



STRATEGIC & EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Workforce Pipeline: Your Accreditation Process Might Be Part of the Problem

Nearly a quarter of permanent skilled migrants work below their skill level. Is your association's recognition process part of the reason?

Australia continues to face significant skills shortages, with 29 per cent of assessed occupations in national shortage in Jobs and Skills Australia's 2025 Occupation Shortage List. For a professional association, this is not simply an external policy issue to comment on from the sidelines. If your association controls or influences accreditation and skills recognition for your profession, you are already part of this story, whether as a contributor to the problem or a part of its solution. Identify which role your association holds: a designated skills assessing authority, an accreditation body under legislation, or a voluntary credential provider. Each carries different obligations and review processes.

Which rules apply to your association?

The law depends on how your association is set up. A **company limited by guarantee** follows the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and its constitution. An **incorporated association** follows its state or territory associations Act and its rules. A **registered charity** also follows the ACNC Act and the ACNC Governance Standards, and some Corporations Act rules are replaced for charities that are companies. Check your own governing documents, and get advice before decisions with legal consequences.

In this resource

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The Scale Of The National Shortage

Jobs and Skills Australia's 2025 Occupation Shortage List found 29 per cent of assessed occupations in shortage, down from 36 per cent in 2023, with shortages persisting in many professions, and many employers report ongoing difficulty recruiting skilled staff. An ageing workforce sits behind much of this, with a significant share of experienced professionals set to retire over the coming decade, carrying institutional knowledge and expertise out the door with them unless deliberate succession planning happens at the industry level, not just inside individual organisations.

The Specific, Directly Relevant Point Most Associations Miss

A striking, specific finding connects this national shortage directly to accreditation governance: CEDA research has found that nearly a quarter of permanent skilled migrants were working in a job beneath their skill level 18 months after arrival, a pattern advocates have linked in part to slow or difficult skills recognition. For professions where the relevant association controls or meaningfully influences credential recognition and accreditation pathways, connecting directly to the accreditation governance discussed earlier in this series, this is not an abstract policy failure happening somewhere else. It is a direct invitation to examine whether the association's own recognition processes are efficient and fair, or whether they are quietly contributing to skilled workers sitting outside the profession they are already qualified to practise in. An association advocating publicly for workforce pipeline solutions, while its own overseas qualification recognition process remains slow, opaque, or unnecessarily restrictive, is arguing for a solution it has not yet applied to itself.

Succession Planning Beyond The Organisation Itself

This series has already covered organisational succession planning in detail. Industry-level succession is a distinct, broader question: whether the profession as a whole has a credible pipeline of newly qualified entrants replacing the experienced practitioners approaching retirement. An association is often uniquely positioned to see this pipeline clearly across the entire profession, and well placed to advocate for the specific training, apprenticeship, or education investment the pipeline actually needs, provided its own credentialing processes are not themselves part of the bottleneck.

- Review your association's own accreditation and skills recognition pathway for efficiency and fairness, particularly for overseas-qualified professionals, before advocating publicly for national workforce solutions.
- Treat industry-level succession, the pipeline of new entrants replacing retiring experienced professionals, as a distinct strategic priority from organisational succession already discussed elsewhere in this series.
- Use the association's unique, whole-of-profession visibility to advocate credibly for specific training and pathway investment, backed by the association's own internal practice.
- Connect any workforce pipeline advocacy directly to the accreditation governance discipline discussed earlier in this series, since credibility on this issue depends on the association's own processes matching what it asks of others.
- Monitor national and sector-specific skills shortage data relevant to your profession specifically, rather than relying on general economy-wide figures that may not reflect your industry's actual position.

A profession facing a skills shortage needs more than sympathetic advocacy from its association. It needs that association to have already examined whether its own accreditation and recognition processes are part of the solution, since credible advocacy for national workforce reform starts with an association confident its own house is in order. This is one of the practical governance topics built into our Association CEO course, alongside the papers, tools and frameworks that turn the principle into your board's actual practice. [Explore the course](#)

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BOARDROOM ACTION WORKSHEET

Workforce Pipeline: Your Accreditation Process Might Be Part of the Problem

Turn the resource into evidence, a decision and an accountable next step. Keep the completed record in your association's approved board records system.

1 What is the issue or decision?

State the governance question in one clear sentence.

2 What evidence do we already have?

Record the facts, source documents and stakeholder evidence available now.

3 What evidence is still needed?

Identify the legal, regulatory, financial, member or operational information still required.

4 What is the agreed next action?

Capture the owner, timeframe and how the matter will return to the board.

Action owner	Review date	Board decision or resolution

General education, not legal, financial, tax, clinical or governance advice. Confirm specifics at the relevant primary source or with your own qualified adviser. Nexus Leadership is operated by Lipstick Consulting Pty Ltd · ABN 15 619 120 482.

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