

RCSA Response to the Draft Core Skills Occupations List

September 2025

Introduction

The Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association (RCSA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) as part of the consultation on the *2025 Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL)*. RCSA is the peak industry body for the recruitment and staffing sector in Australia and New Zealand, representing over 1,000 corporate and individual members who source, place, and manage permanent and temporary workforces across almost every industry in the economy.

The recruitment and staffing industry directly employs more than 650,000 people in Australia, while also facilitating employment pathways for many more in roles employed by their clients. Our members are trusted intermediaries between employers and jobseekers, bringing deep expertise in sourcing, placing, and managing talent across a diverse range of sectors. The inclusion of recruitment consultants on the CSOL is vital to sustaining this activity and ensuring Australian businesses remain competitive and well supported as they adapt to evolving labour market demands.

Role of Recruitment Consultants

Recruitment consultants perform a unique and highly complex role that draws together a broad range of responsibilities and skill sets. At its core, the role requires a consultant to simultaneously act as a business developer, a trusted relationship manager, a labour market analyst, a compliance expert, and, importantly, a provider of pastoral care to candidates navigating the employment process. This multifaceted nature of the role means that consultants must not only understand the technical requirements of the industries they serve but also possess the interpersonal and regulatory expertise necessary to manage sensitive employment relationships responsibly.

The demands placed on recruitment consultants require a blend of skills that are difficult to source from Australia's domestic labour market alone. RCSA members consistently report ongoing challenges in attracting and retaining consultants who are equipped to operate at the level required. In practice, many positions remain unfilled for months at a time or are closed without a suitable appointment being made. This shortage is not simply a matter of volume; rather, it reflects a structural mismatch between the skills in demand and those available locally.

As the industry continues to evolve and become more specialised, these challenges are becoming more acute. Recruitment consultants are no longer expected to be generalists; they are increasingly required to demonstrate deep expertise in highly specific areas. For example, agencies supporting international clients often need consultants with multilingual skills to effectively manage global accounts and service cross-border recruitment needs. In the technology sector, demand has shifted significantly from generalist IT consultants to highly specialised recruiters who understand the intricacies of sub-fields such as Java development, .NET frameworks, cybersecurity, cloud

engineering, and mobile application development. Without specialist knowledge in these areas, consultants are unable to credibly engage with both clients and candidates.

International labour markets are often more mature in these niche areas, with a longer history of developing specialist consultants who can bring critical expertise, established networks, and global perspectives to the Australian market. Access to overseas consultants not only helps address immediate shortages but also strengthens the domestic industry by facilitating knowledge transfer and raising the overall standard of practice. These internationally experienced consultants often introduce innovative sourcing strategies, best practice compliance processes, and cutting-edge market insights that can be leveraged to meet the needs of Australian employers and jobseekers alike.

In this way, recruitment consultants sourced internationally are not merely filling vacancies; they are helping to build the long-term capability and resilience of Australia's recruitment and staffing sector.

Supporting the Broader Economy and Domestic Skill Development

The ability of recruitment consultants to connect businesses with talent has a multiplier effect across the Australian economy. Major infrastructure projects, the renewable energy transition, and ongoing investment in construction, healthcare, and technology all depend on workforce solutions that can scale rapidly. Recruitment consultants are a critical enabler of this, but the sector's own ability to meet demand depends on continued access to skilled consultants. Ensuring the recruitment sector itself is adequately staffed safeguards the pipeline of workers across industries, strengthens sovereign capacity, reduces reliance on informal or ad hoc arrangements, and supports a healthier and more dynamic labour market overall.

At the same time, the sector remains deeply committed to developing local talent. Employers actively prefer to hire and train Australians into recruitment consultant roles, and significant investment has been made in graduate programs, traineeships, and partnerships with universities. However, the immediacy and scale of industry demand mean that overseas workers remain an essential supplement. Migrants with prior experience in advanced international markets also play a critical role in capability transfer—equipping the domestic workforce with best practice knowledge, specialised skills, and global insights. In this way, international expertise complements local training initiatives, ensuring that businesses can meet urgent labour needs while simultaneously building sustainable domestic capability over time.

Alignment with the Government's Productivity Agenda

Recruitment consultants are integral to advancing Australia's productivity agenda. As outlined in RCSA's previous submissions to government, removing barriers that impede the matching of skills to jobs is one of the most direct levers available to boost productivity growth. Recruitment consultants deliver this by reducing time-to-hire, improving job matching, and enabling businesses to deploy labour more efficiently.

In practice, consultants ensure that scarce skills are allocated where they generate the greatest economic return—whether that is fast-tracking workers into major infrastructure projects, enabling health and aged-care providers to staff critical services, or supporting emerging industries to scale rapidly. By improving the efficiency of labour allocation, recruitment consultants enhance output per worker and reduce the drag of unfilled vacancies on the economy.

This function is especially critical as Australia contends with demographic change, persistent labour shortages in key sectors, and major transitions in energy and technology. A strong and skilled recruitment workforce underpins the Government's efforts to make the economy more productive by ensuring that both domestic and migrant workers are placed quickly and effectively into roles that meet industry needs.

Supporting Job Mobility

Job mobility is one of the clearest signs of a healthy and dynamic labour market. As highlighted by Assistant Minister for Treasury Dr Andrew Leigh¹ in his 2025 address to the Sydney Institute, job switching is a proven driver of higher wages, better matches between workers and employers, and stronger productivity growth across the economy. Recruitment consultants are at the heart of this process. They provide the mechanisms, market intelligence, and trusted networks that allow workers to move more easily between roles, industries, and regions. By facilitating mobility, consultants reduce labour market friction, enable workers to pursue higher-value opportunities, and help businesses access the skills they need without delay. Ensuring the continued inclusion of recruitment consultants on the CSOL supports this broader policy objective by reinforcing the infrastructure of mobility that underpins wage growth, productivity, and long-term prosperity.

Beyond individual benefits, improved mobility also supports system-wide efficiency. Vacancies that remain open for long periods act as a drag on productivity and constrain business growth. By accelerating job matching and enabling transitions, recruitment consultants shorten these vacancy periods and ensure skills are allocated to where they are most urgently required. This is particularly critical in industries facing persistent shortages, such as healthcare, technology, and infrastructure. Consultants not only move people into jobs faster but also help workers transition into roles that align with emerging industries and Australia's economic transformation agenda. This amplifies the government's broader ambition for a more adaptive, inclusive, and productive workforce.

Summary

RCSA strongly supports the continued inclusion of recruitment consultants on the Core Skills Occupations List. The role remains in high demand, is difficult to fill locally, and is essential to sustaining the agility, productivity, and competitiveness of Australian businesses.

The recruitment industry is deeply invested in training and developing Australian talent, but international expertise remains necessary to bridge shortages, transfer knowledge, and maintain the industry's ability to service employers across all sectors. Continued inclusion of recruitment consultants on the CSOL will ensure Australia's workforce needs are met, productivity gains are realised, and the broader economy remains resilient in the face of structural and cyclical change.

About RCSA

RCSA is the peak body for the recruitment and staffing industry in Australia and New Zealand. RCSA sets the benchmark for industry standards through representation, education, research, and advisory

¹ [Address to the Sydney Institute | Treasury Ministers](#)

support to its member organisations and accredited professionals, who are bound by the ACCC-
authorised RCSA Code for Professional Conduct.

RCSA is also a proud member of the World Employment Confederation (WEC), the voice of the
recruitment and staffing industry across 50 countries, and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and
Industry (ACCI).