shortage listed on the SPL, industry informs us and is adamant these roles are becoming very difficult for industry to fill. The QA Officer roles are usually filled from within industry, with a requirement of meat processing knowledge essential for the QA Officers responsibilities, further additional industry training will be required and undertaken whilst in the role.

As industry has a significant cohort of migrant employees, there is an increase of employees from a migrant worker background applying for and being appointed into QA Officer roles. Therefore, AMIC submits to have 311314 Primary Products Quality Assurance Officer included in the CSOL.

3.4 149999 Abattoir Manager

AMIC proposes to include this occupation in the CSOL.

Commonly known as a Plant Manager within the meat industry, AMIC acknowledges the ANZSCO code 149999 covers several occupations under the 'not elsewhere classified'. We also note that this occupation is listed as a shortage in 3 states/territories on the SPL.

These roles require significant experience and substantial industry knowledge, therefore are sourced from within industry. Employees would undertake various specialised training programs along with Cert III, Cert IV and Diploma level training programs. As employees for these roles are sourced from within industry, and with a significant proportion of those within industry from a migrant background, Industry foresees there will be an increase these roles been filled with employees from a non-Australian background.

Therefore, AMIC submits to have 149999 Abattoir Manager included in the CSOL.

3.5 311312 Meat Inspector and 351211 Butcher or Smallgoods Maker

AMIC proposes to include both occupations in the CSOL.

Whilst these (2) two occupations are very different within industry, however AMIC will address both within this section of our submission, the reason being both are critical industry occupations, and both are on the SPL as a shortage in every state and territory in

Australia. On this alone both occupations should be included within the 'Confident on list' of the CSOL. Whilst the occupation of Meat Inspector and employees within the Smallgoods sectors already has a cohort of employees from a non-Australian background, the Retail Butchery sector have indicated a desire to utilise employees from various visa programs, to assist with skills and employee shortages. Therefore, AMIC strongly encourages for 311312 Meat Inspector and 351211 Butcher or Smallgoods Maker occupations to be included in the CSOL.

4. Conclusion

The meat industry has a long and successful history of engaging with migrant workers. Industry also acknowledges the importance of developing a local domestic workforce. When we look at solutions to address our shortage of workers and skills, the CSOL is crucial for overseas and domestic markets. As this industry is mainly in regional locations, we come across many challenges, such as competing with the Mining sector for employees and skills, there is a lack of a domestic workforce within these regional communities, the housing market in these areas are tightly contested, and as with the rest of Australia the cost-of-living crisis.

While all these challenges are present, the meat industry will have a reliance of migrant employees to assist in filling skilled, semiskilled, and nonskilled positions. With ensuring the right skills are included on the CSOL lists, we have a chance at building workers and skills to support our industry where it is needed most and work towards a long-term sustainable workforce.