

Outlook Australia

Development & social trends shaping the decade ahead

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THE
DEMOGRAPHICS
GROUP

In a turbulent post-pandemic world there is a sense that **the settings within which Australia operates have changed.**

There is concern that immigration levels have lifted, that consumer behaviour has changed (more online shopping), that worker expectations have shifted (WFH as a right), that housing has become less affordable in our biggest cities.

These concerns lead to questions around confidence in the future. However from a demographic point of view there is every reason to be confident in the future of Australia.

This report assembles demographic data to show how Australia might change, and how business opportunities might arise over the decade to 2036.

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INTRODUCTION

In a world of uncertainty the business community is interested in better understanding the factors that shape the business environment.

To this end, and in collaboration with ORDE Financial, The Demographics Group has prepared a report that identifies the demographic trends likely to shape the decade ahead.

These trends include:



The great skills shift



The resilience of the commercial heartland



The rise of tradies & professionals



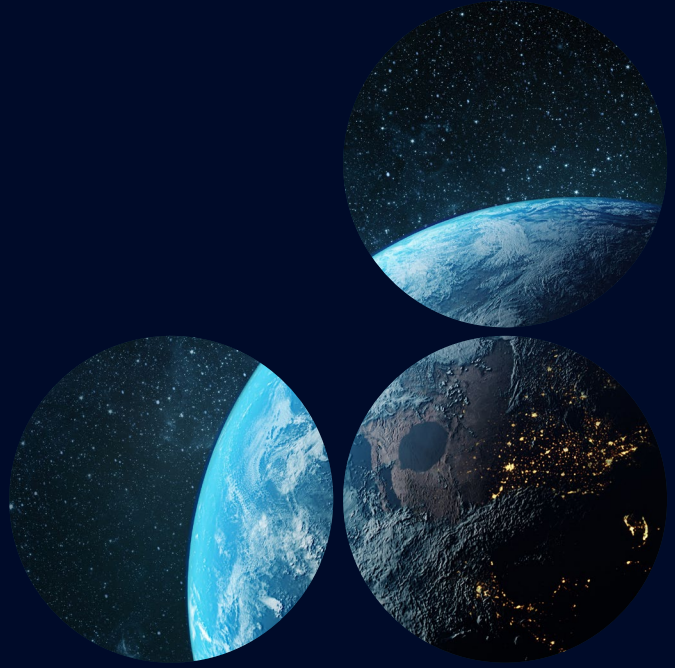
Millennials on the move, and into their 40s!

These trends are likely to: drive demand for forever homes, underpin the further rise of tradies & professionals in the workforce, support further growth in the healthcare & social assistance workforce. These trends are largely a product of cohort and other shifts in the Australian population including in immigration.

But before discussing these specific trends it is worthwhile canvassing the broader demographic outlook for Australia over the decade to 2036.

The global context

01



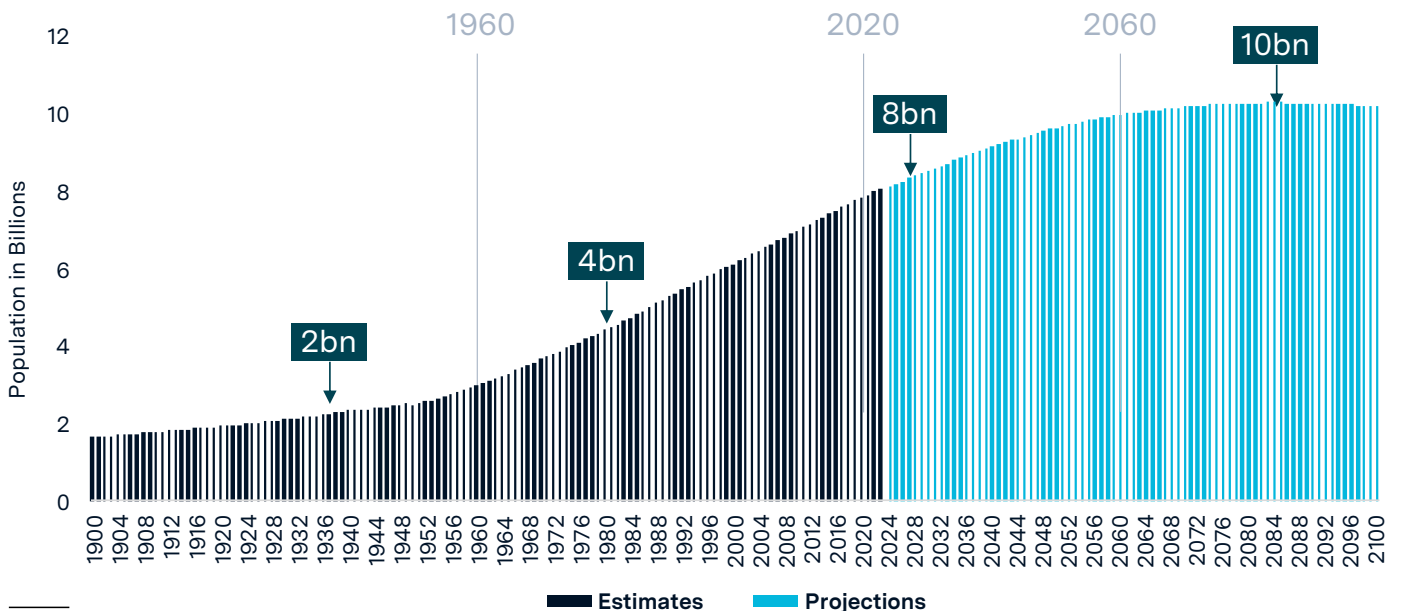
In a world of continued population growth at least until 2080 Australia could well prosper due to its role as a producer and exporter of food, energy, resources (including rare earths), commodities and also via the delivery of services like education and tourism.

These longer-term trends and business opportunities are likely to prompt skilled migration to Australia which when added to natural increase will drive continued population growth in the decade ahead (Graphic 1).

It could be argued that the decade past and the decade to come represent a golden era (of 20 years) of opportunity within which the Australian nation and its communities will continue to grow and prosper.

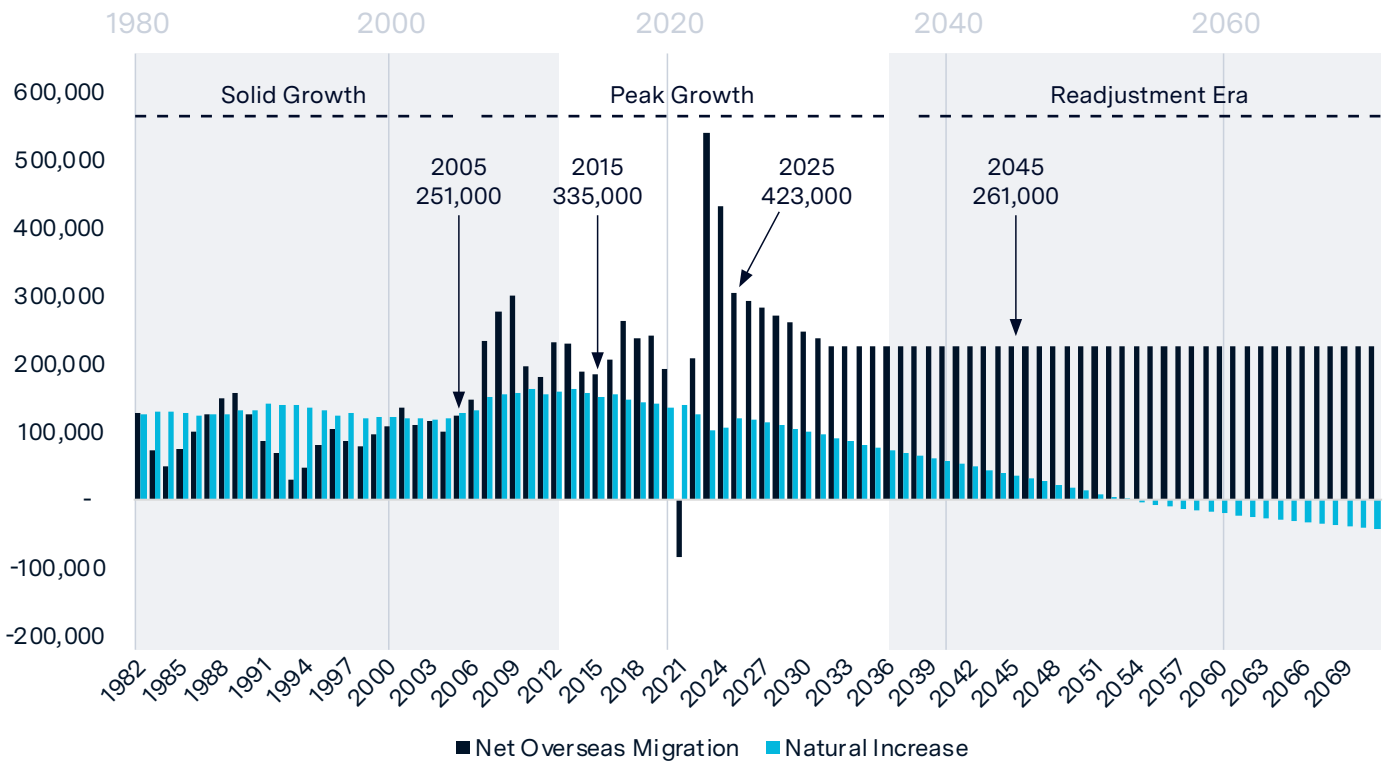
Graphic 1: Global population growth assures rising demand for food, resources

World population between 1900 – 2100; Source: UN World Population Prospects 2024



Graphic 2: The last decade & the decade to come could be “our best years”

Components of population change between 1982 and 2071; Source: ABS National State and Territory Population & Population Projections, 2022 (latest, updated 2027)



However this growth rate will likely subside from the late 2040s onwards as the baby boomer cohort subsides (i.e. dies off) (Graphic 2). In the short term these trends are sure to translate into strong demand for housing, infrastructure, services (e.g. care, education), commercial property and for bigger cities and new communities.

Australia is projected by both the UN Demographics Division and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to remain an immigrant destination for decades to come. This outlook is based on the logic of a rising demand for skilled labour, and on business growth and especially in areas relating to the export of resources and services.



The great skills shift... the workplace requires more skilled workers

02



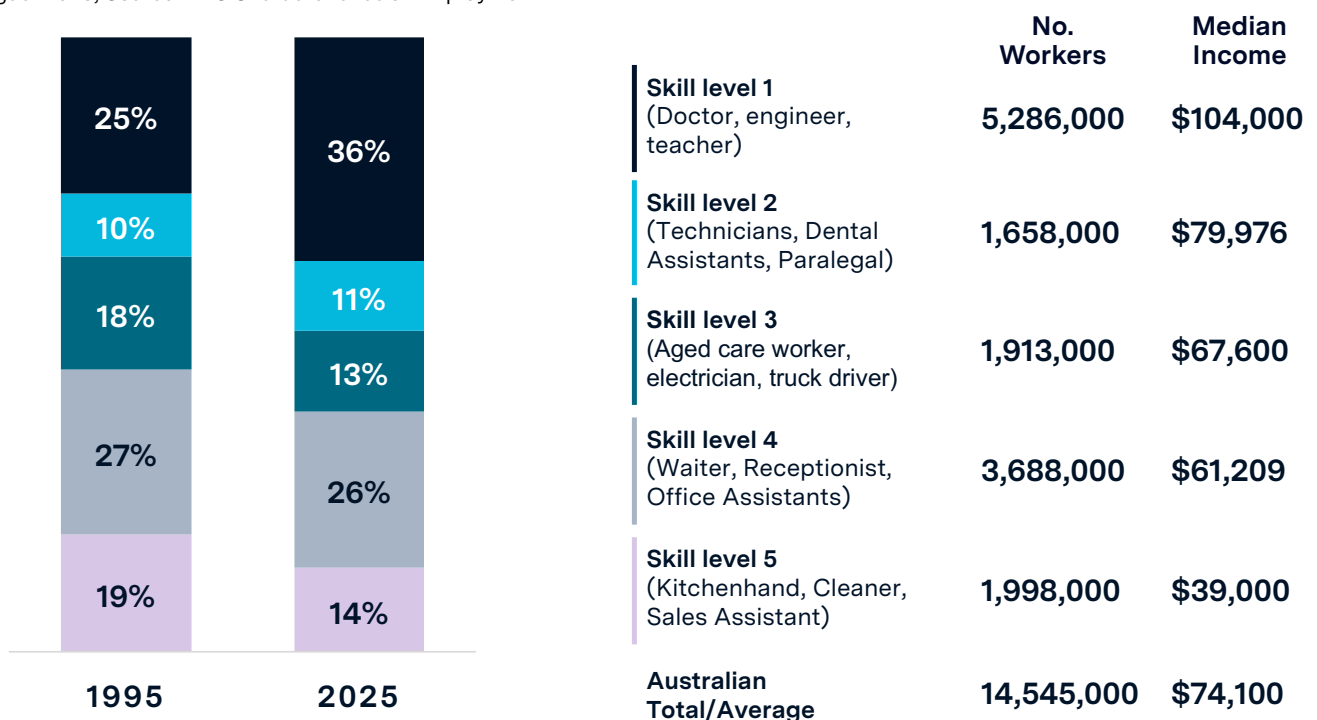
One of the key demographic shifts likely to shape the decade to come is a shift in the skill sets that comprise the Australian workforce.

Over the last 30 years and probably longer the skillsets that comprise the Australian workforce have changed. The ABS classifies each of the 1,353 jobs that constitute the workforce into five skillsets ranging from managerial and university educated work to unskilled labour.

In 1995 some 25 per cent of the workforce was classified as working in a Skill Level 1 job; today this proportion is 36 per cent (Graphic 3).

Graphic 3: The workforce is skewing towards skilled & better paid work

Workforce by skill level from August-1995 to August-2025; Source: ABS Labour Force & Employee Median Personal Income by Skill level August 2025; Source: ABS Characteristics of Employment



Over three decades job opportunities for highly skilled workers have broadened; indeed there has been an 11-percentage-point uplift in the Skill Level 1 share of the job market over this timeframe. Work opportunities clearly require evermore technical skills requiring longer and more specialised training.

And since June 2019 (pre-pandemic) the great skills shift has accelerated. Some of the fastest growing Skill Level 1 jobs in Australia over the six years to June 2025 include registered nurse (up 69,400 or 23 per cent), software & app programmers (up 68,400 or 50 per cent) and ICT managers (up 43,600 or 92 per cent) (Graphic 4).

The fastest growing job in Australia in absolute terms over this time frame was aged and disabled carer up 143,800 or 72 per cent.

The second fastest growing job was sales assistant (general) up 86,000 or 19 per cent. Indeed, if current and even recent trends were to continue it is possible that aged and disabled carer could at some point in the 2030s replace sales assistant (general) as the most popular job on the Australian continent.

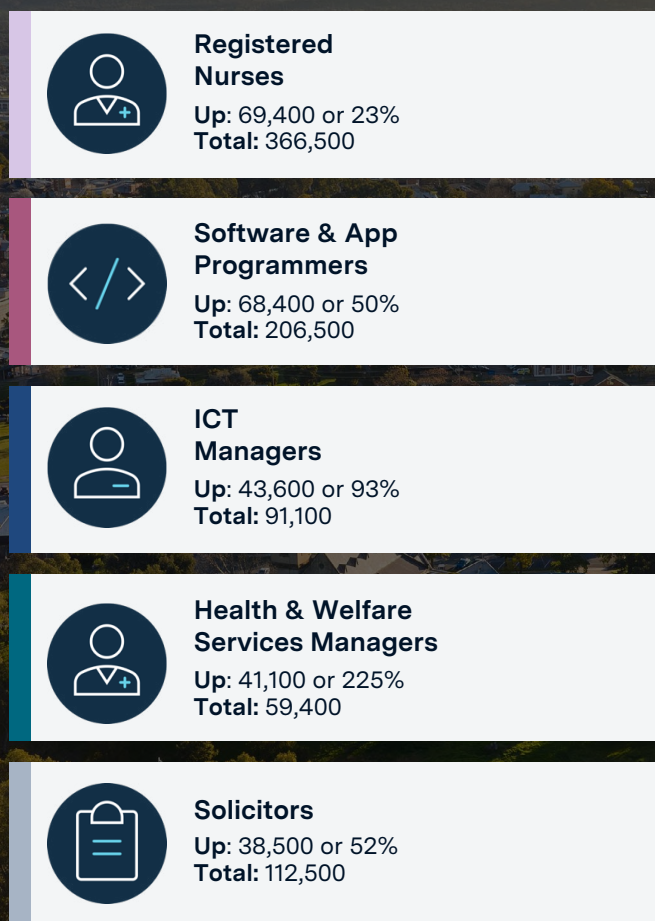
Graphic 4: Care economy surging... Top-earning growth jobs health, IT, law

Top 5 job growth by skill level from August-2019 to August-2025; Source: ABS Labour Force 2019-2025

Top 5 Job Growth (All Skill Levels)



Top 5 Job Growth (Skill Level 1)



03

The commercial heartland... sits within the core of our biggest cities



The outlook for commercial and industrial investment can be tracked via building approvals submitted to local government councils. The total value of these approvals (and for residential development) is published quarterly by the ABS. There is no guarantee that a building approval for a commercial or industrial (or indeed for a residential) project will proceed to construction. The building approval process is required for both public works and for private projects.

The value, the geographic location, and the underlying trend (over time) of building approvals shows business intent for and perhaps even confidence in the future.

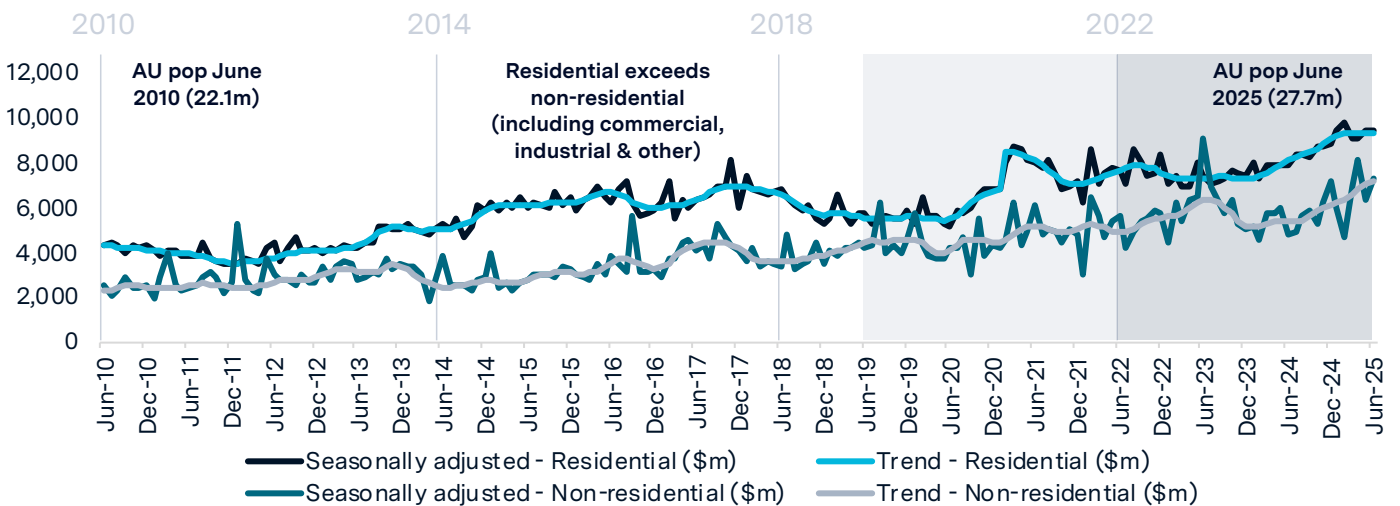
In this regard The Demographics Group has assembled commercial and industrial building approval data for all Australian LGAs (566 in total) over the three years to June 2022 (includes the core Covid years of 2020 and 2021), and for the three post-Covid years to June 2025.

At the uppermost level commercial and industrial building approvals in Australia reached \$167 billion over the three years to June 2022.

Over the following three years (to June 2025) the commercial & industrial approvals aggregate for Australia was \$211 billion, which represents an increase of 27 per cent over the previous three-year period (Graphic 5).

Graphic 5: Population growth goes hand in hand with building activity

Value of buildings approved by building type (a); Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia June 2025



The building approval database shows that plans for commercial and industrial building projects have jumped by about a quarter in the three post-pandemic years (as compared with the three pre-pandemic years).

This suggests that commercial and industrial business is more confident in the future now than it was during the Covid years.

But there’s more to the commercial and industrial outlook than ‘overall optimism’ now that the pandemic is over.

There’s the undeniable fact that most planned commercial and industrial development (by the public and private sector) remains tied to Australia’s three biggest cities namely Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The biggest single markets for commercial and industrial development as measured by building approvals over the three years to June 2025 include Melbourne (\$52 billion), Sydney (\$47 billion) and Brisbane (\$28 billion) (Graphic 6).

And even when looking at net growth in the value of approvals between the three years to 2022 and the three years to 2025, the lift-in-approvals was greatest in Melbourne (up \$13 billion), Brisbane (up \$7 billion) and Sydney (up \$5 billion).

And within Melbourne the concentration of commercial & industrial building approvals was greatest in Melbourne West (including Wyndham) (\$14 billion), while for Sydney the focus was Sydney’s South West (including Campbelltown) (\$8 billion), and for Brisbane it was Moreton Bay North (including Caboolture) (\$3 billion).

Graphic 6: Most commercial & industrial projects planned for our biggest cities

Value of commercial & industrial building approvals 2022-2025 with growth from 2019-2022 (years to June); Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Biggest Markets 2022-2025

	City	\$bn
1	Melbourne	52
2	Sydney	47
3	Brisbane	28

- Big Capital Cities
- Gateway Cities

Rising Markets 2019-22 to 2022-25

	City	\$bn
1	Melbourne	13
2	Brisbane	7
3	Sydney	5

- Westgate Tunnel
- Brisbane 2032

Bits of Markets 2022-2025

	City Region	\$bn
1	Melbourne West Up \$6bn	14
2	Sydney South West Up \$3bn	8
3	Moreton Bay – North Up \$2bn	3

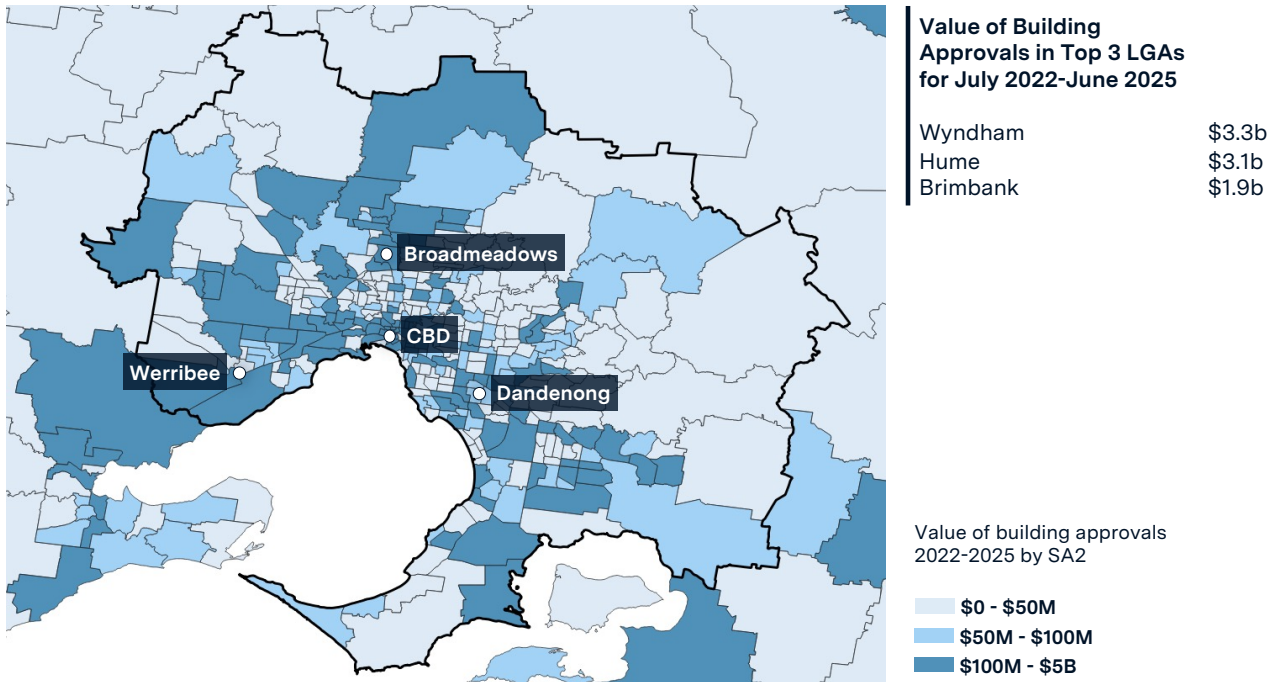
- Infrastructure
- Melbourne’s flip

Large-scale infrastructure projects create flow-on demand for SME skills & outputs
Big projects can also ‘soak up’ available tradie skills

It is also evident that the LGAs (i.e. parts of cities) recording the greatest value of commercial and industrial building approvals over the three years to June 2025 were Wyndham in Melbourne (\$3.3 billion), Penrith in Sydney (\$4.6 billion), and Brisbane Inner City (central Brisbane City Council) (\$5.6 billion) (Graphics 7, 8 & 9)

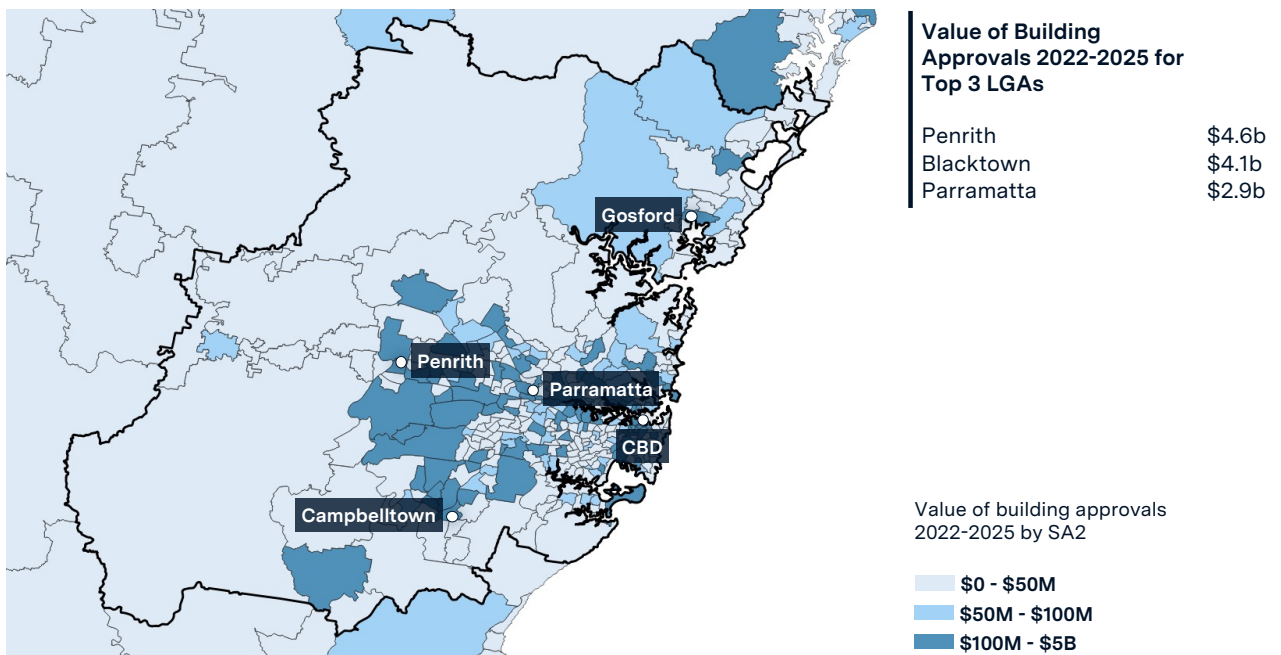
Graphic 7: Melbourne is flipping from east to west... requires new infrastructure

Value of commercial & industrial building approvals 2022-2025 (years to June) by SA2, Melbourne; Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics



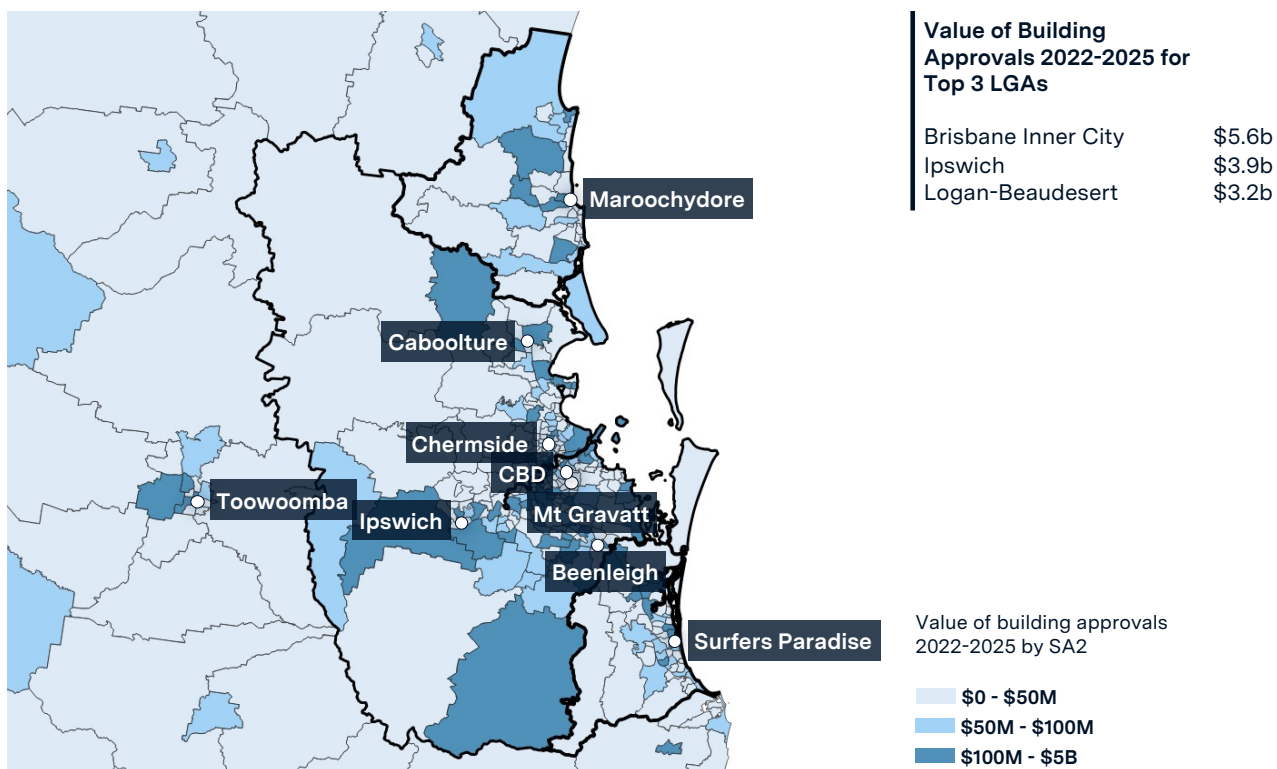
Graphic 8: Sydney is consolidating and improving services 'out west'

Value of commercial & industrial building approvals 2022-2025 (years to June) by SA2, Sydney; Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics



Graphic 9: Brisbane is improving specific infrastructure e.g. airport, tunnels, rail

Value of commercial & industrial building approvals 2022-2025 (years to June) by SA2, Brisbane; Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics



There are also concentrations of commercial and industrial building approval activity in ‘industrial’ regional centres over the three years to June 2025, including Townsville with \$2.1 billion, Wollongong with \$1.8 billion, and Toowoomba with \$1.9 billion (Graphic 10).

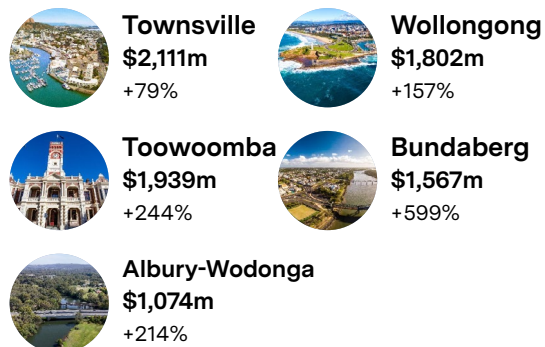
The conclusion is that commercial and industrial building approvals are generally concentrated within the biggest capital cities and especially in connection with nation-building projects like the Western Sydney International Airport, the Westgate Tunnel project, and works that relate to (or possibly support) the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

There is also significant planned commercial & industrial investment in industry-orientated regional cities where large projects tend to be associated with upgrades to existing infrastructure projects such as airports and marinas.

The logic is that large-scale infrastructure projects that proceed beyond the approval stage generate business opportunities for tradies and for tradie businesses and often for years at a time.

Graphic 10: Regional cities & towns are also growing via multiple growth pistons

Value of commercial & industrial building approvals 2022-2025 and growth from 2019-2022 (years to June); Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics



- Five cities 80,000 -320,000 population
- \$1-2bn markets (over 3 years to June 2025)
- Proposed investment outlook at least doubled over last 3 years
- Sign of confidence in the regions
- These cities contain infrastructure like marina, ports, airport, military, university, steel-making, agribusiness hub

The rise of tradies... and there's still not enough!

04



While there has been a clear shift towards university-educated Skill Level 1 workers at an aggregate level over the last 30 years it is also evident that Australia has supported a rise in demand for trades workers, aka 'tradies.' About 13 per cent of the Australian workforce are tradies as defined by the ABS. A large proportion of these tradies (about one in five i.e. 19 per cent) operates as a business owner-manager (especially bricklayers).

The proportion of the workforce comprised of tradies actually rises to 27 per cent in places like Victoria's Woori Yallock located beyond the eastern edge of Melbourne. In mining communities like The West's Newman (in the Pilbara) this proportion is also 27 per cent. In the treechange village of Seville in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges tradies comprise 25 per cent of the workforce (Graphic 11).

Graphic 11: Tradie towns are on the rise... and so too are tradie-town variants

Top tradie towns across Australia at the 2021 Census; Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Top Tradie Towns				Muscle Town Tradies				DIDO/FIFO Tradie Towns			
1	Woori Yallock-Launching Place	VIC	27%	1	Newman	WA	27%	1	Seville	VIC	25%
2	Landsborough	QLD	21%	2	Roxby Downs	SA	26%	2	Dunsborough	WA	21%
3	Dodges Ferry-Lewisham	TAS	20%	3	Mackay	QLD	20%	3	Jimboomba	QLD	20%

... and then there's the many tradie-town tribes of Victoria!

1	Whittlesea	23%	4	Lang Lang	22%	7	Teesdale	21%
2	Yarra Junction	23%	5	Romsey	21%	8	Creswick	20%
3	Bunyip	23%	6	Koo-wee-rup	21%	9	Wallan	19%

13% of workforce is a tradie... this proportion is 19+% in tradie towns

We have mapped the residential location of tradies across Australia including in Greater Melbourne, in Greater Sydney, and in South East Queensland. Tradies tend to cluster on the edge of capital cities forming tradie belts, and especially around Melbourne (Graphic 12).

Tradies are generally less prevalent in Sydney where they represent 11 per cent of the workforce as compared with 12 per cent in Melbourne. This is due to the fact that Sydney is a ‘head office city’ and as such the locally-based workforce is skewed towards the delivery of professional services (Graphic 13).

In high-growth SEQ tradies also form belts on the edges of Brisbane, in the hinterland overlooking the Gold Coast, and on the Sunshine Coast (Graphic 14).

Tradies cluster in mining towns as well as in ‘lifestyle’ locations in close (acreage) proximity to the city’s burgeoning edges.

At the time of the 2021 Census the Australian tradie workforce was estimated at 1.77 million workers. By August 2025, this workforce is estimated by the ABS to have expanded to 1.97 million workers.

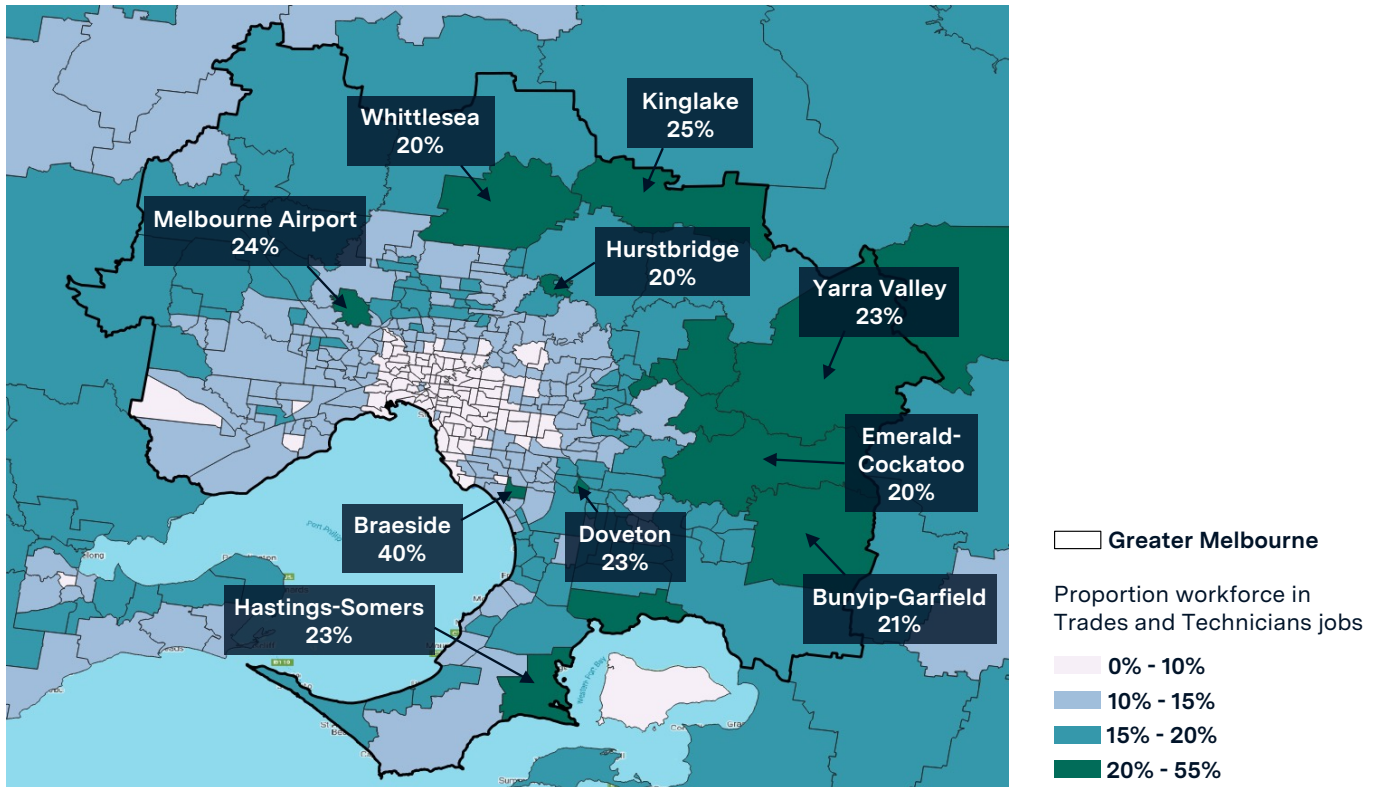
Australia’s tradie workforce is therefore expanding at an average rate of 51,000 per year.

Based on census data, around 19 per cent of the tradie workforce is a business owner-manager.

On current workforce estimates this means there are around 374,000 tradie owner-managers working today; it also means that this ‘tradie business’ community is growing at a rate of around a net 9,700 businesses per year (i.e. 19 per cent of 51,000).

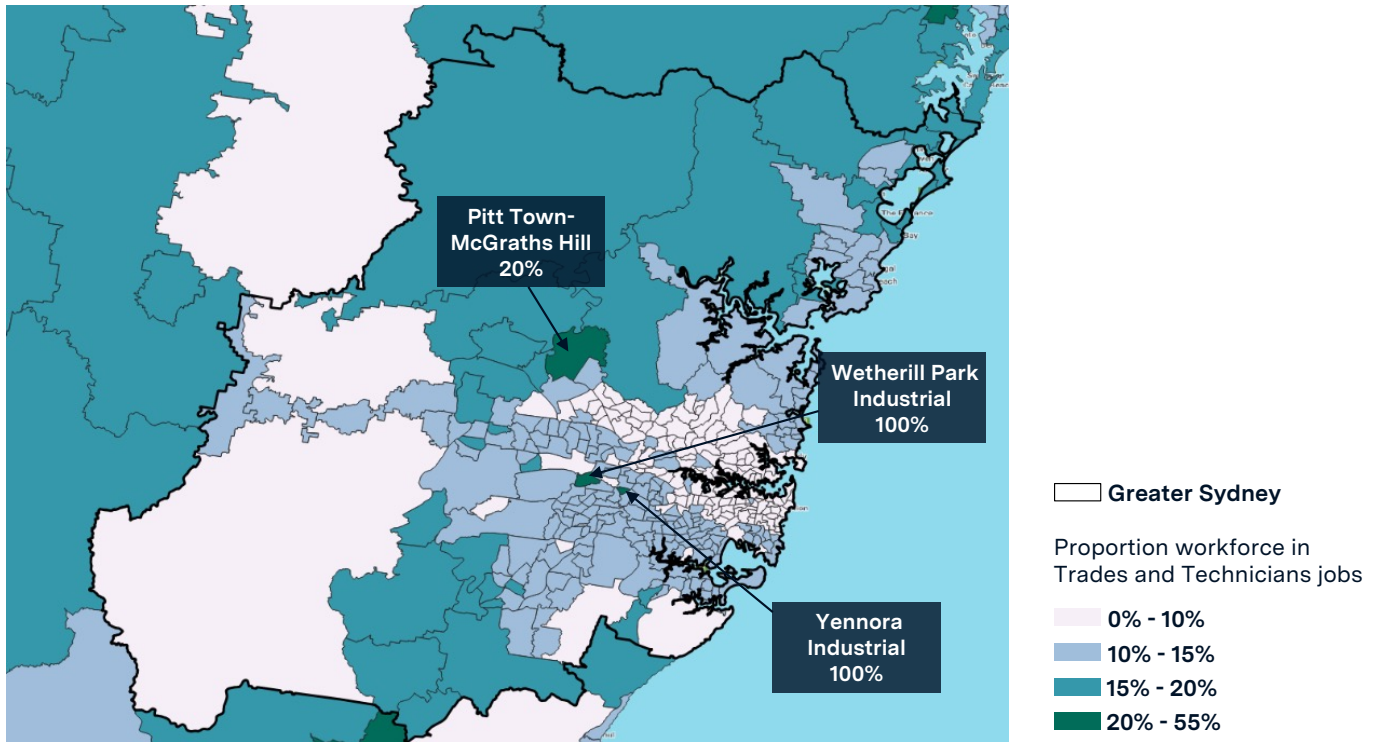
Graphic 12: Victorian tradies have Melbourne surrounded!

Share of workforce in Trades and Technicians occupation group by SA2, Greater Melbourne 2021; Source: ABS Census



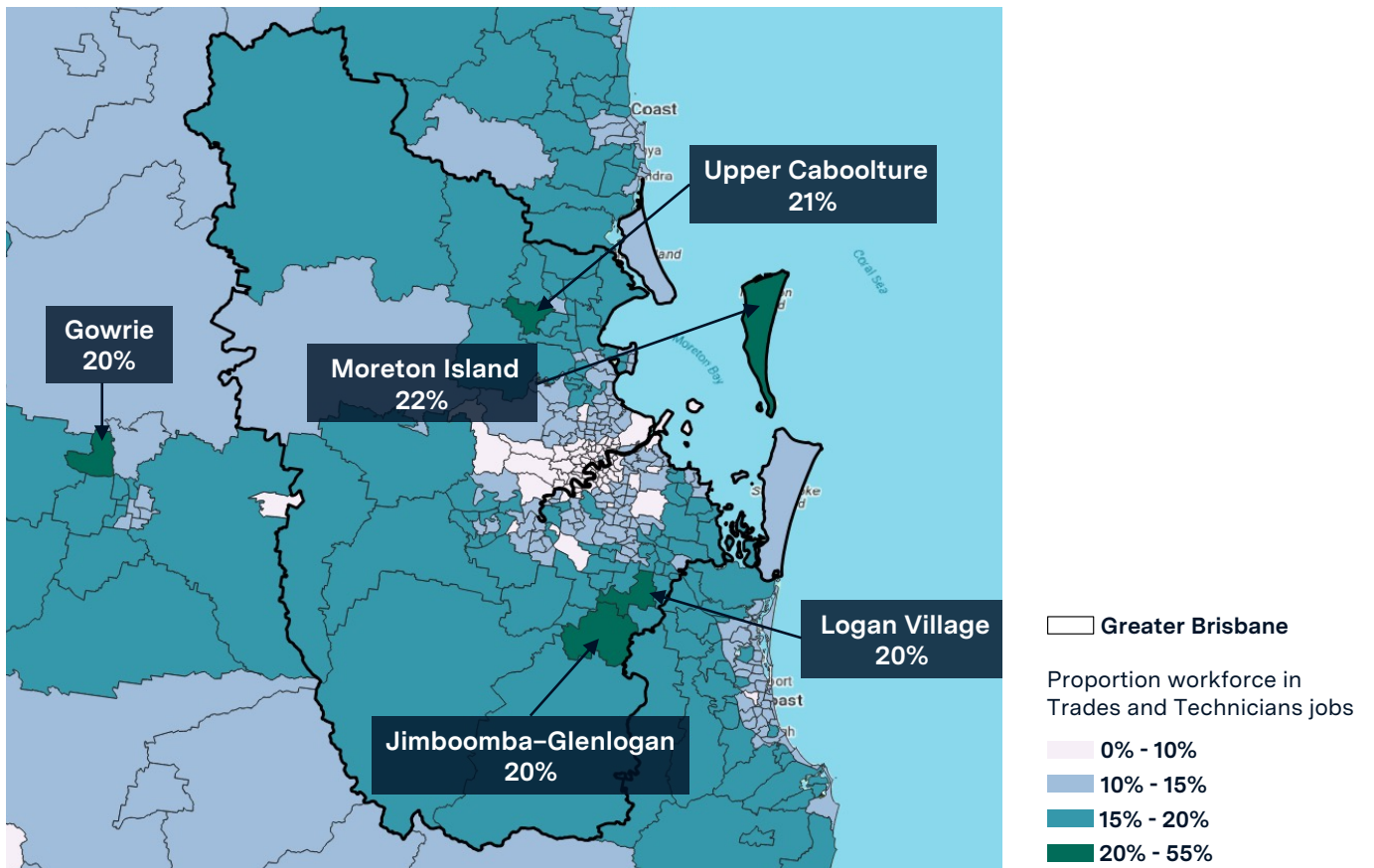
Graphic 13: The tradie (tool) belt on Sydney's edges... tradies do love Dural!

Share of workforce in Trades and Technicians occupation group by SA2, Greater Sydney 2021; Source: ABS Census



Graphic 14: SEQ's tradies quite like Jimboomba, Logan and Upper Caboolture

Share of workforce in Trades and Technicians occupation group by SA2, Greater Brisbane 2021; Source: ABS Census



05

The surge in professionals... and we seem to need more!

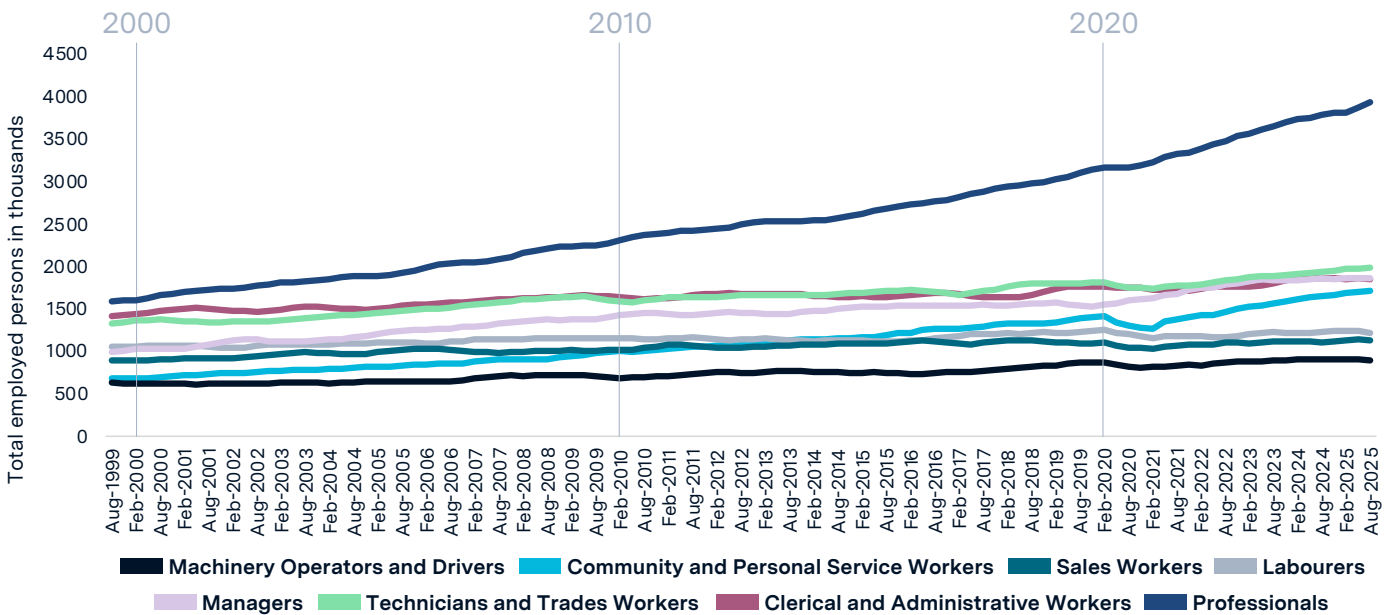


It is the professional workforce that has ‘exploded’ over the last three decades (and longer).

According to ABS Labour Force Survey data around 4 million workers in a current workforce of 14.7 million are defined as professionals up from 1.5 million at the turn of the century. No other job category matches or even approaches the scale of, let alone the growth of the professional workforce over the last quarter of a century (Graphic 15).

Graphic 15: The professional workforce is surging ahead

Total employed persons by Occupation in Australia, August-1999 to August-2025; Source: ABS Labour Force



Not only are professionals the largest skillset within the Australian workforce it is also the best remunerated (on average).

And especially in comparison with trades workers. Again according to ABS Census and ABS Labour Force Survey sources the fulltime professional workforce on average earns 27 per cent more income per year than a fulltime trades worker.

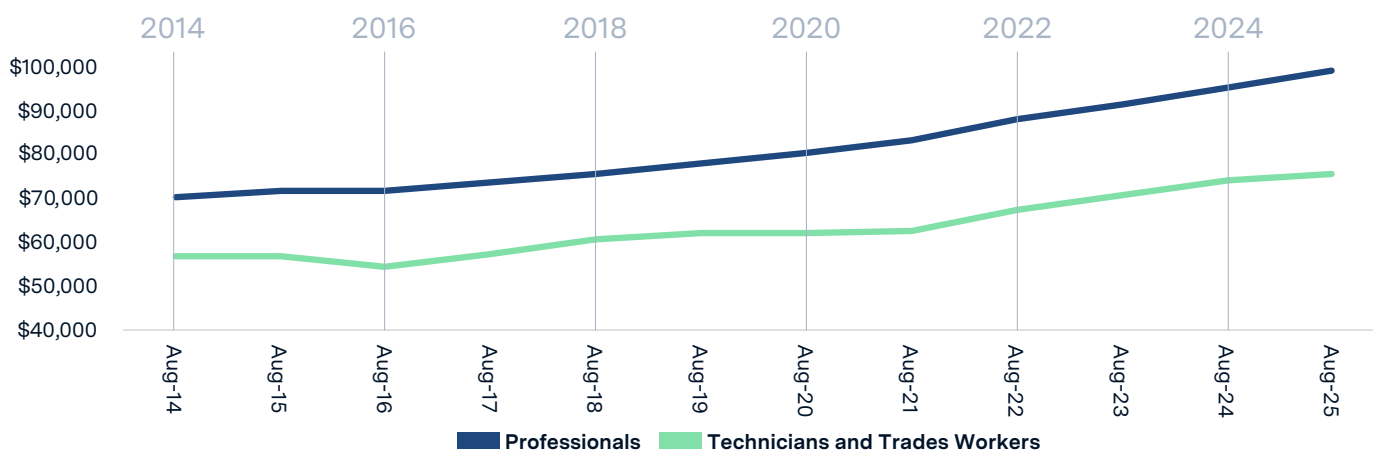
And this differential is up from 23 per cent a decade earlier in August 2015 (Graphic 16)

The point being that on average the professional worker generates a higher income than a trades worker. However it is also evident that trades workers are far more likely to run their own business (19 per cent) than are professional workers (14 per cent).

While a quarter (24 per cent) of the Australian workforce is classified as professional, this proportion reaches 31 per cent in Victoria's (favoured treechange town of) Castlemaine, 27 per cent in NSW's (university town of) Armidale, and 21 per cent in Queensland's (university town of) Toowoomba (Graphic 17).

Graphic 16: Professionals out-earn Tradies by a further 30 per cent

Median personal annual income of Professionals and Technicians and Trades Workers in Australia, August-2015 to August-2025; Source: ABS Characteristics of Employment



Graphic 17: Professionals cluster in university towns

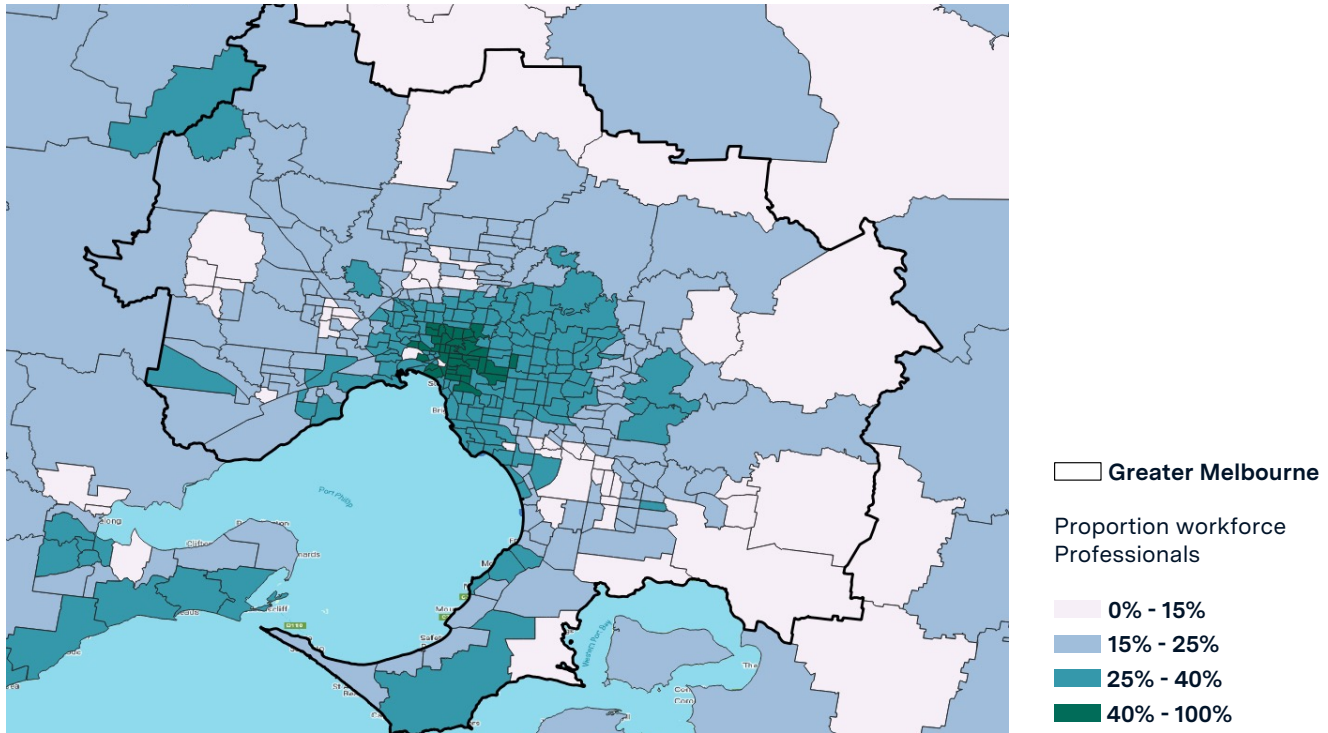
Top 10 SUAs by the highest number of Professionals per 1000 workforce by State 2021; Source: ABS Census

New South Wales			Victoria			Queensland		
Rank	SUA	Professionals per 1000 workforce	Rank	SUA	Professionals per 1000 workforce	Rank	SUA	Professionals per 1000 workforce
1	Armidale	268	1	Castlemaine	306	1	Toowoomba	215
2	Byron Bay	252	2	Gisborne	249	2	Sunshine Coast	210
3	Port Macquarie	235	3	Geelong	235	3	Cairns	209
4	Wollongong	231	4	Ballarat	228	4	Gold Coast-Tweed Heads	204
5	Orange	227	5	Bendigo	221	5	Townsville	200
6	Ballina	226	6	Sale	217	6	Hervey Bay	190
7	Newcastle - Maitland	225	7	Warrnambool	199	7	Yeppoon	186
8	Bowral - Mittagong	216	8	Wangaratta	190	8	Mount Isa	173
9	Wagga Wagga	213	9	Horsham	188	9	Rockhampton	172
10	Central Coast	204	10	Shepparton-Mooroopna	184	10	Bundaberg	168
	Greater Sydney	293		Greater Melbourne	268		Greater Brisbane	245
	Australia	240		Australia	240		Australia	240

The mapping of Australia’s professional workforce shows that most live in capital cities where healthcare, education and aviation (e.g. air traffic controllers) infrastructure is concentrated. Professionals also cluster in lifestyle zones like Victoria’s Surf Coast, Sydney’s Central Coast, parts of the Gold Coast (including Byron Bay), parts of the Sunshine Coast, and in Toowoomba (including university precincts) (Graphics 18, 19 & 20).

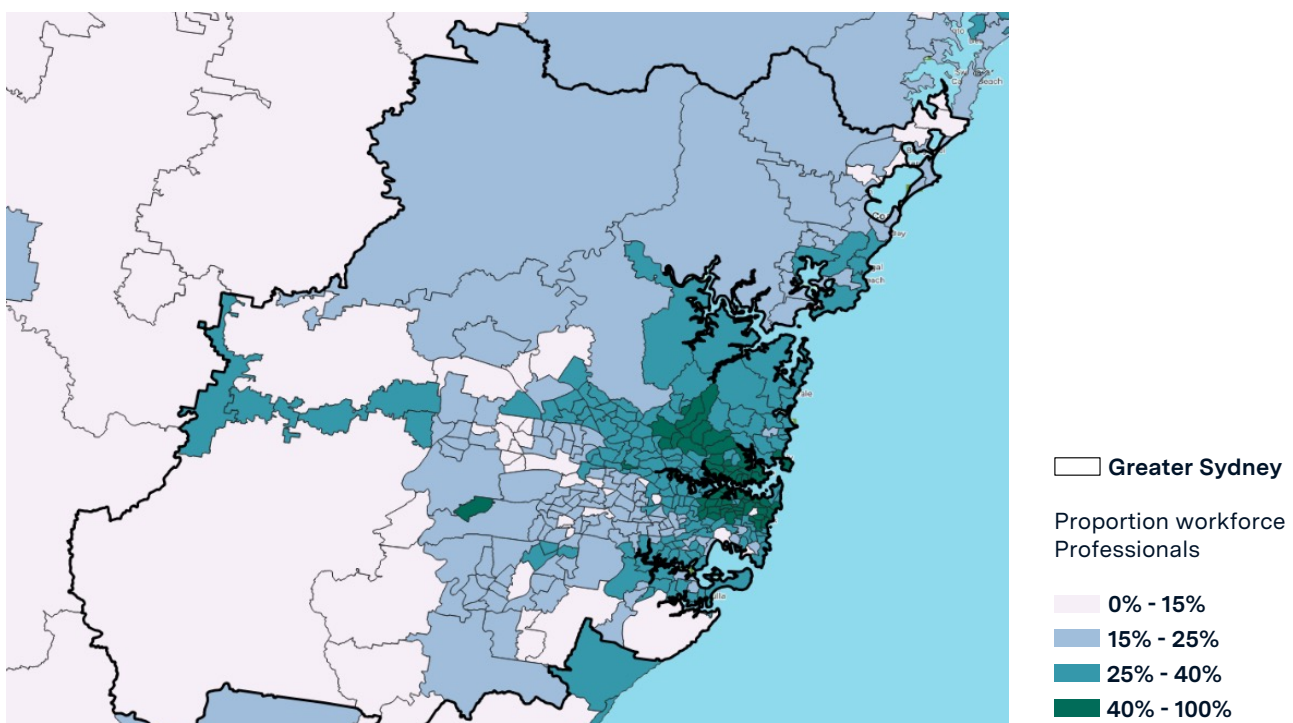
Graphic 18: Victorian professionals cluster in the inner city

Share of workforce in Professionals occupation group by SA2, Greater Melbourne 2021; Source: ABS Census



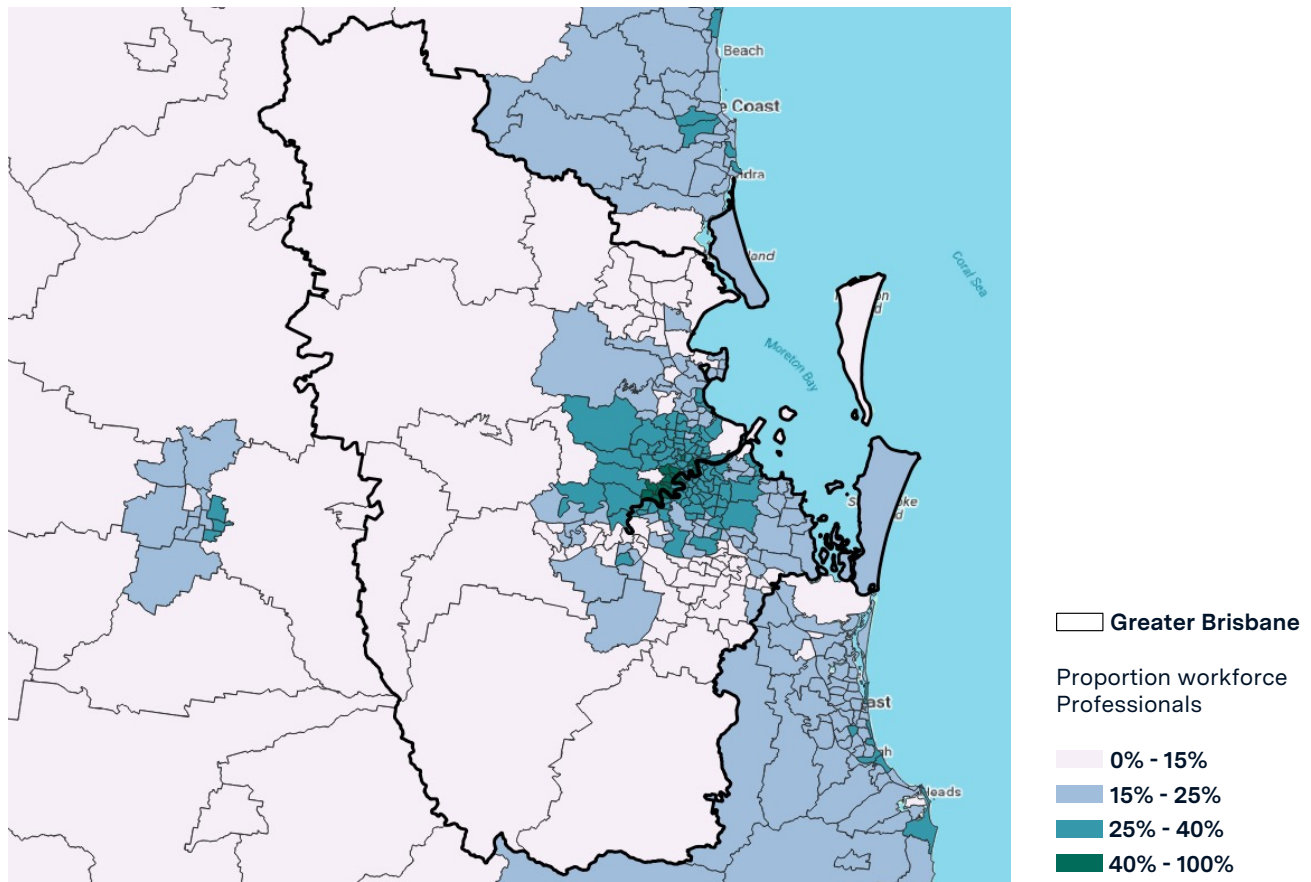
Graphic 19: Sydney professionals prefer the eastern suburbs and north shore

Share of workforce in Professionals occupation group by SA2, Greater Sydney 2021; Source: ABS Census



Graphic 20: Brisbane professionals follow the river

Share of workforce in Professionals occupation group by SA2, Greater Brisbane 2021; Source: ABS Census



The Tradie & Professionals market... the pistons of small business

06



Over the four years (since the census) to August 2025 the Australian workforce increased by 13 per cent.

However the professional workforce jumped by 18 per cent while the tradie workforce increased by 12 per cent. Australia’s immigration program is designed to support skilled (both trades and professions) migration.

The top 12 professional occupations as measured by both the ABS Census and subsequent ABS Labour Force Surveys shows that at August 2025 the leading jobs for professionals were registered nurses (366,472 jobs), accountants (219,932 jobs) and software & app programmers (206,549 jobs). The number of software & app programmers increased by an estimated 78 per cent over the previous four years which is an average growth rate of almost 20 per cent per year (Graphic 21).

Graphic 21: [Medicine, law, consulting, accounting... professional businesses](#)

Top 12 occupations for Professionals by workforce in August-2025 and change in workforce from Aug-2021 (Census); Source: ABS Census and Labour Force

Rank	Occupation	Workforce Aug-2025	Workforce Change 2021-2025	Income Variance From AU Average	Proportion Owner-Managers
1	Registered Nurses	366,472	40%	+20%	1%
2	Accountants	219,932	40%	+39%	17%
3	Software and Applications Programmers	206,549	78%	+85%	8%
4	Secondary School Teachers	172,609	11%	49%	0%
5	Primary School Teachers	165,049	1%	32%	1%
6	Solicitors	112,495	63%	92%	24%
7	Management and Organisation Analysts	105,143	41%	86%	24%
8	Advertising and Marketing Professionals	97,398	17%	34%	14%
9	General Practitioners and Resident Medical Officers	83,876	31%	148%	37%
10	Human Resource Professionals	80,784	14%	29%	6%
11	Civil Engineering Professionals	79,047	60%	72%	10%
12	Database and Systems Admins, and ICT Security Specialists	74,031	117%	68%	5%
	Total workforce	14,543,323	22%	0%	14%

Graphic 22: Painting, hairdressing, gardening...most common tradie businesses

Top 12 occupations for Technicians and Trades workers by workforce in August-2025 and change in workforce from Aug-2021 (Census); Source: ABS Census and Labour Force

Rank	Occupation	Workforce Aug-2025	Workforce Change 2021-2025	Income Variance From AU Average	Proportion Owner-Managers
1	Electricians	366,472	49%	24%	21%
2	Carpenters and Joiners	219,932	25%	1%	33%
3	Chefs	206,549	55%	-16%	8%
4	Metal Fitters and Machinists	172,609	46%	40%	7%
5	Plumbers	165,049	46%	8%	30%
6	Motor Mechanics	112,495	24%	-10%	21%
7	Gardeners	105,143	45%	-22%	39%
8	Architectural, Building and Surveying Technicians	97,398	21%	44%	15%
9	Hairdressers	83,876	45%	-40%	43%
10	Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers	80,784	23%	6%	12%
11	ICT Support Technicians	79,047	44%	15%	7%
12	Painting Trades Workers	74,031	5%	-8%	48%
	Total workforce	14,543,323	22%	0%	14%

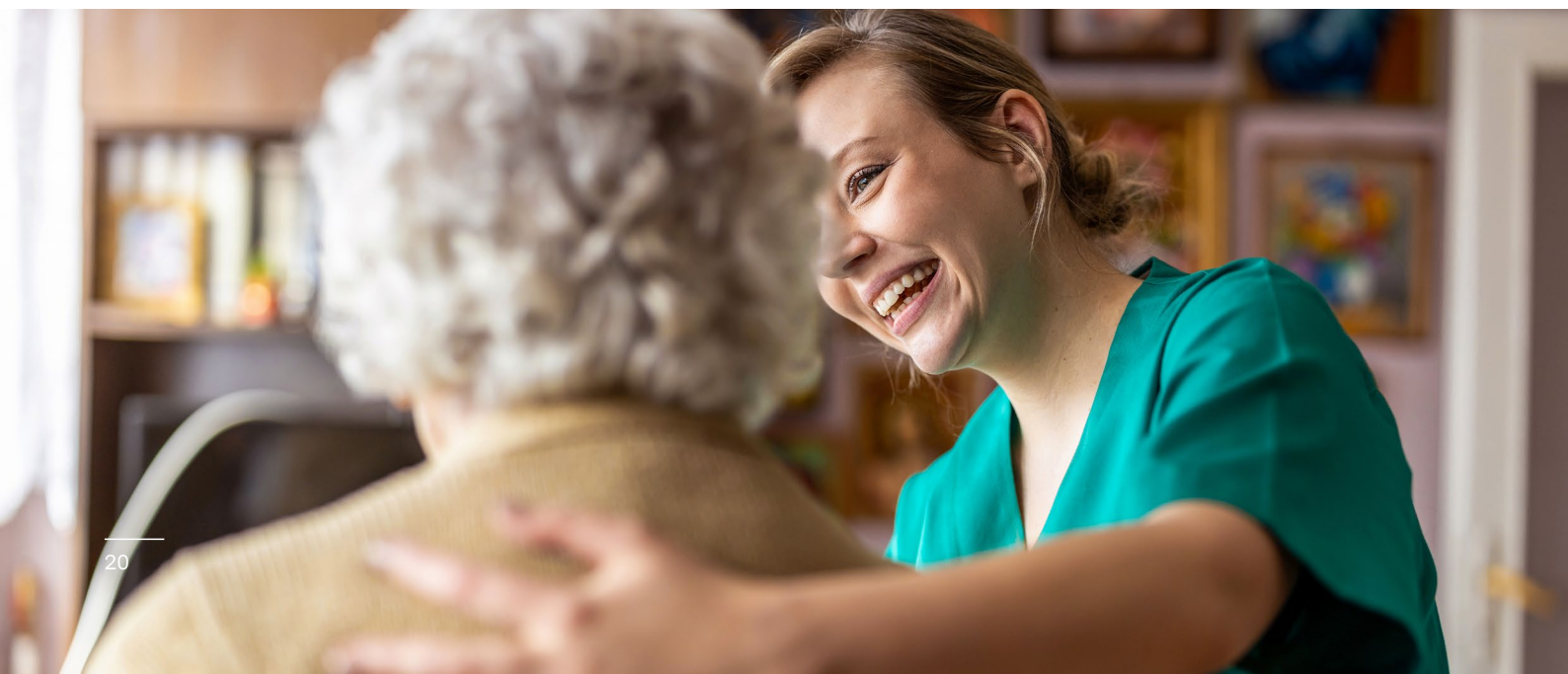
All of the top 12 professional jobs generate an income that is above the Australian average, especially GPs (148 per cent above the national average) but also nurses (20 per cent above the national average).

But only four of the top 12 professional jobs rank above average (i.e. 14 per cent of the workforce) in owning & managing a business. These most common professional jobs where individuals are predisposed to running their own business include GPs (37 per cent), solicitors (24 per cent), management consultants (24 per cent), and accountants (17 per cent).

On the other hand, many of the most numerous trades workers generate an annual income that is below the Australian average largely due to the fact that these jobs are often part time or contract type work. These include jobs like hairdresser, gardener, chef, and painting trades worker (Graphic 22).

The highest paid of the 12 most numerous trades jobs include building surveyor & technicians 44 per cent above the Australian average, metal fitters 40 per cent above average, and electricians 24 per cent above average.

And yet all of the top 12 most numerous trades are also quite predisposed to setting up and managing their own business including painting trades worker (48 per cent own and manage their business), hairdressers (43 per cent), gardeners (39 per cent), and carpenters (33 per cent).



07



Millennials on the move... into their 40s

This has to be one of the greatest demographic stories of the coming decade: the transitioning of seven million millennials in 2026 – many now in their 30s into their 40s.

At an aggregate level, the number of Australians aged 40-something in 2026 (3.6 million) will jump by 589,000 or by 16 per cent to 4.2 million by 2036.

This is an important shift. Moving from the largely childless-20s to the largely childless-early-30s doesn't particularly impact the housing market.

However by the late 30s Australians tend to be partnered, with perhaps 2-3 kids, and many will have their partner back in the workforce. The early 40s is the time in the Australian lifecycle when many couples decide they need more space: out with apartment living; in with a separate house on a separate block of land. Indeed the decade to 2036 will surely see a surge in demand for the 'forever home.'

Maybe not all but many of today's Millennials spilling into their 40s will want a 'forever home' to accommodate a young family, and that will be capable of accommodating teenagers later in the 2030s. This might be achieved by gravitating to middle or outer suburbia and 'making-over' a post-war home on a traditional quarter-acre-block. Or it might involve moving to the lifestyle zone (i.e. seachange, treechange towns) and commuting perhaps 1-2 times per month back into a city-based workplace.

The ascendant demographic force that drives this pursuit of the forever home is the transitioning of the Millennial bulge from the 30s to the 40s. The greatest uplift in the 40-something population over the decade to 2036 includes Melbourne up 131,000, Sydney up 114,000 and Brisbane up 57,000. And within these cities the greatest concentrations of a rising 40-something forever-home-seeking cohort will be Melbourne's west, Sydney's west, and Brisbane's south.

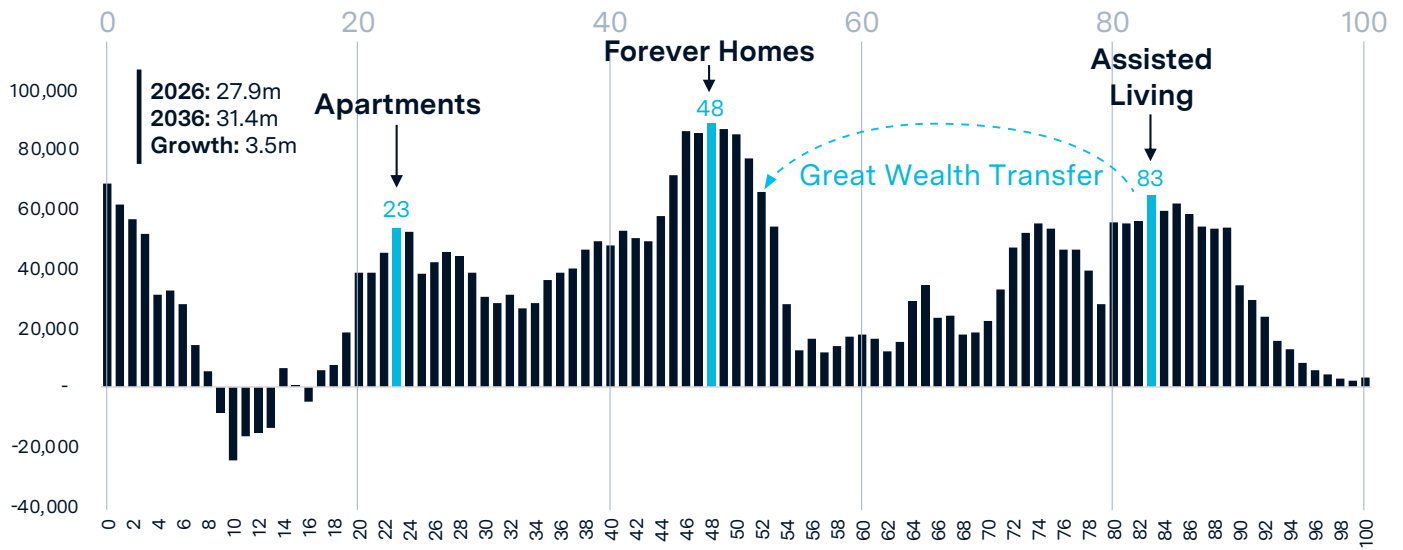
The Millennials are predominately the children of the baby boomers and as such were once (in the 1990s) referred to as the Echo Generation. As modern-day Millennials transition into the 'peak family' (or 40s) stage of the lifecycle they will surely look for ways of securing their forever home.

This might include for example negotiating early access to generational wealth and/or choosing to relocate to (less expensive) lifestyle locales. Or even making the decision to move to smaller (and thus less expensive) capital cities or even to regional cities.

And while 'Millennials on the move' is an important demographic theme that will shape the decade to come, other forces will also influence the cultural and housing landscape. This includes the projected continued growth in 20-somethings largely driven by expansion of the student market. The housing market will also be shaped by ageing baby boomers pushing into their 80s which will drive demand for aged care services, accommodation and workers (Graphic 23).

Graphic 23: As Millennials push into middle age, they will want a 'forever home'

Net annual change in Australia's projected population by age 2026-2036; Source: ABS Population Projections



However it may be that one of the most significant transformational shifts of the coming decade is a decision by some boomers to start the great wealth transfer 'now' rather than waiting until they pass away.

After all, passing on a meaningful portion of wealth to adult kids in their needy-40s will have a bigger impact than passing it on years later when the grandchildren have left the family home.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from this review is that some things are **bound to change whilst others are likely to stay the same.**

For example, commercial and industrial heartland is likely to remain attached to large nation-building projects that deliver infrastructure in places within the biggest capital cities.

But there are other aspects of the coming decade that could be truly transformational. By the middle of the 2030s the concept of natural decrease (i.e. deaths exceeding births) within the population will be evident or at least 'on the horizon.' At this time Australia will grow more slowly and a 40-something cohort of Millennials will have created their own version of family life: some in apartment, possibly many in a reimagined (and denser) suburbia. And it could be that the role of 'carer' grows to be the most popular (i.e. numerous) job on the Australian continent.

In the meantime, as Australia hurtles toward the middle of the 2030s, we are likely to remain a high-growth first-world nation attracting skilled immigrants from diverse cultures.

Indeed, based on census data it is evident that immigrants generally have the same aspirations as the Australian-born population: the acquisition of skills and training, the pursuit of a long-term relationship, achievement of home ownership, the experience of family life and, for some, the satisfaction of creating and running a business.

And this is why there is every reason to be confident in the future of Australia. We have our concerns, and our challenges. But we also have an abundance of resources, a culture of welcoming migrants, the aspiration of home ownership, and a sense of optimism that is, I think, unique to Australia. And that is why from a demographic point of view the decade to 2036 could well be an era of opportunity and achievement.

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