



# NATIONAL FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE SURVEY

**REPORT**

**2026**





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# FOREWORD

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Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA) commissioned the National First Year Experience Survey in late 2025 to build a deeper understanding of how apprentices and trainees navigate the most critical stage of their training. Drawing on the voices of more than 12,000 Australian Apprentices across the country, this report provides one of the clearest national pictures we have of the first-year experience.

The findings are both encouraging and instructive. Many apprentices and trainees report positive experiences of training, supervision and workplace safety, which indicate a system with strong foundations. However, the report also shows that strong foundations do not always deliver consistent outcomes. Many still face cost-of-living pressures, wellbeing strain or uneven early support at the very point where confidence and commitment are being formed.

What stands out most is the importance of the first year. It is the period in which attrition risk is highest and where support, supervision, mentoring and clarity matter most. If we are to strengthen retention and improve the apprentice experience, our programs, policies and practices must be grounded in evidence and focused on this early stage.

As part of Australia's business chamber movement, and with the backing of Business NSW, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, ASA is committed to advancing strong, sustainable vocational education and training pathways. Furthermore, improving first-year outcomes will require coordinated leadership across industry, government, apprenticeship support services and training providers.

This report is more than a record of apprentice and trainee experiences; it is a call to act on what the evidence now shows us. By listening more closely and responding with practical and person-centred solutions, we can reduce attrition and strengthen workforce capability. Additionally helping more apprentices and trainees complete their training and build successful careers.

I would like to acknowledge the team behind this research and publication and sincerely thank the apprentices and trainees who generously shared their time and perspectives. Their voices are fundamental to this work, and they must remain central as we continue to shape a system that is more responsive and better equipped for the workforce challenges ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Xavier', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lee Xavier  
Chief Executive Officer, Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The National First Year Experience Survey was developed through a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach, drawing on expertise across psychology, research design and analysis, skills policy and marketing. This combination of perspectives was critical in ensuring the research was rigorous, relevant and grounded in the real experiences of Australian Apprentices, supported by a statistically significant sample from across Australia.

Apprenticeship Support Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land where we work and live. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present. We celebrate the stories, culture, and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of all communities who also work and live on this land.



## DANIELLE BUCKLEY

Danielle Buckley is a Registered Psychologist with extensive experience in coaching and positive psychology. She holds a Master of Applied Science in Coaching Psychology, a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology). Danielle is a member of the International Society for Coaching Psychology and International Positive Psychology Association.

Danielle has worked in Australia, Europe, the United Kingdom and Asia developing and implementing both small and large scale coaching and behavioural change programs.

In this project, Danielle provided expert psychological input into the analysis and interpretation of wellbeing data, drawing on her extensive experience in coaching psychology and behavioural change. She led the wellbeing insights underpinning this report and contributed evidence-based recommendations to strengthen future mentoring and wellbeing programs for Australian Apprentices. Her contribution builds on her long-standing collaboration with Business NSW, including her analysis of the 2017 and 2018 Skillsroad Youth Census.





### **DR NIGEL PALMER**

Dr Nigel Palmer is the Senior Policy Manager, Skills and Education at Business NSW. Nigel works at the intersection of education and industry, where he shapes policy to address the evolving needs of the workforce. With over two decades of experience in tertiary education, he holds a PhD from ANU and is a dedicated advocate for quality and innovation in education and research.

Nigel has provided guidance in the design of the First Year Experience Survey, ensuring alignment with existing industry data while incorporating new lines of inquiry. His contribution ensures the research complements current workforce and skills analysis and delivers policy-relevant insights for government and industry stakeholders.



### **MEGAN MCCARTHY**

Megan is a senior research advisor with more than 25 years' experience in market research and strategic insights. Through her independent research consultancy, Fusion Research, Megan has delivered more than 200 research projects across diverse industries including government, health, telecommunications, recruitment and training.

Megan and her team led the independent analysis of survey data for this project, providing rigorous interpretation of findings and ensuring the integrity of results. Her expertise in large-scale research and strategic insights was critical to translating the data into practical, evidence-based conclusions.

Apprenticeship Support Australia further acknowledges Amanda Wood (Business NSW), for strategic leadership of the project and campaign; Danielle Matejka (Business NSW) and Hannah Paranihi (Business NSW), for survey and data support; the broader marketing and operational teams at Business NSW, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia; and Nicole Hughes (Words by Nic) for copywriting and editorial support.



# INTRODUCTION

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The first year of an Australian Apprenticeship is a critical turning point. It is where skills are built, confidence is developed, and long-term career pathways begin to take shape. It is also the point at which Australian Apprentices are most at risk of disengaging or leaving altogether. National data from Apprenticeship Support Australia shows attrition peaks within the first 12 months (Appendix 4).

To identify retention risks, improve completion rates and support Australian Apprentices to succeed, we need a clearer picture of how Australian Apprentices are experiencing life, work and training during their first year. We need to identify where the system is working well, or where it is falling short and what we can do to fill those gaps.

The National First Year Experience Survey was developed to provide that insight.

Drawing on Apprenticeship Support Australia's national network of current and former Australian Apprentices, the survey explores the realities of the first-year experience across Australia. It examines not only workplace and training environments, but also the broader factors shaping outcomes, including financial pressures, wellbeing, and life outside of work.

This research builds on previous work, including the 2018 Skillsroad Youth Census, to better understand how the wellbeing of Australian Apprentices has evolved. Registered Psychologist Danielle Buckley analysed the results of this survey and compared the findings to the 2018 Youth Census to deliver insights on the wellbeing of Australian Apprentices.

By bringing these insights together, the report aims to inform employers, industry, support services, and government on how to improve Australian Apprenticeships and implement interventions that support Australian Apprentices to stay, progress and succeed.



**TOTAL  
POPULATION**  
**12,376**



## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was delivered online and collected responses from current and former Australian Apprentices across Australia. The survey opened on 11 November 2025 and closed on 8 December 2025. It provides a large-scale national data set on experiences, satisfaction, support needs, wellbeing and workforce outcomes.

In total 12,376 responses were completed.

Responses were collected from current and former apprentices and trainees across all states and territories, with representation across industries, employer sizes and demographic groups. In this report, we refer to this collective group as “Australian Apprentices”.

The survey explored a range of core areas, including:

- Australian Apprenticeship experience
- access to information, support and incentives
- training and education
- workplace conditions and support
- wellbeing and mental health
- retention, continuation and future intentions

The findings presented in this report focus on high-level national insights, with further analysis to be explored across specific cohorts, industries and regions in subsequent reports.

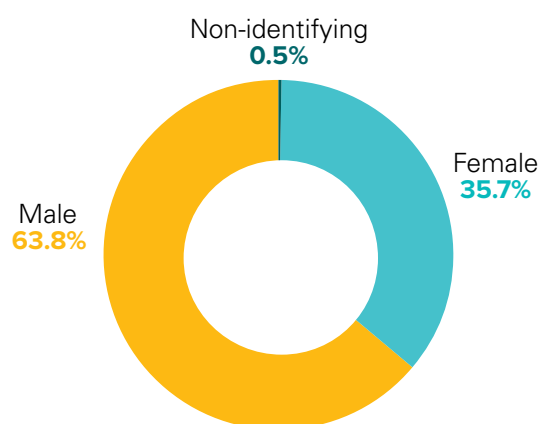
**Figure 1**

### Age



**Figure 2**

### Gender



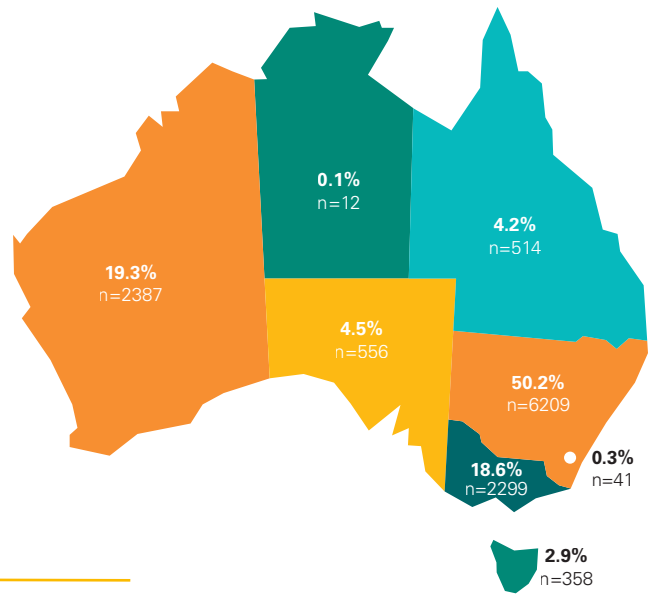
**Figure 3**

### Regional/Metro



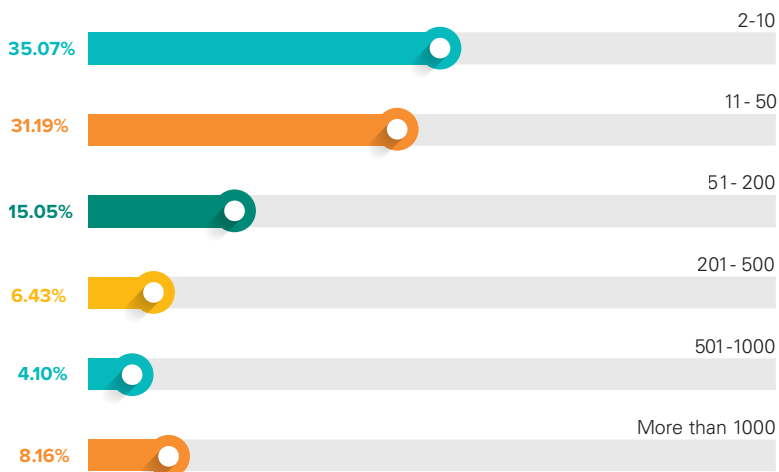
**Figure 4**

### State



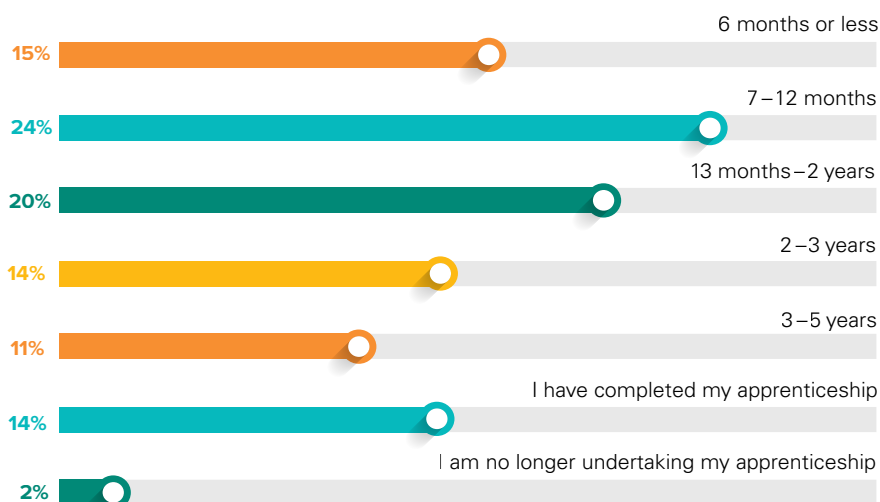
**Figure 5**

### Size of organisation



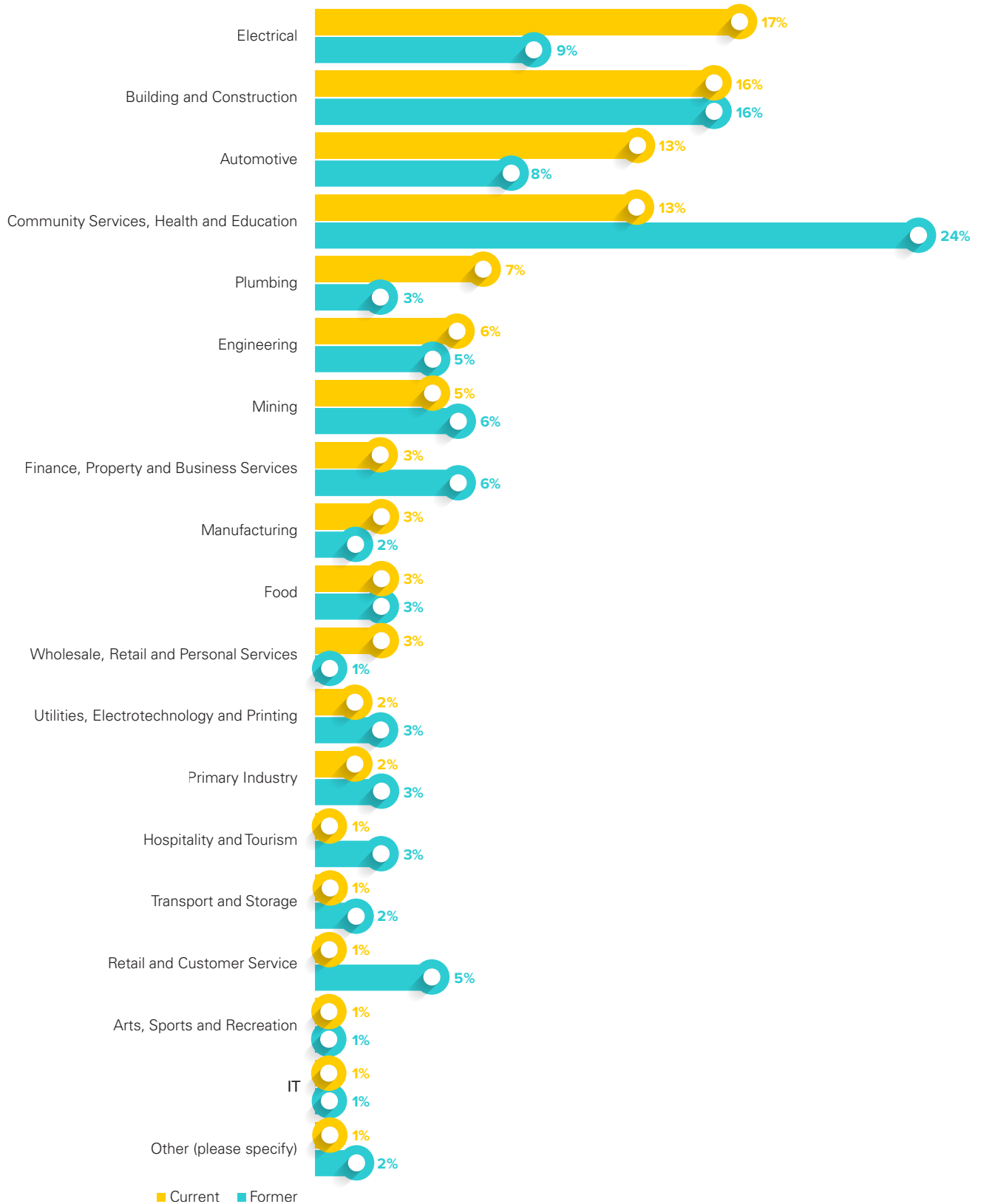
**Figure 6**

### How far along are you in your apprenticeship or traineeship journey?



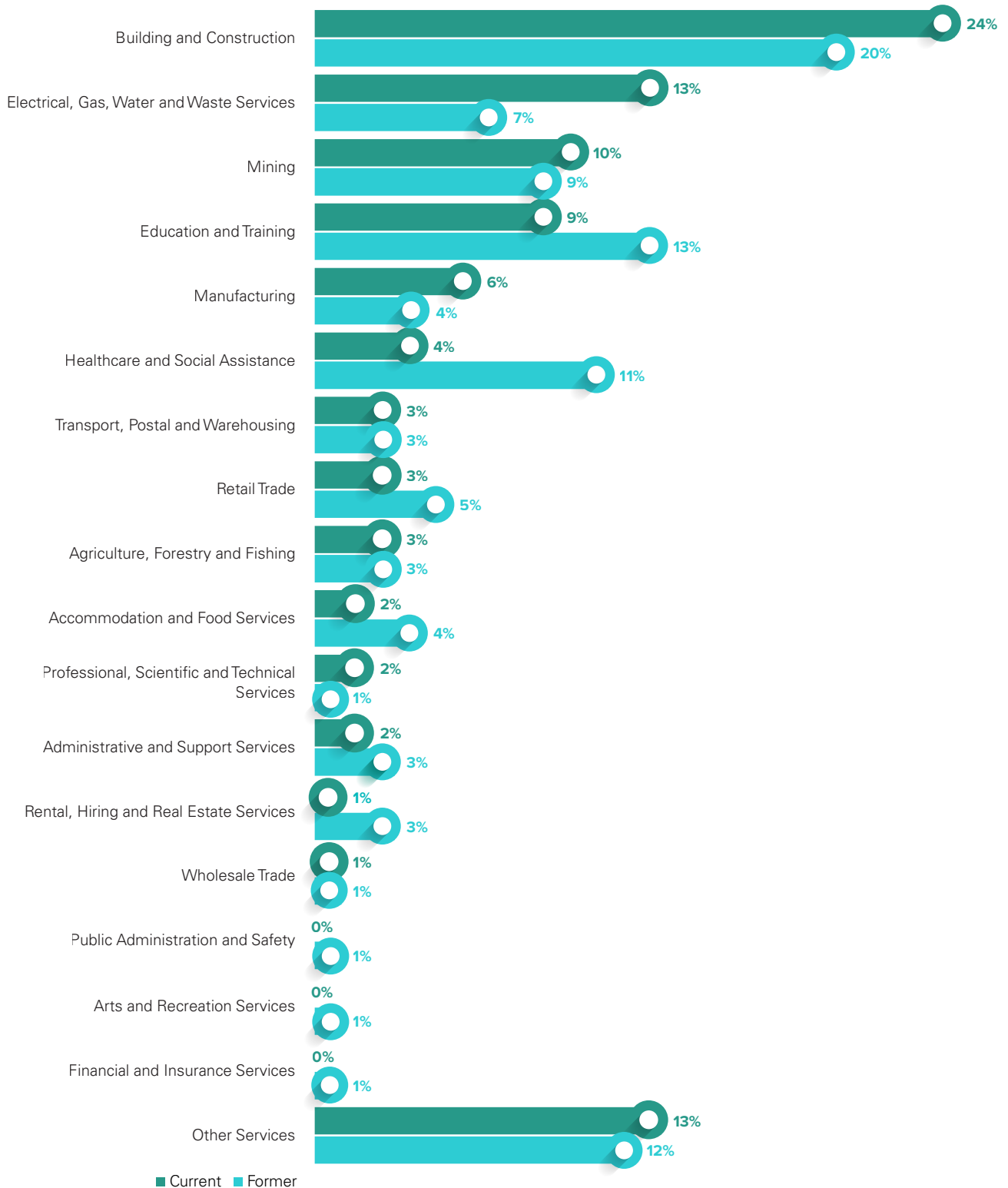
**Figure 7**

**Which area of study best describes your Australian Apprenticeship?**



**Figure 8**

**Which industry sector best describes the organisation where you were doing your Australian Apprenticeship?**





SMILE BRIGHT  
DENTAL

CORRECTIVE & ORTHODONTIC SERVICES

EVERY SMILE  
TELLS A STORY  
let's make yours amazing!

# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

## **Most employers are doing a good job**

The majority of Australian Apprentices report positive apprenticeship experiences. 75% rate on-the-job training as good or excellent, 76% rate supervision positively, and 88% received adequate mentoring. Encouragingly, over 95% feel their training has prepared them to work safely, indicating strong confidence in workplace safety practices.

However, this is not consistent for all Australian Apprentices. One in five describe their apprenticeship experience as only 'okay' and a small minority report poor experience.

These results highlight the need to improve consistency ensuring all Australian Apprentices receive the level of support, training and supervision needed to succeed.

## **Australian Apprentice experiences differ by size of organisation**

Training and mentoring is reported to be strongest in smaller organisations, indicating a loss of personalised support in larger workplaces. However, psychological safety improves with the organisation size, with Australian Apprentices reporting that they are more comfortable raising concerns.

Overall, retention risk is highest in smaller organisations with those working for businesses with less than 50 employees more likely to consider leaving. This suggests that capacity and structure matter.

## **Career advice is linked to wellbeing, and better advice could improve outcomes**

Australian Apprenticeships are most often a post-school decision, with more than half choosing this pathway after leaving school. However, only 49% of Australian Apprentices report receiving good information about all available career options at school.

Australian Apprentices who report receiving good career advice at school also report stronger mental health outcomes. And stronger mental health and wellbeing outcomes are linked to higher retention rates.

This highlights the role of career guidance not only in shaping pathways, but in supporting confidence and preparedness during the transition into work and training. It presents clear opportunity to strengthen how career pathways are presented in schools. In particular, reinforcing the importance of young people being exposed to all career pathways and supported to make informed decisions before leaving school.

## **Most Australian Apprentices want to stay, but early support is critical**

Around three in four Australian Apprentices want to stay in their apprenticeship. Importantly, retention is influenced by more than pay alone. Factors such as workplace support, wellbeing and the overall experience play a significant role, with lower wellbeing linked to a higher likelihood of considering leaving.

This reinforces the importance of strong early support, particularly in the first year, to build confidence, capability and long-term retention.

## **Some cohorts face greater challenges and need more targeted support**

While most Australian Apprentices report positive experiences, outcomes are not consistent across all groups. Australian Apprentices living with disability report significantly higher mental health impacts (70% compared to 50% overall). They also report lower levels of support, including mentoring (82% vs 88%), supervision (75% vs 77%) and feeling supported in their first year (73% vs 83%).

First Nations Australian Apprentices and Women in Trades both report elevated wellbeing challenges, with 55% and 58% respectively experiencing mental health impacts, both above the overall average.

These findings highlight the importance of continued targeted support for cohorts experiencing more complex challenges. While existing initiatives are supporting many Australian Apprentices, the results suggest there is still an opportunity to strengthen early intervention, wellbeing support and culturally or individually responsive approaches to improve outcomes.

## **Earning while learning remains a key strength**

More than half of Australian Apprentices report cost-of-living pressures, reflecting broader economic conditions. Despite this, the ability to earn an income while gaining practical skills remains one of the most valued aspects of an apprenticeship.

This balance is central to the value of the apprenticeship pathway, combining immediate income with long-term skill development. This should remain a key consideration in policy and design of Australian Apprenticeships.

## **Mentoring is a key strength and a key opportunity**

Mentoring is a clear strength across the apprenticeship system, with 88% of current and former Australian Apprentices reporting they received adequate mentoring and 76% rate supervision positively.

Australian Apprentices place high value on mentors who are approachable, supportive and clear in their guidance. However, they consistently identify a need for more structured support including regular check-ins, clearer expectations and better alignment between work and learning.

There is also an opportunity to strengthen mentoring beyond the workplace, including the role of independent or external support. Australian Apprentices highlight the importance of broader support to help navigate challenges outside the job, including wellbeing, cost of living and balancing work and life.

## **Apprenticeships provide stability in a time of rising pressure**

While the wellbeing of Australian Apprentices has declined overall in the post-pandemic environment, Australian Apprentices generally report largely positive experiences.

Around half of Australian Apprentices report experiencing mental health challenges, and more than half are impacted by cost-of-living pressures. This reflects broader societal and economic pressures rather than issues unique to apprenticeships.

Experiences are broadly consistent across states and between regional and metropolitan areas, with the most noticeable differences linked to age and life stage. Younger Australian Apprentices are more likely to report uncertainty about whether they will enjoy the job or industry (32% vs 16% of those aged 25+) and are slightly more likely to have considered leaving (29% vs 23%), likely reflecting earlier career decision-making and competing life choices.

In contrast, financial pressure increases significantly with age and independence. Australian Apprentices aged 25 and over are substantially more likely to report high cost-of-living impact (66% vs 45% of those under 25), likely reflecting greater financial responsibilities such as housing costs, mortgages and supporting families. Older Australian Apprentices also report slightly higher levels of mental health impact, suggesting financial and life-stage pressures intensify over time.

## **Looking ahead**

These insights present a nuanced picture of the first-year apprenticeship experience, one that is broadly positive, but marked by important variations in quality, consistency and outcomes.

While the system provides strong foundations, the findings also highlight where experiences differ based on factors such as employer size, individual circumstances and access to early support and career guidance. The following report explores these themes in greater depth, examining the drivers of Australian Apprentice satisfaction, wellbeing and retention, and identifying where targeted interventions can improve outcomes across the system.

# APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS

The pathway into an apprenticeship is shaped by how opportunities are accessed, when decisions are made and the information available at key points.

Informal networks, personal interests, and access to information during key decision-making years all influence how Australian Apprentices enter the system. These factors also highlight where gaps in access and career advice may be shaping outcomes and where stronger support can improve apprenticeship or traineeship experiences.

## How Australian Apprentices enter the system

Apprenticeships are most commonly secured through informal channels, with employer connections and personal networks playing a central role.

In this sample, around one-third of Australian Apprentices secured their apprenticeship through their employer, with a further quarter relying on family or friends. This is significantly higher than those using job boards or school-based pathways (Figure 9).

This highlights an important dynamic within the apprenticeship system. While informal networks and employer engagement are important and can open doors, they can also limit access, creating barriers for those without connections.

However, how Australian Apprentices enter matters less than what happens in the workplace during the first year. While entry pathways vary, outcomes are shaped more by early workplace experience. This aligns with broader labour market research showing that initial aspirations can be reshaped rapidly by lived experience and organisational factors.

**Figure 9**

### How did you find your apprenticeship or traineeship role?





"Options  
weren't really  
explained."

## The decision pathway

Apprenticeship decisions are shaped by a wide range of influences and are most commonly made after school.

More than half of current Australian Apprentices (54%) and former Australian Apprentices (67%) decided to pursue their apprenticeship after finishing school (Figure 10).

While this suggests improving awareness of the Australian Apprenticeship pathway, it is still not consistently positioned as a clear or planned pathway during schooling. Instead, many apprentices arrive at this option later, often after exploring other pathways or entering the workforce.

The pathway into an Australian Apprenticeship also varies. For many, the decision is driven by a personal passion or hobby (29%), while nearly a quarter are influenced by family and friends (22%) (Figure 11).

Employer influence shows a more notable shift. Former Australian Apprentices were more likely to be influenced by an employer or potential employer (30%) compared to current Australian Apprentices (20%). This points to a growing reliance on self-directed decision-making, with Australian Apprentices navigating pathways based on personal interest and informal networks, rather than clear, structured entry points.

Parents or guardians also play a comparatively smaller role, suggesting that apprenticeship decisions are increasingly shaped by individual interests, direct exposure to work and the people they know, rather than by traditional parental guidance alone.

Together, these findings point to a gap at a critical stage of decision-making and reinforce the importance of high-quality career guidance during school years. Without clear, consistent exposure to apprenticeship pathways during school, many Australian Apprentices are making decisions later and with less structured support.

## EXPERT INSIGHT

### DANIELLE BUCKLEY

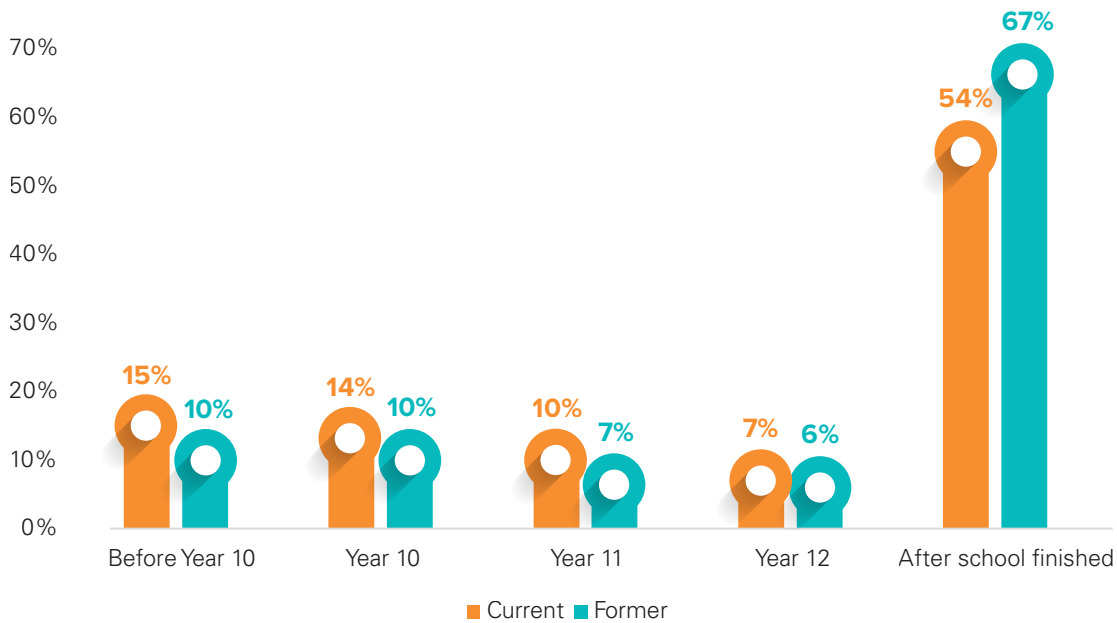
Career advice is not consistently providing young people with a clear understanding of the expectations and realities of apprenticeship pathways. While many Australian Apprentices arrive at an apprenticeship through family and friend connections, their knowledge and expectations are often limited and may not reflect the realities of their new roles. As a result, the transition into an apprenticeship can involve misaligned expectations, uncertainty and avoidable stress. Building stronger connections from pre-employment and throughout the life cycle of an apprenticeship is critical to ensure Australian Apprentices have opportunities to set realistic expectations, address concerns, identify support pathways before issues escalate. These foundations are particularly important for cohorts who may already face additional barriers to inclusion or support.



**“Every career option was provided all at once. It was confusing and unmemorable.”**

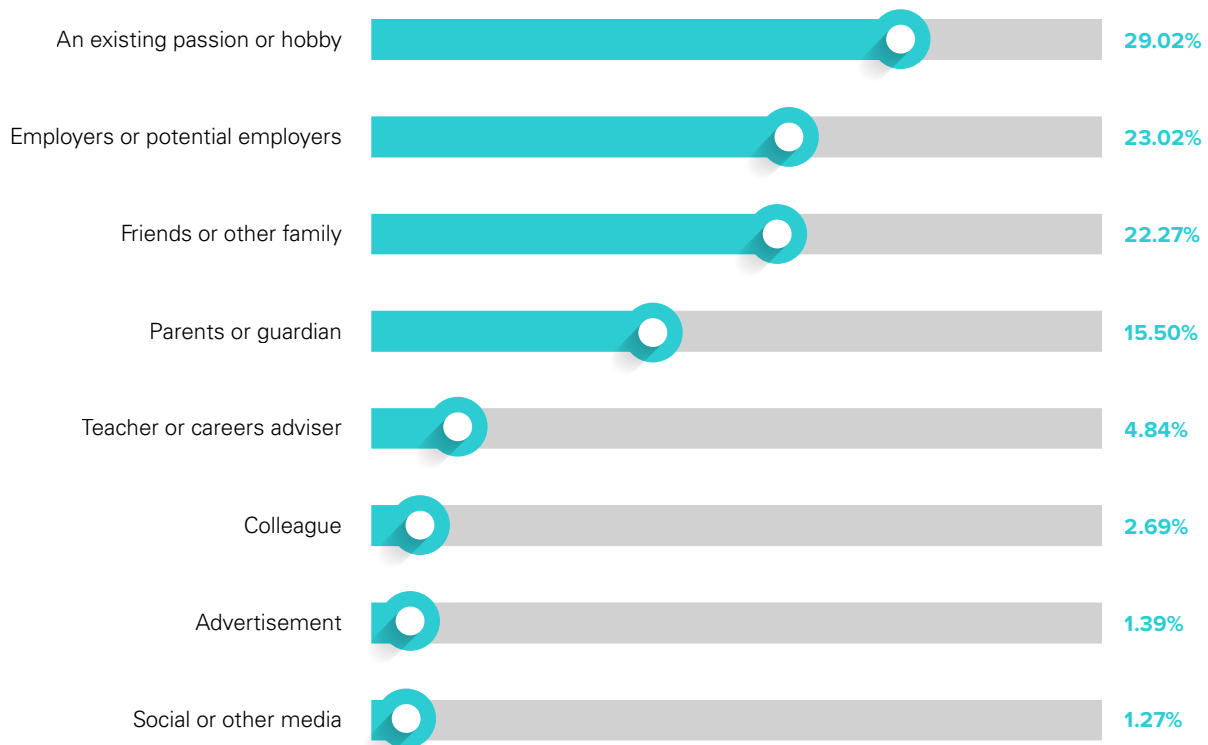
**Figure 10**

**At what stage did you first decide you wanted to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship?**



**Figure 11**

**Who or what was the biggest influence on your decision to do an apprenticeship or traineeship?**



## Career advice shapes both pathways and wellbeing outcomes

Career advice plays a critical role in how Australian Apprentices enter the system and how they experience it once they begin.

Just under half of Australian Apprentices (49%) report receiving good information about all available career pathways at school (Figure 12).

Many describe a narrower career guidance experience, feeling like they were being directed toward a particular pathway (often university), rather than being supported to explore the full range of post-school options. While others wished they had received more comprehensive information about all the pathways available to them.

Although some respondents reported receiving information on multiple career pathways, they described it as overwhelming, high-level, and lacking practical connection to personal interests, capabilities or real-world job outcomes.

This suggests that career advice is not consistently equipping young people with a clear understanding of the apprenticeship pathways. This lack of consistent, balanced career advice means many are making decisions without a clear understanding of the opportunities available through an Australian Apprenticeship.

The impact extends beyond decision-making. Those who report receiving good career advice at school also report stronger mental health outcomes, including lower levels of anxiety, sadness or worry (43%) which is markedly lower than the overall average (Figure 42).

In contrast, those who felt under-informed or constrained report significantly higher mental health impacts. For example, 58% of Australian Apprentices who wished they had known more about all available options report experiencing anxiety, sadness or worry.

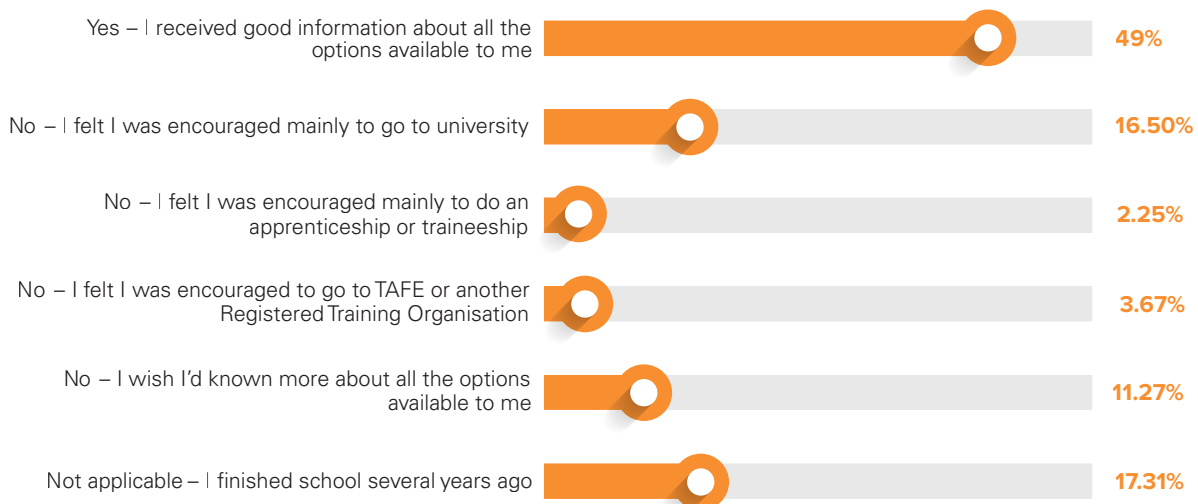
Similarly, those who felt they were steered toward a particular pathway also report elevated levels of mental health challenges, reinforcing the impact of limited or unbalanced guidance.

This indicates that access to clear, balanced and comprehensive career advice early on, not only supports more informed decisions but also helps Australian Apprentices feel more confident and prepared as they transition into work and training.

Together, these findings position career advice as both a pathway and a wellbeing intervention. This presents a clear opportunity to improve outcomes through more consistent, informed and balanced guidance in schools.



**“We were always advised university as the smoothest most promising option.”**

**Figure 12****During your time at school, did you receive good advice about the different career pathways you could take - such as university, apprenticeships or traineeships, and school - based apprenticeships****Getting a good start: expectations and reality**

Before they begin, Australian Apprentices are already thinking about the realities of the role. The most common concerns relate to pay, balancing work, study and personal life, working for a good employer and finding the right employer and industry fit.

For former Australian Apprentices, balancing work and life was their primary concern (47%), followed by pay (43%) (Figure 13). For current Australian Apprentices, the order is reversed, with 47% identifying pay as their top concern, followed by balancing work, study and personal life (41%). This reflects the broader impact of rising cost-of-living pressures.

Once they begin, most Australian Apprentices report being clear about what is expected of them during the first year. However, the transition into the workplace for some is not always straightforward.

While around 7 in 10 Australian Apprentices feel clear about expectations, 21% say this was only sometimes the case, and 8% say expectations were not clear. This gap is more pronounced for some cohorts. Women in Trades and Australian Apprentices living with disability report lower levels of clarity (63%), compared to the overall average, while Clean Energy Australian Apprentices report higher levels of clarity (74%) (Figure 14).

This presents a clear opportunity to strengthen consistency in early role clarity, onboarding and communication. Especially for Women in Trades and Australian Apprentices living with Disability. Getting these elements right can help apprentices build confidence quickly and reduce the risk of disengagement and retention risk in the first year.

When it comes to employer expectations, Australian Apprentices consistently value fair pay and recognition, opportunities to learn and progress and access to coaching and mentoring (Figure 15). However, above all, a positive and friendly workplace culture stands out as the most important factor, identified by more than 40% of Australian Apprentices.

Getting the early experience right is critical. When expectations are clear and the workplace environment is supportive, Australian Apprentices are more likely to build confidence, stay engaged and continue through their apprenticeship.

**Figure 13**

**Before you started, what was your biggest concern about taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship? (select all that apply)**

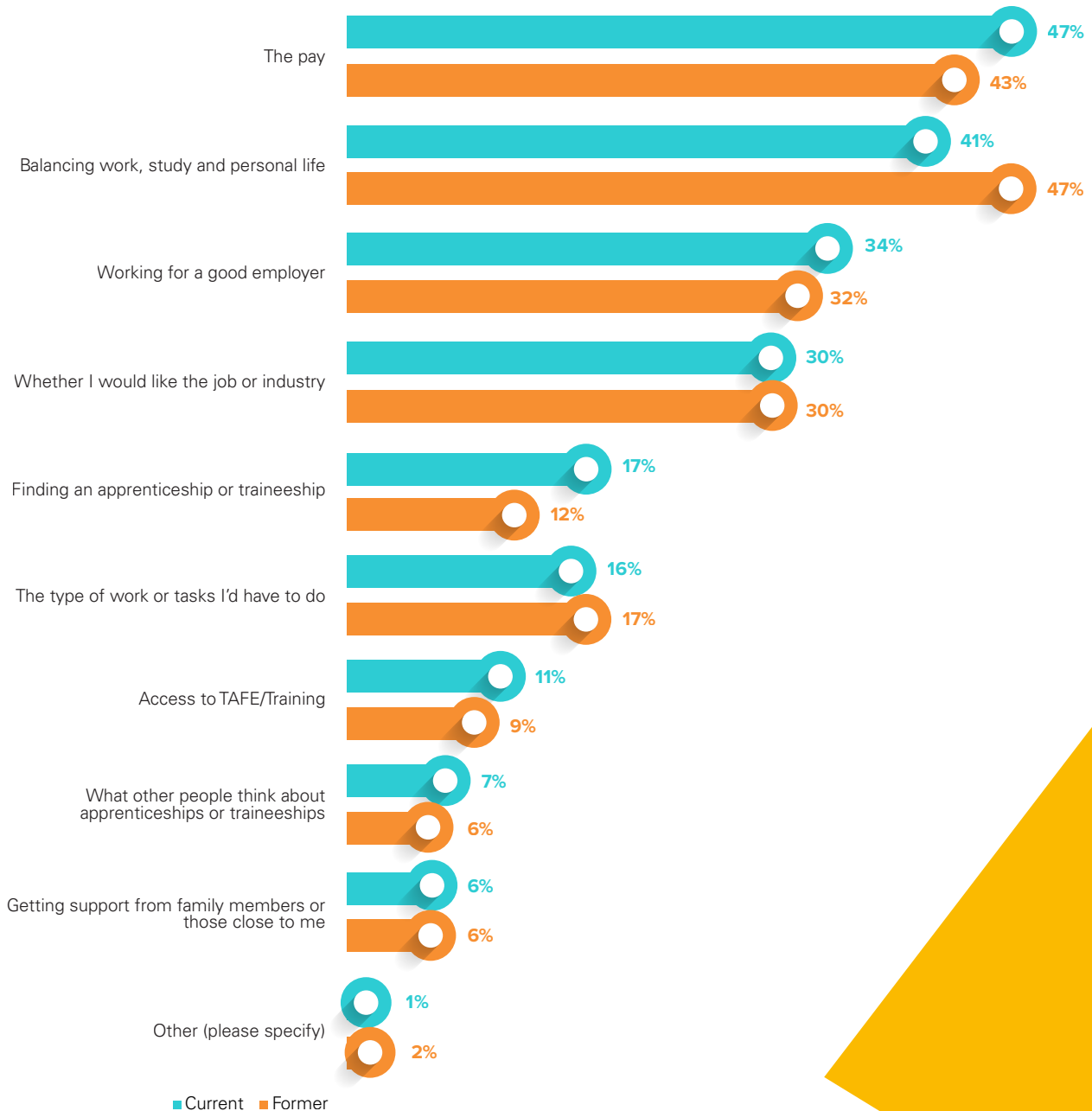


Figure 14

### Workplace training & quality - current cohort differences

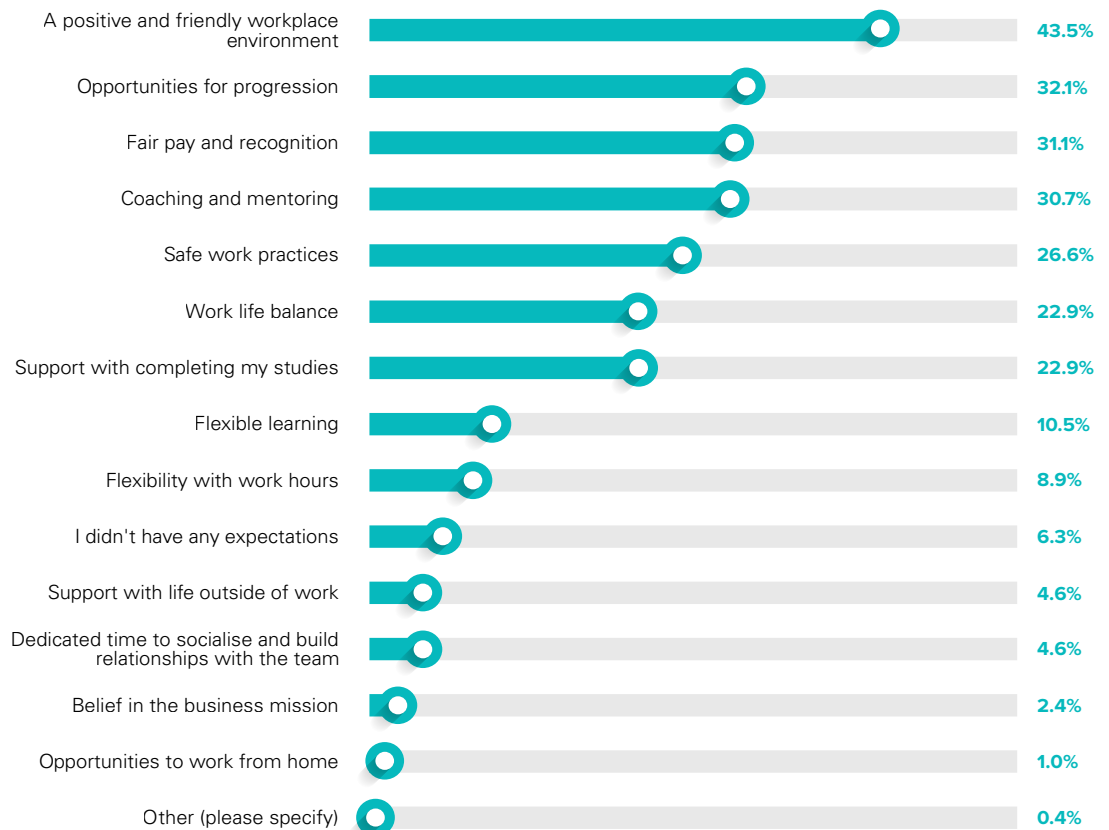
|                                       | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Employed by SMEs (<200 employees)     | 82%     | 83%      | 78%↓          | 61%↓            | 79%          | 80%                         |
| Less than 10 apprentices              | 84%     | 85%      | 84%           | 68%↓            | 79%↓         | 83%                         |
| Clear expectations first year         | 71%     | 73%      | 69%           | 63%↓            | 74%          | 63%↓                        |
| Good training                         | 76%     | 77%      | 76%           | 73%             | 81%↑         | 72%↓                        |
| Good progress                         | 77%     | 79%      | 77%           | 76%             | 82%↑         | 68%↓                        |
| Training prepared them to work safely | 97%     | 98%      | 97%           | 96%             | 98%          | 94%↓                        |

|                                      |                                      |                                       |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ↓ Significantly lower positive score | ↓ Significantly lower negative score | ↑ Significantly higher positive score | ↑ Significantly higher negative score |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

Figure 15

### When you started your apprenticeship or traineeship what were the most important things you expected from your employer? (select up to three)



# THE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Training sits at the core of the apprenticeship experience.

It is where skills are developed, knowledge is applied, and confidence is built through a combination of on-the-job learning and formal training delivered through Registered Training Organisations.

At the same time, Australian Apprentices are navigating broader challenges, including wellbeing, cost of living and balancing work and life. All these factors can influence how they engage with training and progress in their role.

## Most Australian Apprentices report positive experiences

Training outcomes across the apprenticeship system are strong, with most Australian Apprentices reporting positive experiences.

76% of current Australian Apprentices rate training as excellent or good (Figure 16). This indicates a high level of satisfaction with the quality of learning and development provided in the workplace.

Australian Apprentices benefit from hands-on, practical learning that is directly connected to real work. This allows them to build skills in context, apply knowledge immediately and develop capability through experience.

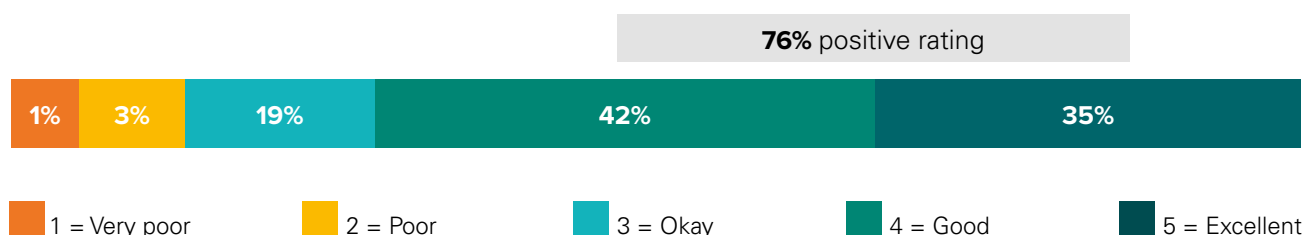
This model of employment-based training is a key strength of the apprenticeship pathway. It supports both technical skill development and the transition into the workforce, helping Australian Apprentices build confidence, independence and a sense of progress early in their careers.

Perceptions around the quality of training by current Australian Apprentices vary by state. Victoria, ACT and New South Wales tend to perform above the national average, while Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania trend lower across measures such as training adequacy and progress toward qualifications (Figure 17). These differences reflect variation in delivery and coordination rather than training capability. Australian Apprentices in some states highlight challenges in alignment between employers and training providers, indicating a system-level opportunity to improve consistency.

Variation of current Australian Apprentices is also evident across cohorts. Australian Apprentices living with disability and Women in Trades report lower levels of training satisfaction, 72-73% compared to the 76% overall average (Figure 14). In contrast, the Clean Energy sector reports stronger outcomes, sitting around five percentage points above the average at 81%, indicating more consistent early support structures.

Figure 16

## How would you rate the adequacy of your training at work? Current Apprentices





**Figure 17**

### State-based differences in training experiences

Note: Results based on current apprentices only

|                                                                                                      | OVERALL | NSW<br>n=6,209 | QLD<br>n=514 | ACT<br>n=41 | VIC<br>n=2,299 | WA<br>n=2,387 | SA<br>n=556 | NT<br>n=12* | TAS<br>n=358 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Adequate training                                                                                    | 76%     | 78%            | 69%          | 79%         | 80%            | 71%           | 76%         | 71%         | 70%          |
| Good + progress with formal qualification                                                            | 78%     | 81%            | 71%          | 79%         | 80%            | 73%           | 75%         | 71%         | 69%          |
| Training prepared to work safely                                                                     | 97%     | 98%            | 97%          | 97%         | 97%            | 97%           | 98%         | 86%         | 99%          |
| Reasons for considering leaving 'Quality of training at TAFE or other training provider'             | 4%      | 4%             | 4%           | 0%          | 3%             | 4%            | 3%          | 0%          | 9%           |
| Most important thing to improve quality 'Better quality training at TAFE or other provider'          | 9%      | 8%             | 8%           | 14%         | 9%             | 10%           | 11%         | 29%         | 10%          |
| Biggest challenges 'Poor organisation or coordination between my employer and the training provider' | 4%      | 5%             | 11%          | 2%          | 6%             | 10%           | 9%          | 0%          | 9%           |

## Workplace safety: capability vs culture

Workplace safety induction and training is well embedded, supported by structured induction, clear processes and ongoing reinforcement.

97% of all Australian Apprentices surveyed report their training prepared them to work safely, highlighting strong confidence in safety capability across Australian Apprenticeships (Figure 18).

This is particularly important for Australian Apprentices entering the workforce for the first time, helping to build confidence and safe behaviours early.

Where issues do arise, they are more often driven by workplace culture than a lack of training or capability.

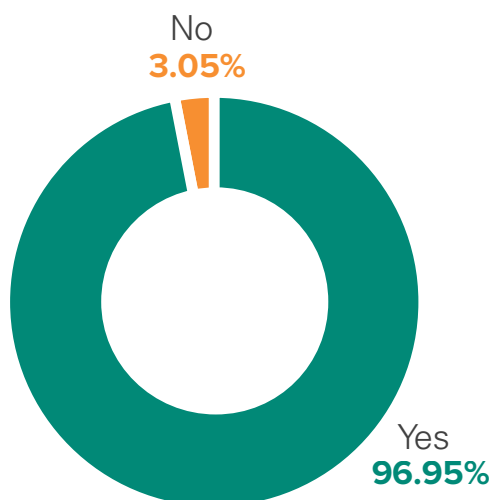
Australian Apprentices consistently point to:

- time and productivity pressures leading to corners being cut
- unsafe behaviours being normalised through poor leadership
- being expected to take on tasks too early without sufficient supervision.

Strengthening workplace culture, leadership behaviours and reinforcement of safe practices, will be key to ensuring safety training is consistently applied in practice.

**Figure 18**

**Do you feel that the training you received has prepared you to work safely at your workplace? (For example having a proper safety induction, understanding safety procedures, and access to PPE.)**



### Small improvements can have a meaningful impact

The findings show that overall, most employers are doing a good job with training (Figure 19). For those employers where support is less consistent or those who are not supporting their Australian Apprentices, more targeted improvements could make a meaningful difference to outcomes.

While only 5% of Australian Apprentices rate training as poor or very poor, one in five describe their training as only “okay”, indicating variability in the quality of on-the-job learning.

Australian Apprentices value clear communication, structured learning and opportunities to develop skills through meaningful work. Where these elements are present, Australian Apprentices are more likely to feel supported, build confidence, stay engaged and continue with their apprenticeship.

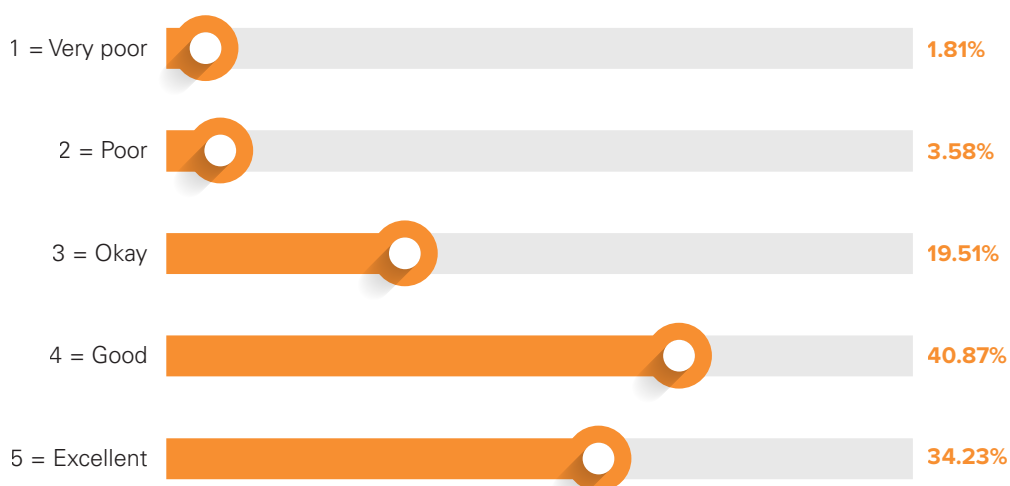
A smaller group of Australian Apprentices experienced more significant challenges including:

- limited or inconsistent support
- misalignment between work and training
- being used primarily for low-skill tasks.

This reflects a more complex picture. While the system is working well for many, improving consistency across workplaces remains a key opportunity to reduce disengagement and early exit.

**Figure 19**

#### How would you rate the adequacy of your training at work?



## Training providers play a critical role in the apprenticeship experience

Off-the-job training delivered through Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) is a core component of the apprenticeship pathway.

This training provides the theoretical knowledge that underpins on-the-job learning, helping Australian Apprentices understand not just how to do the work, but why it is done that way. When effectively aligned with workplace experience, it reinforces skill development, builds capability and supports progression through the apprenticeship.

Strong alignment between formal training and workplace tasks leads to higher engagement and a clearer understanding of how learning applies in practice. It also strengthens confidence, as Australian Apprentices can directly connect theory to real-world application.

Australian Apprentices highlight the importance of:

- clear communication between training providers and employers
- structured learning that complements workplace experience and
- flexibility to balance study with work demands.

These elements support a more cohesive and effective learning experience.

Access to and alignment of formal training is not always uniform for all Australian Apprentices. Some report delays in securing a place in TAFE or other RTO courses after commencing their apprenticeship. In some cases, this results in extended periods (of up to a year) without formal off-the-job training.

This gap can impact engagement and progression. Without structured learning alongside workplace experience, Australian Apprentices may feel they are not developing as expected, increasing the risk of disengagement in the early stages.

The impact also extends to employers. Delayed training can shift formal learning into later years. This creates challenges for workforce planning and productivity when more experienced Australian Apprentices are required to spend time away from the workplace.

These findings highlight the importance of timely access to training and stronger alignment between training providers and employers to ensure Australian Apprentices receive a consistent and well-sequenced learning experience.



**“In my first year I didn’t complete any TAFE blocks...this has made it slow and stressful”.**



**"I would have liked more supervised time with a tradesperson before being sent out on my own."**

## Quality supervision underpins learning and retention

Supervision plays a critical role in shaping the apprentice experience and transition into the workplace.

Most Australian Apprentices report positive supervision experiences, with around three quarters of Australian Apprentices rating supervision as good or excellent (Figure 20). Strong supervision provides day-to-day guidance, helps set clear expectations and supports Australian Apprentices to apply their skills safely and effectively in real work environments.

The quality of supervision of current Australian Apprentices varies depending on the workplace. Australian Apprentices who are the only apprentice, or those who work in very small organisations (under 10 staff) report stronger supervision, 80% vs 77% overall (Figure 24). This reflects the benefits of more direct access to experienced colleagues and closer oversight.

Access to supervision varies across apprentices. Some Australian Apprentices report being expected to work unsupervised too early, with fewer opportunities to ask questions, receive feedback or be corrected. This can impact confidence and increase the risk of errors, particularly in the early stages of an apprenticeship.

Supervision also varies across cohorts. Current Australian Apprentices living with disability report slightly lower levels of supervision (75% vs 77% overall), while Women in Trades also report lower levels of early clarity and support (Figure 21). In contrast, supervision stands out as a strength for Clean Energy Australian Apprentices, with 86% rating supervision as good or excellent, significantly higher than the overall cohort. This suggests more consistent supervisory practices or stronger on-the-job oversight within this sector.

Supervision is also closely linked to retention. Australian Apprentices who report adequate or excellent on-the-job training, learning from experienced colleagues and feeling supported at work are significantly less likely to consider leaving (Figure 35). This reinforces the importance of supervisory capability and structured workplace learning in supporting both performance and retention.

Strengthening supervision through clearer expectations, regular check-ins and access to experienced guidance will be critical to improving confidence, safety and retention outcomes across Australian Apprenticeships.

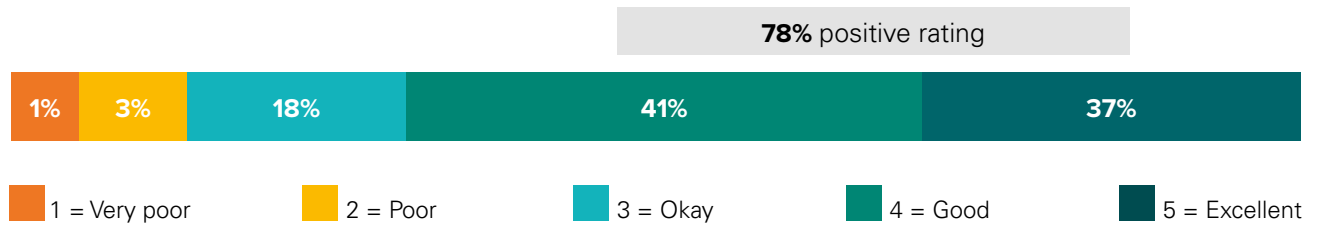
## EXPERT INSIGHT

### DANIELLE BUCKLEY

While there is no 'one size fits all' approach, better practice supervision commonly involves employers or supervisors taking a coaching approach. Providing regular, structured and scheduled one to one conversations that provide space for Australian Apprentices to reflect on what they are learning, how they are experiencing work, and how they are adjusting to the transition. Quality mentoring and supervision develops satisfaction, self-acceptance and autonomy which drive wellbeing, performance and retention. They are especially critical in the early months of an apprenticeship.

**Figure 20**

**Most current Australian Apprentices rate workplace supervision as good or excellent**



**Figure 21**

**Supervision, mentoring & formal support - Current cohort differences**

|                                            | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Good supervision at work                   | 78%     | 79%      | 79%           | 78%             | 86%↑         | 75%                         |
| Good communication with supervisor/manager | 92%     | 92%      | 91%           | 89%             | 94%↑         | 87%↓                        |
| Received adequate mentoring at work        | 90%     | 90%      | 89%           | 88%             | 93%          | 82%↓                        |

## Mentoring is a key strength and a key opportunity

Mentoring helps apprentices build confidence, navigate challenges and stay engaged throughout their apprenticeship.

Mentoring is a clear strength, with 90% of current Australian Apprentices reporting adequate support (Figure 21). Australian Apprentices place high value on mentors who are approachable, supportive and clear in their guidance. These relationships provide a trusted point of contact, helping apprentices ask questions, build capability and navigate both workplace and personal challenges with confidence.

However, not all Australian Apprentices experience the same level of mentoring support. This is more pronounced for Australian Apprentices living with disability who report lower levels of mentoring support (82% vs 90% overall), while Women in Trades also report slightly lower levels of early support (88%).\*

Mentoring outcomes are broadly aligned across states, although Western Australia reports slightly lower results (88% vs 90% overall), a small but statistically significant difference. This suggests some variation in how mentoring is delivered and provides an opportunity to strengthen more structured mentoring across workplaces.\*

Across the country, Australian Apprentices identify a need for more structured and ongoing support over time, including regular check-ins, clearer guidance and continued engagement (Figure 23).

Mentoring also plays an important role beyond the workplace. Australian Apprentices highlight challenges related to wellbeing, cost of living and balancing work and life, factors that can impact engagement but are not always addressed through workplace mentoring alone.

These findings highlight an opportunity to extend mentoring beyond priority cohorts. While specialist groups often receive structured, ongoing support, many other Australian Apprentices rely primarily on digital touchpoints rather than personalised guidance.

Expanding access to all would provide more reliable support in the early stages, strengthening confidence, engagement and retention.

## 5 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN MENTORING

Australian Apprentices highlighted clear opportunities to improve mentoring and strengthen early support:

1

### More regular check-ins

Consistent touchpoints to track progress, address challenges and provide guidance.

2

### Clearer expectations and direction

Better communication around roles, responsibilities and what success looks like.

3

### More structured mentoring

Moving from informal support to more planned and consistent mentoring approaches.

4

### Better alignment between work and learning

Ensuring tasks and training reinforce each other to support skill development.

5

### Stronger support beyond the workplace

Access to additional support to navigate challenges such as wellbeing, cost of living and work-life balance.

\*Further insights on the experiences of Australian Apprentices living with disability, Women in Trades and state-based Australian Apprentices will be explored in a dedicated report.

## EXPERT INSIGHT

DANIELLE BUCKLEY

Mentoring questions to ask your Australian Apprentice.

1

What's one thing you did well today?

2

What's one thing you learned?

3

What's one thing you wish you did differently and why?

4

What goal are you working towards this week?

5

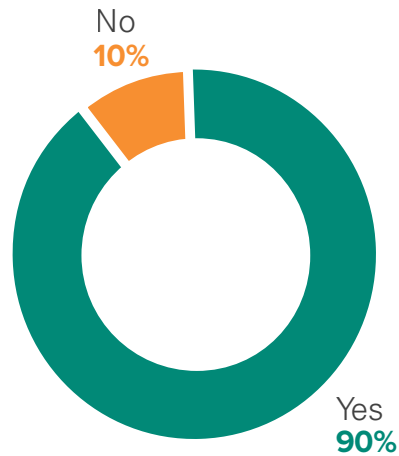
What could get in your way of reaching your goal?



"I would have liked regular check ins. Being told how I'm doing and what I need to focus on."

**Figure 22**

**Do you feel like you received adequate mentoring at work from your employer throughout your apprenticeship or traineeship?**



**Figure 23**

### Summary Comparison by Cohort

Note: Based on current apprentices unless otherwise stated.

\* indicates total sample (current + completed).

| METRIC                                          | OVERALL | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | FIRST NATIONS | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY | REGIONAL |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Comfortable raising concerns                    | 92%     | 92%             | 93%          | 91%           | 86%                         | 93%      |
| Have a workplace friend                         | 92%     | 89%             | 92%          | 92%           | 81%↓                        | 92%      |
| Adequate mentoring                              | 90%     | 88%             | 93%          | 89%           | 82%↓                        | 90%      |
| Felt cared and supported in first year          | 83%     | 81%             | 88%          | 83%           | 73%↓                        | 84%      |
| Level of supervision (good +)                   | 77%     | 78%             | 86%↑         | 79%           | 75%                         | 79%      |
| Impacted by cost of living*                     | 55%     | 56%             | 55%          | 59%           | 55%                         | 54%      |
| Mental health impact (sadness, anxiety, worry)* | 50%     | 58%↑            | 44%          | 55%↑          | 70%↑                        | 50%      |
| Wellbeing Score*                                | 115     | 115             | 118↑         | 109↓          | 113                         | 115      |
| Only apprentice at workplace                    | 24%     | 15%↓            | 16%↓         | 27%↑          | 26%                         | 25%      |
| Secured role close to home                      | 79%     | 71%↓            | 81%          | 79%           | 81%                         | 82%      |
| ASA support usage                               | 82%     | 100%↑           | 82%          | 80%           | 79%                         | 82%      |
| Left apprenticeship/traineeship                 | 2%      | 0%              | 0%           | 3%            | 0%                          | 2%       |
| Thought about leaving                           | 27%     | 26%             | 26%          | 29%           | 33%↑                        | 25%      |
| Communicates well with supervisor               | 92%     | 89%             | 94%          | 91%           | 87%↓                        | 92%      |



### **Organisation size shapes the apprenticeship experience**

Apprenticeship experiences vary depending on the size of the organisation, with different strengths and challenges emerging across small, mid-sized and larger workplaces.

Most survey participants work in organisations with 50 or fewer employees (Figure 5) and alongside fewer than 10 other Australian Apprentices (Appendix 1). In these environments, Australian Apprentices rely heavily on supervisors for training quality, guidance and safety oversight.

For current Australian Apprentices, smaller organisations often provide stronger day-to-day experiences (Figure 24). They benefit from closer working relationships, more direct supervision and more personalised support, which can support early learning and confidence.

As organisations grow, this level of individualised support can become less consistent. Australian Apprentices in larger workplaces are more likely to report reduced access to direct supervision and day-to-day guidance, reflecting the challenges of maintaining personalised support at scale.

At the same time, larger organisations offer different strengths. Australian Apprentices report higher levels of psychological safety, feeling more comfortable raising concerns and speaking up, likely supported by more formal structures and processes.

These differences are also reflected in retention outcomes. Retention risk is highest in very small organisations (2–10 employees) and lowest in mid-sized organisations (51–500 employees), suggesting that both capacity and organisational structure play an important role in supporting Australian Apprentices over time.

These findings highlight that no single organisational model delivers all elements of the experience equally. Smaller workplaces provide strong day-to-day support, while larger organisations offer greater structure and opportunities. Strengthening consistency across both by supporting smaller employers with structure and ensuring larger organisations maintain quality supervision will be key to improving Australian Apprentice outcomes.

**Figure 24**

**Current apprentice experiences differ by size of organisation**

|                                              | OVERALL | 2-10 | 11-50 | 51-200 | 201-500 | 501-1,000 | MORE THAN 1,000 |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|------|-------|--------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| Considered leaving                           | 27%     | 29%↑ | 29%↑  | 22%↓   | 21%↓    | 25%       | 25%             |
| Adequate training                            | 76%     | 79%↑ | 75%↓  | 73%↓   | 74%     | 75%       | 73%↓            |
| Supervision rated good +                     | 77%     | 80%↑ | 75%↓  | 75%↓   | 76%     | 78%       | 80%             |
| Adequate mentoring                           | 90%     | 91%↑ | 89%   | 89%    | 87%↓    | 90%       | 87%↓            |
| Comfortable raising concerns                 | 92%     | 91%↓ | 93%   | 93%    | 94%     | 95%↑      | 92%             |
| Workplace friend                             | 92%     | 89%↓ | 93%↑  | 92%    | 92%     | 93%       | 92%             |
| Felt cared and supported during first year   | 83%     | 84%↑ | 82%↓  | 83%    | 83%     | 83%       | 83%             |
| Communicates well with supervisor            | 92%     | 92%  | 91%↓  | 92%    | 90%     | 91%       | 91%             |
| Mental health impact (sadness/anxiety/worry) | 50%     | 46%↓ | 52%↑  | 48%    | 47%     | 48%       | 48%             |
| Cost of living impact (quite/extreme)        | 55%     | 52%  | 54%   | 56%    | 53%     | 56%       | 59%             |
| Only apprentice at work                      | 24%     | 47%  | 15%   | 9%     | 6%      | 4%        | 3%              |

## Financial pressure and the value of earning while learning

Cost-of-living pressures are impacting the apprenticeship experience, reflecting broader economic conditions.

More than half of Australian Apprentices (55%) surveyed report being quite or extremely affected by cost-of-living pressures, making it a common challenge across the cohort (Figure 25).

The impact is not evenly distributed. First Nations Australian Apprentices (60%) and Australian Apprentices Living with Disability (58%) are more likely to report high levels of financial strain, while Women in Trades (56%) and Clean Energy Australian Apprentices (55%) align with the overall result (Figure 26).

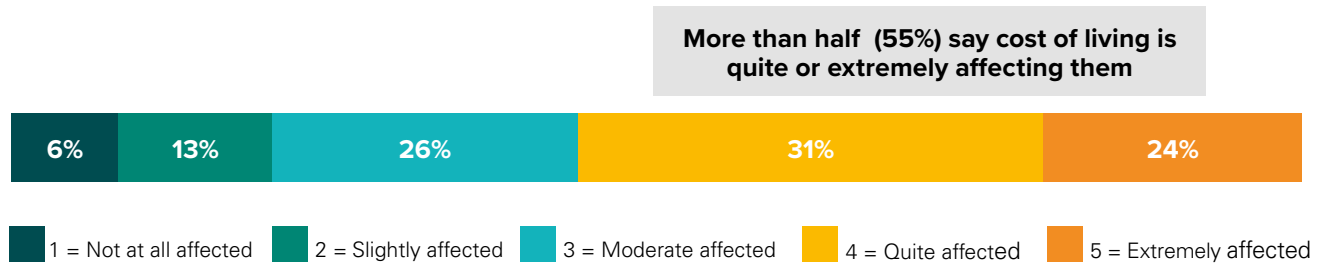
Financial pressure also increases with independence. Australian Apprentices living independently are more than twice as likely to report being extremely affected (31% vs 13% of those living with parents or guardians), highlighting the role of housing and life stage in financial stress (Figure 28).

These pressures influence behaviour, with many Australian Apprentices adjusting spending or relying on informal living arrangements to manage costs.

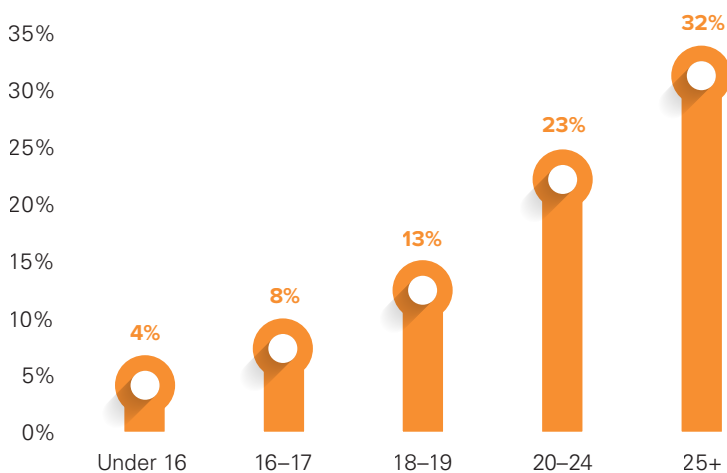
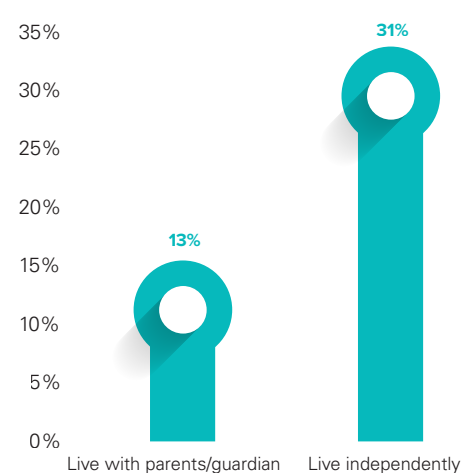
Despite this, the ability to earn while learning remains a key strength of the apprenticeship pathway. Getting paid while learning (42%) and gaining practical, on-the-job experience (35%) are among the most valued aspects, alongside becoming qualified (50%) (Figure 30).

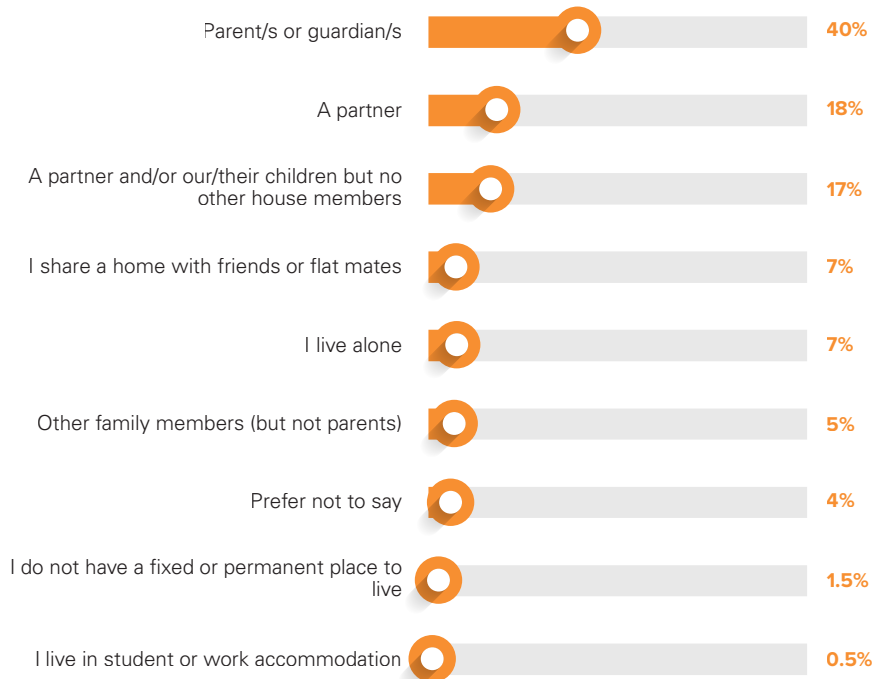
This reinforces the appeal of the “earn while you learn” apprenticeship model. One of the only pathways that combines paid employment with structured training and nationally recognised qualifications on completion.



**Figure 25****Cost of living and financial pressures****Figure 26****Cost of living and financial pressures - current cohort differences**

|                                            | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Quite/extremely affected by cost of living | 55%     | 54%      | 60%           | 56%             | 55%          | 58%                         |

**Figure 27****Australian Apprentices extremely affected by cost-of-living****Figure 28****Cost-of-living pressure increases as Apprentices move into independent living**

**Figure 29****All Australian Apprentices living situation****Figure 30****In your view, what are the best things about an apprenticeship or traineeship? (select up to three).**

## Early support makes the difference

The first year of an apprenticeship is a defining period, where early support shapes confidence, engagement and retention.

Most current Australian Apprentices report positive early experiences, with 83% saying they felt cared for and supported during their first year (Figure 24). This reflects a strong foundation across the system, where many Australian Apprentices are able to settle into the workplace and begin building confidence.

However, early support is not consistent for everyone. Around one in six Australian Apprentices either did not feel supported or were unsure, highlighting variability in how support is delivered during the early stages.

Where support is lacking, the impact on retention is clear. Among former Australian Apprentices, 16% identify an unsupportive manager, supervisor or workplace as the primary reason for leaving, making it the top driver of attrition. Among current Australian Apprentices, 27% have considered leaving, with 12% citing an unsupportive manager, supervisor or workplace as a key factor.

Across cohorts, the differences in early support are more pronounced. Clean Energy Australian Apprentices report higher levels of first year support (88% vs 83%), while Women in Trades track slightly lower (81% vs 83%) indicating some early-stage support gaps. Australian Apprentices living with disability report significantly lower levels of support (73% vs 83%) and social connection (81% vs 92%), making them the highest priority group for targeted support strategies.\*

Australian Apprentices consistently point to the importance of structured mentoring, regular feedback and clear guidance in the early months.

\*Further insights on the experiences of Clean Energy Australian Apprentices, Women in Trades and Australian Apprentices living with disability will be explored in subsequent reports.

These elements are foundational to building capability and supporting long-term retention.

Around three in four Australian Apprentices want to stay in their apprenticeship, reinforcing that the pathway is working for most (Figure 33). However, retention is shaped by more than pay alone. Workplace support, wellbeing and overall experience all play a role, with lower wellbeing linked to a higher likelihood of considering leaving (Figure 34).

This highlights the importance of strong early support in the first year to build confidence, capability and long-term retention.

## EXPERT INSIGHT

### DANIELLE BUCKLEY

During this time, Australian Apprentices are navigating a major transition and often do so without a clear understanding of the expectations. Transitions involve significant adjustments and uncertainty. Australian Apprentices are learning how to work, how to balance their new environment with their existing life responsibilities, and how to manage the expectations associated with learning new skills and working with often unfamiliar people. Clear onboarding, regular check-ins and visible progression markers can help sustain engagement over time. So too can ensuring Australian Apprentices have all the information they need relating to financial support and incentives. This period can be emotionally demanding as Australian Apprentices navigate a completely new stage of life.

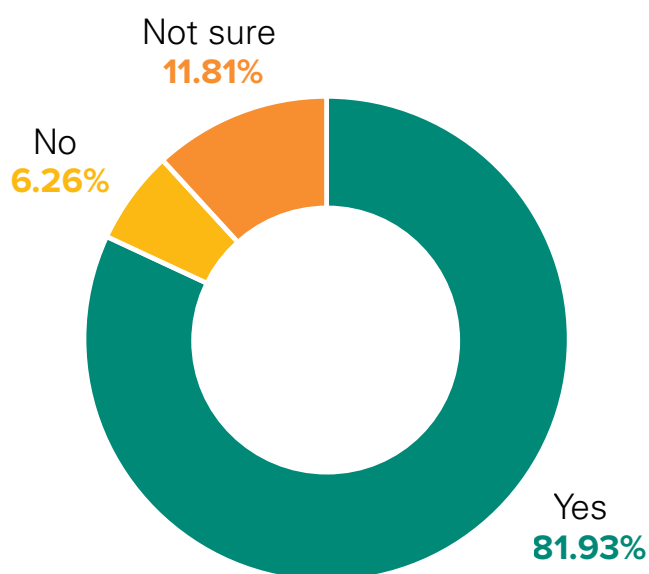
**Figure 31**

**Workplace culture, belonging and psychological safety cohort differences for current Australian Apprentices**

|                                            | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Comfortable raising a concern              | 92%     | 93%      | 91%           | 92%             | 93%          | 86%↓                        |
| Consider a colleague a friend              | 92%     | 92%      | 92%           | 89%             | 92%          | 81%↓                        |
| Felt cared for and supported in first year | 83%     | 84%      | 83%           | 81%             | 88%          | 73%↓                        |

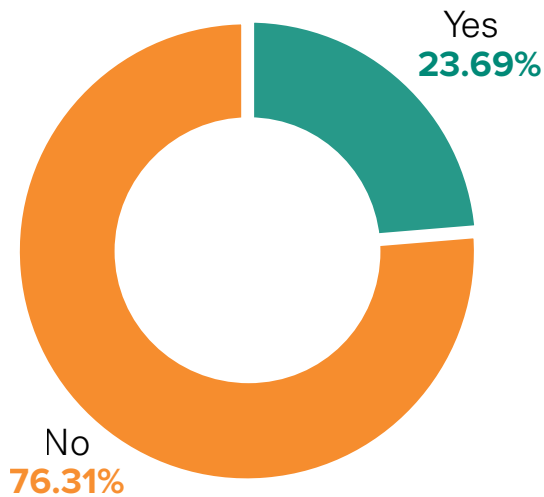
**Figure 32**

**Workplace support is/was positive for most current and former Australian Apprentices**



**Figure 33**

**Consideration of leaving apprenticeship**



**Figure 34**

**Key drivers of retention risk for current Australian Apprentices**

Relative increase in likelihood of retention risk (%)





# WELLBEING

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Apprenticeships and traineeships are about more than skills and qualifications. An Australian Apprentice's experience of support, connection, purpose and wellbeing can significantly influence how they perform, engage and ultimately whether they remain in their apprenticeship.

While most Australian Apprentices report positive experiences, the findings highlight important opportunities to strengthen wellbeing, particularly through workplace support, connection and early intervention.

## **Wellbeing matters for retention and performance**

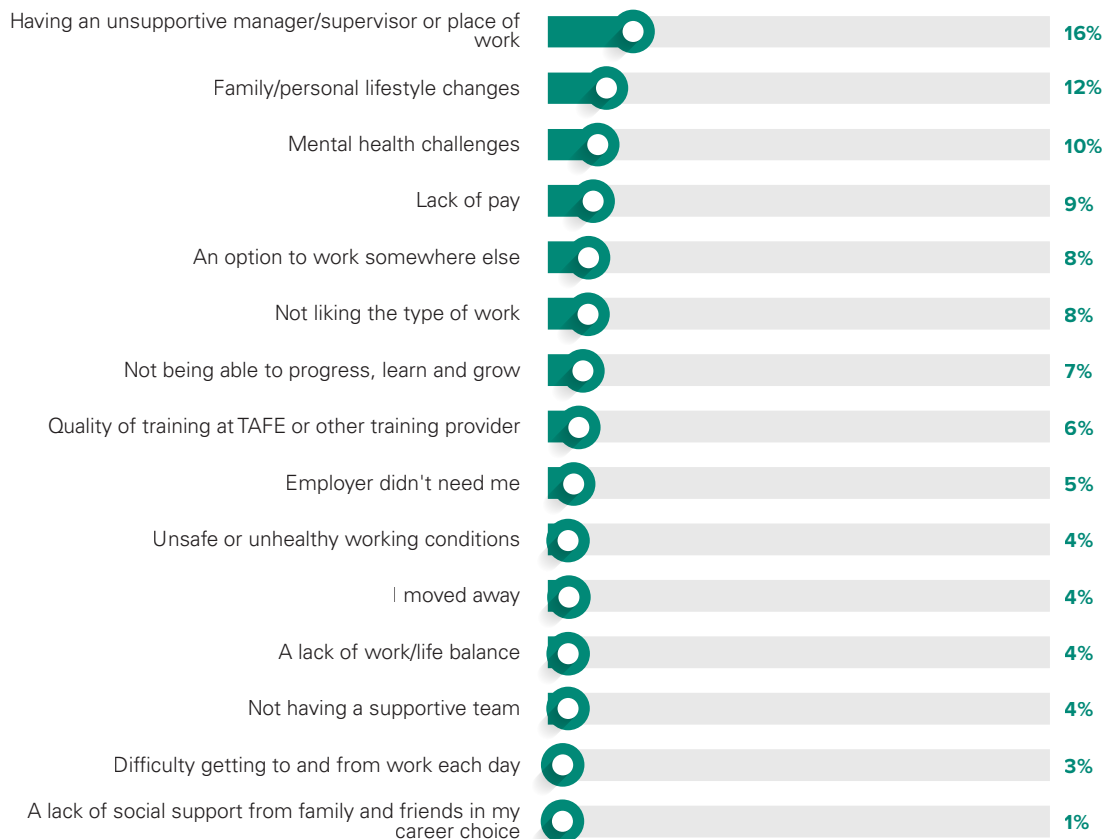
Wellbeing is the experience of feeling good, functioning well and being content with life. In the data set, changes in wellbeing-related experiences are associated with the largest proportional shifts in risk. Having an unsupportive manager/supervisor or place of work, family/personal lifestyle challenges and mental health challenges being the top three reasons why Australian Apprentices withdrew from their apprenticeship, with almost 40% citing one of these three reasons (Figure 36). This indicates that wellbeing is not just nice to have, but highly influential and when invested in, can achieve higher performance, stronger relationships, improved safety, reduced mental health risk and long-term workforce sustainability.

Around three in four Australian Apprentices indicate they want to stay in their apprenticeship, signalling a largely motivated cohort. However, the data shows that retention is influenced by more than pay alone. Workplace support, wellbeing and an Australian Apprentice's overall experience plays a significant role, with lower wellbeing linked to a higher likelihood of considering leaving (Figure 35). Life satisfaction, self acceptance and autonomy are key drivers of wellbeing, helping explain why an Australian Apprentice's day-to-day experience, and how they feel at work is so closely linked to their wellbeing (Figure 38).

Workplaces are not neutral environments.

They actively influence how people feel, function, and perform. Employers need to create opportunities for inclusion and pathways to seek help when issues arise. Often, such investments do not require significant financial resources, but rather a small commitment of time. To further support the feelings of stress, anxiety and worry Australian Apprentices bring to work, employers are encouraged to begin with building relationships and creating psychologically safe workplaces, where they feel able to raise concerns and discuss stressors openly.

Investing in wellbeing domains yields lasting and meaningful outcomes. We know that when employers invest in fostering a sense of progression, creating an enjoyable workplace, providing opportunities for learning and development, and building supportive environments, they intentionally create workplaces where wellbeing is prioritised, and completion is more likely.

**Figure 35****Key protective drivers for retention****Figure 36****Reasons for withdrawal among former Australian Apprentices**

## The foundations of wellbeing are under pressure

Fifty per cent of all respondents report experiencing sadness, anxiety, or worry in the past year that has significantly impacted their ability to study, live, or work (Figure 37).

Wellbeing at work extends beyond simply feeling happy. In fact, it has been shown to drive performance, prevent illness, and support the development of sustained careers. In these results, wellbeing also emerged as a critical driver of retention risk. When compared to the 2018 Skillsroad Youth Census dataset, we observed a slight overall decrease in wellbeing. However, it must be noted that there is a difference in the age range of participants, as this survey includes respondents beyond the 18-24 age cohort of the 2018 Skillsroad Youth Census.

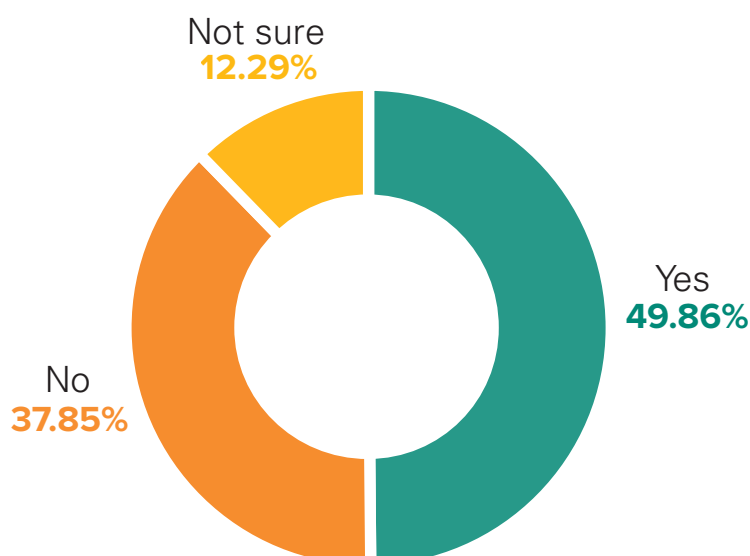
The biggest decline in wellbeing domains was in vitality, 7.6 in 2018 vs 6.9 in 2025 and clear thinking, 8.7 vs 7.9 in 2025, (Figure 38).

Vitality refers to how alive and vital one feels at work, while clear thinking is the cognitive foundation of wellbeing. It is the ability to evaluate information reliably, recognise biases, and manage mental clutter. It is understandable that as stress increases, relationships decline, support becomes inconsistent, and an Australian Apprentice's experience becomes less enjoyable, this impacts both vitality and clear thinking.

This decline, highlights the need for employers to invest in evidence-based wellbeing initiatives that improve an Australian Apprentice's overall workplace experience. This can be done by investing in mentoring to support relationships and career progression, supervision to manage conflicting priorities and stressors, and further education for employers in effective leadership and workplace practices. Together with creating a psychologically safe environment, investments in these areas have the potential to impact not only these domains and overall wellbeing. Even small changes in these domains can have a significant impact.

**Figure 37**

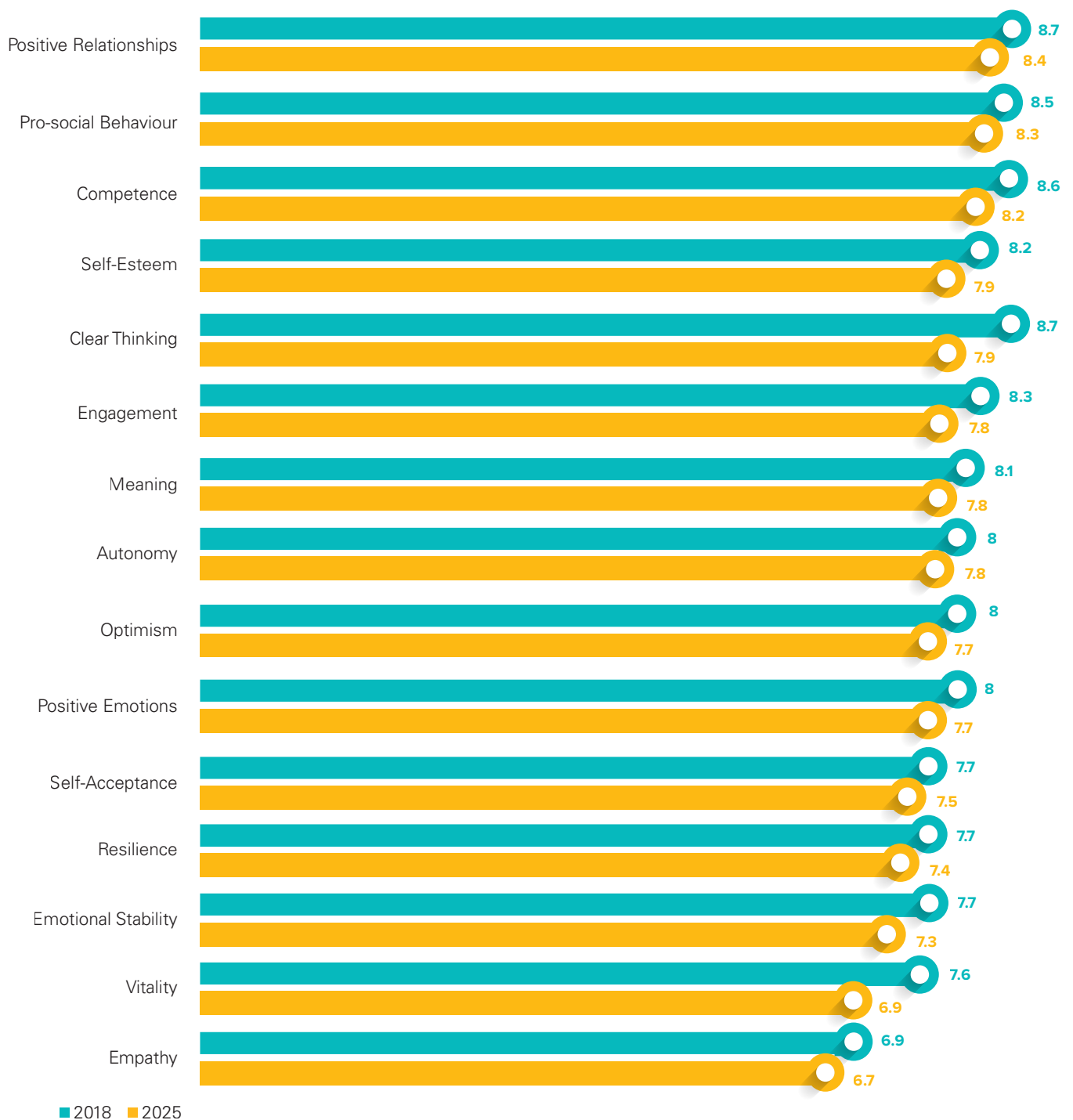
**In the past twelve months, have you experienced sadness, anxiety or worry that has significantly impacted how you study, live or work?**



Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA) commissioned the Skillsroad 2018 Youth Census to gain a deeper understanding of how youth living in Australia were experiencing life as they prepared for, and transitioned to, life after school. More than 30,000 people between 18 and 25 years participated, and 74% of respondents cited undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship post school. The dataset in Figure 38 below compares apprentice and trainee responses only.

**Figure 38**

### Changes in wellbeing since 2018



## Managing mental health

Work provides more than an income. It offers identity, routine, a sense of purpose, connections and opportunities to build skills (de Neve & Ward, 2025)\*. How connected people feel to their work is strongly shaped by their day-to-day experiences and these experiences impact the level of stress they feel. We can see from the data, that both current and former Australian Apprentices 'most commonly expected a positive and friendly workplace environment'.

Half (50%) reported experiencing sadness, anxiety or worry in the past year that had a significant impact on their ability to study, work or manage daily life (Figure 39), while more than half identified cost of living pressures as affecting their apprenticeship experience (Figure 40). This reflects broader mental health trends and economic pressures affecting young people in Australia. According to Beyond Blue\*, in Australia 1 in 8 men experience depression, while 1 in 5 experience anxiety, and about 1 in 6 women will experience depression and 1 in 3 will experience anxiety in their lifetime. Stigma and low help seeking behaviour has been attributed to some of the factors that influence these numbers.

In our data, experiences of worry, anxiety and distress are strongly associated with retention risk. Taken together, this suggests that on any given day a proportion of Australian Apprentices arrive at work feeling stressed, worried, anxious or dissatisfied with their lives. Additionally, mental health impacts were not evenly distributed across the cohorts.

Australian Apprentices Living with Disability reported the highest rate of mental health impacts (70%),

followed by Women in Trades (58%) and First Nations Australian Apprentices (55%), compared with the overall average of 50% (Figure 39). As a starting point, workplaces need to be aware that this is a lived and very real experience.

As highlighted earlier, there are several protective factors that workplaces can actively employ to improve how Australian Apprentices manage stress and the rise of mental health issues. Feeling socially connected at work, such as having a workplace friend, and working in an environment where people feel cared for and supported are important for wellbeing and protect against mental health issues. This might look like opportunities for fun, and social inclusion such as having lunch together or playing sport together.

Giving Australian Apprentices opportunities to appropriately use and develop their skills is also critical. Australian Apprentices don't want to be used as low-cost labour and want to feel part of a supportive workplace culture.

Employers also play a critical role in ensuring workplaces are free from discrimination and inequality, and that Australian Apprentices know where to go and who to turn to when they need help or support. Having these supports available in a non-judgemental way is critical to apprentice wellbeing and support.

\*De Neve, J.-E., & Ward, G. (2025). Why workplace wellbeing matters: The science behind employee happiness and organizational performance. Harvard Business Review Press

\*[beyondblue.org.au](https://beyondblue.org.au)

**Figure 39**

### Mental Health and wellbeing of Australian Apprentices by cohort

|                                                            | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Experienced sadness, anxiety or worry impacting daily life | 50%     | 50%      | 55%           | 58%             | 44%          | 70%↑                        |
| Wellbeing score                                            | 115     | 115      | 109↓          | 115             | 118↑         | 113                         |



## Connection drives wellbeing outcomes

Connection is a critical driver of workplace wellbeing and performance. High quality connections, whether through supervision, mentoring, peer support, or informal team interactions, drive wellbeing, impacting retention, mental health and a culture of psychological safety. Overall, workplace relationships were viewed positively. 90% of Australian Apprentices reported receiving adequate mentoring, 77% rated their supervision as good or excellent, and most (83%) reported feeling supported during their apprenticeship (Figure 40). These findings suggest many employers are creating environments where Australian Apprentices can build confidence, develop skills and establish positive workplace relationships.

However, these headline results mask important differences across the cohorts. Australian Apprentices Living with Disability reported lower levels of mentoring (82%), lower satisfaction with supervision (75%), and were less likely to feel supported during their first year (73%). Women in Trades and First Nations Australian Apprentices also reported lower wellbeing outcomes than the overall cohort, suggesting that the quality of workplace connection and support is not experienced equally by all Australian Apprentices.

This variation highlights that the quality of the training environment, and specifically how people are supported, managed and included in the workplace is inconsistent. The lower-than-average experiences reported by First Nations Australian Apprentices, Women in Trades and those Living with Disability suggest that current approaches to on-the-job training and supervision are not meeting the diverse needs of all cohorts. Social connection is also significantly weaker when Australian Apprentices work alone, with lower likelihood of having a workplace friend and reduced comfort raising concerns (Figure 41).

Strong connections foster psychological safety by creating environments where apprentices feel able to raise issues without fear of negative consequences. There is an opportunity to support employers to implement good practice in developing high-quality connections. For example, by supporting them to develop capabilities such as coaching, active listening, non-judgemental questioning and mentoring, which are inconsistently delivered, yet are critical skills that drive both wellbeing and performance.

**Figure 40**

### Key metric cohort differences

Results based on current apprentices

|                                              | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Level of Supervision (good +)                | 77%     | 78%      | 79%           | 78%             | 86%↑         | 75%                         |
| Adequate mentoring                           | 90%     | 90%      | 89%           | 88%             | 93%          | 82%↓                        |
| Comfortable raising concerns                 | 92%     | 93%      | 91%           | 92%             | 93%          | 86%↓                        |
| Felt cared for and supported in first year   | 83%     | 84%      | 83%           | 81%             | 88%          | 73%↓                        |
| Has a workplace friend                       | 92%     | 92%      | 92%           | 89%             | 92%          | 81%↓                        |
| Only apprentice at workplace                 | 24%     | 25%      | 27%↑          | 15%↓            | 16%↑         | 26%                         |
| Mental health impact (sadness/anxiety/worry) | 50%     | 50%      | 55%↑          | 58%↑            | 44%          | 70%↑                        |
| Wellbeing score / 150                        | 115     | 115      | 109↓          | 115             | 118↑         | 113                         |
| Cost-of-living impact (quite/extreme)        | 55%     | 54%      | 59%↑          | 56%             | 55%          | 59%↑                        |
| Secured role close to home                   | 79%     | 82%      | 71%           | 71%↓            | 81%          | 81%                         |
| ASA support usage                            | 82%     | 82%      | 80%           | 100%↑           | 82%↑         | 79%                         |

**Figure 41**

### Being the only Australian Apprentice weakens social connection

Results based on current apprentices

|                                                | OVERALL | ONLY APPRENTICE |
|------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Considered leaving                             | 27%     | 27%             |
| Adequate training                              | 76%     | 78%↑            |
| Supervision rated good +                       | 77%     | 80%↑            |
| Adequate mentoring                             | 90%     | 91%             |
| Comfortable raising concerns                   | 92%     | 90%             |
| Workplace friend                               | 92%     | 88%↓            |
| Felt cared for and supported during first year | 83%     | 83%             |
| Communicates well with supervisor              | 92%     | 92%             |
| Mental health impact (sadness/anxiety/worry)   | 50%     | 47%↓            |
| Cost of living impact (quite/extreme)          | 55%     | 52%↓            |

## **Mentoring and supervision strengthens wellbeing**

Mentoring and structured supervision are central to creating environments where Australian Apprentices feel supported. Those who rated their progress as excellent, and feel they are learning from experienced people and mentors are amongst the least likely to consider leaving (Figure 35). Survey results indicate that Australian Apprentices want direct, hands-on mentoring while performing real tasks, particularly early in their apprenticeship, rather than being expected to learn by observation or work independently too soon.

These learning opportunities help them build confidence, ask questions, and find meaning and purpose in their chosen pathway. Periods of significant change are also times of increased mental health risk, and high-quality mentoring and supervision act as protective factors by validating emotions and dispelling concerns, offering guidance rather than judgement, and supporting the development of confidence and self-efficacy.

Survey results further emphasised the importance of good supervision and adequate mentors (Figure 40) and a respectful workplace culture where asking questions is encouraged and mistakes were treated as learning opportunities. Perceptions of adequate or excellent on-the-job training and learning from experienced colleagues are consistently associated with lower retention risk (Figure 35), reinforcing the importance of supervisory capability and structured learning in the workplace.

## **The impact of career advice on mental health outcomes**

Higher anxiety, sadness or worry was experienced by those who felt under-informed or constrained. In particular, those who wish they'd known more about all career options available to them (Figure 42). Being steered towards a single pathway at school is linked to higher mental health impacts, reinforcing the value of balanced, comprehensive career conversations during school.



Figure 42

### Access to quality career advice at school is linked to better mental health outcomes

|                                                                                        | EXPERIENCED ANXIETY, SADNESS OR WORRY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS | HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED ANXIETY, SADNESS OR WORRY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS | NOT SURE | DIFFERENCE (YES COMPARED TO OVERALL) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Yes – I received good information about all the options available to me                | 43%                                                         | 45%                                                                  | 12%      | -7%                                  |
| No – I felt I was encouraged mainly to go to university                                | 54%                                                         | 35%                                                                  | 12%      | 4%                                   |
| No – I felt I was encouraged mainly to do an apprenticeship or traineeship             | 52%                                                         | 34%                                                                  | 13%      | 2%                                   |
| No – I felt I was encouraged to go to TAFE or another Registered Training Organisation | 54%                                                         | 30%                                                                  | 15%      | 4%                                   |
| No – I wish I'd known more about all the options available to me                       | 58%                                                         | 26%                                                                  | 16%      | 8%                                   |
| Not applicable – I finished school several years ago                                   | 50%                                                         | 39%                                                                  | 11%      | 0%                                   |

Figure 43

### Wellbeing challenges in specific cohorts rated out of 10

|                        | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Empathy                | 6.7     | 6.7      | 6.6           | 6.8             | 6.6          | 7.0                         |
| Vitality               | 6.9     | 6.8      | 6.0↓          | 6.8             | 7.2          | 6.9                         |
| Emotional Stability    | 7.3     | 7.3      | 6.6↓          | 6.9             | 7.7↑         | 7.2                         |
| Resilience             | 7.4     | 7.4      | 6.4↓          | 7.0             | 7.6          | 7.3                         |
| Self-acceptance        | 7.5     | 7.5      | 7.5           | 7.5             | 7.7          | 7.2                         |
| Positive Emotions      | 7.7     | 7.7      | 7.0↓          | 7.7             | 8.0          | 7.5                         |
| Optimism               | 7.7     | 7.7      | 7.7           | 7.8             | 7.9          | 7.2↓                        |
| Autonomy               | 7.8     | 7.7      | 7.7           | 7.8             | 7.9          | 7.3↓                        |
| Meaning                | 7.8     | 7.8      | 7.2↓          | 7.7             | 8.1          | 7.7                         |
| Engagement             | 7.8     | 7.9      | 7.6           | 7.9             | 8.0          | 7.9                         |
| Clear Thinking         | 7.9     | 7.8      | 7.1↓          | 7.7             | 8.1          | 7.6                         |
| Self-Esteem            | 7.9     | 7.9      | 7.4↓          | 8.0             | 8.1          | 7.8                         |
| Competence             | 8.2     | 8.2      | 7.8↓          | 8.0             | 8.3          | 8.0                         |
| Pro-social Behaviour   | 8.3     | 8.3      | 8.4           | 8.4             | 8.4          | 8.4                         |
| Positive Relationships | 8.4     | 8.4      | 8.0↓          | 8.5             | 8.5          | 8.2                         |
| Total Wellbeing Score  | 115     | 115      | 109↓          | 115             | 118↑         | 113                         |

Figure 44

## Supportive workplaces are linked to better mental health outcomes

|                                                      | OVERALL | EXPERIENCED<br>SADNESS, ANXIETY<br>OR WORRY IN THE<br>PAST 12 MONTHS | HAVE NOT<br>EXPERIENCED SADNESS,<br>ANXIETY OR WORRY IN THE<br>PAST 12 MONTHS | GAPS |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Quite/extremely affected by cost of living           | 55%     | 66%                                                                  | 39%                                                                           | 27%  |
| Knew what was expected of them during the first year | 71%     | 64%                                                                  | 82%                                                                           | -18% |
| Adequacy of training rated good +                    | 76%     | 68%                                                                  | 86%                                                                           | -18% |
| Felt cared for and supported                         | 83%     | 76%                                                                  | 93%                                                                           | -17% |
| Supervision rated good +                             | 77%     | 70%                                                                  | 87%                                                                           | -17% |
| Adequate mentoring                                   | 90%     | 84%                                                                  | 96%                                                                           | -12% |
| Comfortable raising concerns                         | 92%     | 89%                                                                  | 96%                                                                           | -7%  |
| Consider a colleague a friend                        | 92%     | 90%                                                                  | 94%                                                                           | -4%  |



**Figure 45**

**Wellbeing across industry sectors**

Note: Based on total sample (current + completed)

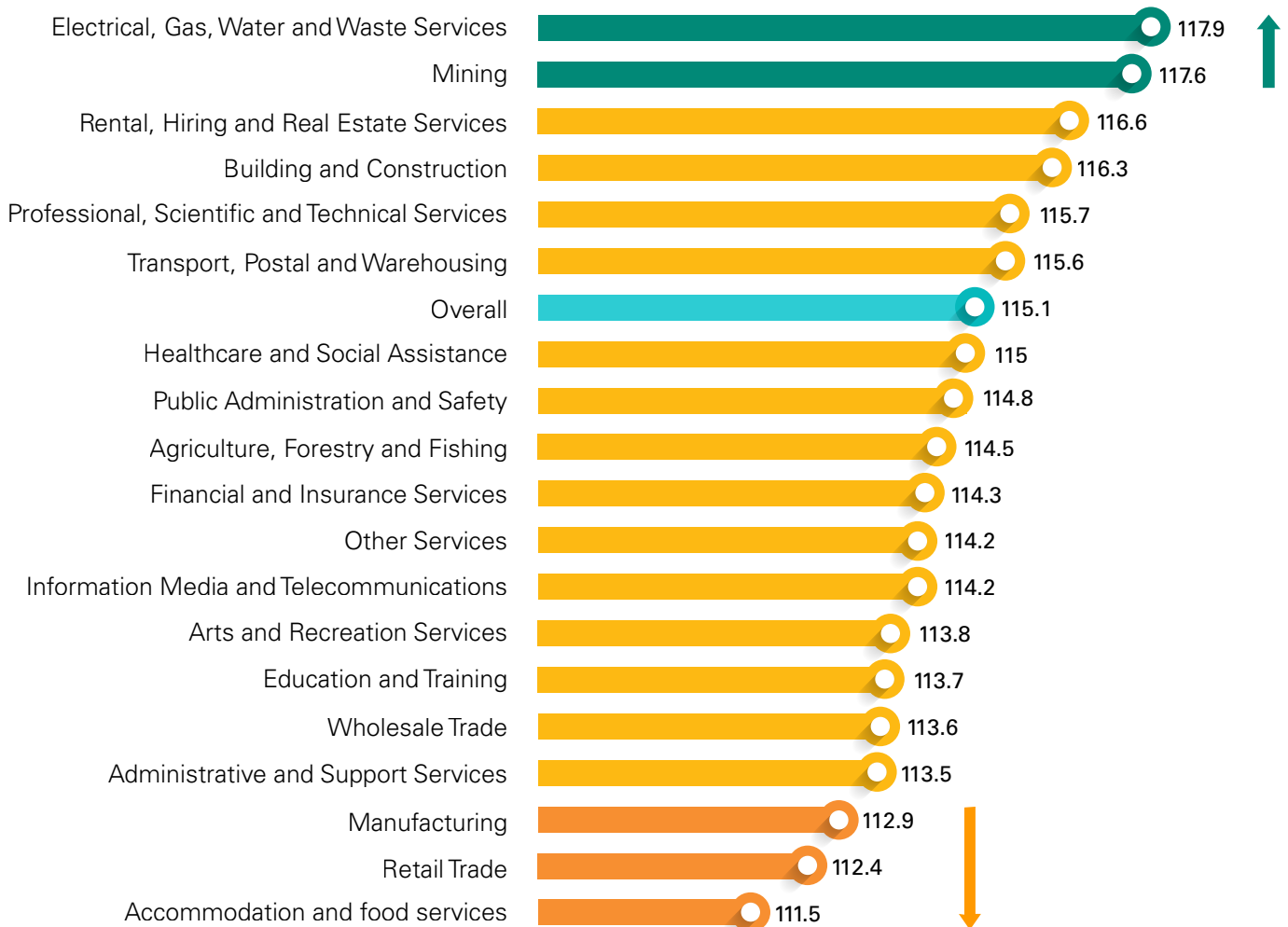


Figure 46

## Some industries experience greater wellbeing pressures

|                                                 | EXPERIENCED ANXIETY, SADNESS OR WORRY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS | HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED ANXIETY, SADNESS OR WORRY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS | NOT SURE | DIFFERENCE (YES COMPARED TO OVERALL) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Overall                                         | 50%                                                         | 38%                                                                  | 12%      | N/A                                  |
| Education and Training                          | 58%                                                         | 30%                                                                  | 12%      | 8%                                   |
| Administrative and Support Services             | 55%                                                         | 33%                                                                  | 12%      | 5%                                   |
| Financial and Insurance Services                | 54%                                                         | 43%                                                                  | 3%       | 4%                                   |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Services | 54%                                                         | 35%                                                                  | 12%      | 4%                                   |
| Retail Trade                                    | 54%                                                         | 32%                                                                  | 13%      | 4%                                   |
| Accommodation and Food Services                 | 53%                                                         | 33%                                                                  | 14%      | 3%                                   |
| Healthcare and Social Assistance                | 53%                                                         | 36%                                                                  | 11%      | 3%                                   |
| Arts and Recreation Services                    | 52%                                                         | 34%                                                                  | 14%      | 2%                                   |
| Public Administration and Safety                | 51%                                                         | 33%                                                                  | 16%      | 1%                                   |
| Other Services                                  | 50%                                                         | 36%                                                                  | 14%      | 0%                                   |
| Transport, Postal and Warehousing               | 49%                                                         | 39%                                                                  | 12%      | -1%                                  |
| Wholesale Trade                                 | 49%                                                         | 33%                                                                  | 17%      | -1%                                  |
| Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services         | 48%                                                         | 47%                                                                  | 6%       | -2%                                  |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing               | 47%                                                         | 40%                                                                  | 13%      | -3%                                  |
| Manufacturing                                   | 47%                                                         | 38%                                                                  | 15%      | -3%                                  |
| Building and Construction                       | 45%                                                         | 43%                                                                  | 12%      | -5%                                  |
| Mining                                          | 44%                                                         | 44%                                                                  | 12%      | -6%                                  |
| Electrical, Gas, Water and Waste Services       | 43%                                                         | 44%                                                                  | 13%      | -7%                                  |
| Information Media and Telecommunications        | 39%                                                         | 45%                                                                  | 16%      | -11%                                 |

## Wellbeing underpins Apprentice success

Overall, the findings reinforce that wellbeing is not a peripheral concern, but a key factor of Australian Apprentice success. While many Australian Apprentices are navigating their first year positively, a significant proportion are doing so alongside elevated stress, mental health challenges and external pressures that can undermine both performance and retention. The evidence is clear: where Australian Apprentices feel supported,

connected and confident, they are far more likely to persist and thrive. Conversely, where these foundations are weak or inconsistent, risks escalate quickly. By strengthening workplace relationships, building psychologically safe environments, investing in mentoring and supervision, and taking a more proactive and inclusive approach to support, both wellbeing and completion outcomes for Australian Apprentices can be improved.



# CONCLUSION

---

This **National First Year Experience Survey** provides one of the most comprehensive insights to date into how Australian Apprentices experience their first year of training and employment.

The findings present a clear and balanced picture. The apprenticeship system is delivering strong outcomes for most, but the consistency of those outcomes varies and it is this variability that presents the greatest opportunity for improvement.

Overall, Australian Apprenticeships remain a highly effective pathway. Most apprentices and trainees report positive experiences, strong training outcomes and high levels of mentoring and supervision. Importantly, around three in four Australian Apprentices intend to stay, demonstrating a fundamentally motivated and engaged cohort.

However, findings from this survey also highlight that success is not universal. One in five apprentices describe their experience as only “okay”, and a smaller but important group report poor experiences. These inconsistencies are significant, as they directly influence wellbeing, engagement and ultimately retention.

The first year emerges as a critical intervention point. Early experiences, particularly the quality of supervision, mentoring, clarity of expectations, and workplace culture, have an impact on confidence, capability and the decision to continue. Where these elements are strong, apprentices and trainees thrive. Where they are inconsistent or absent, risks escalate quickly.

Beyond the workplace, broader systemic factors are also shaping outcomes. Access to high-quality, balanced career advice is uneven, leaving many apprentices and trainees underprepared for the realities of the pathway. At the same time, rising cost-of-living pressures and increasing mental health challenges are influencing how Australian Apprentices engage with work and training. While these pressures are not unique to Australian Apprenticeships, they nevertheless affect performance and retention.

The findings also reinforce that outcomes differ across cohorts. Australian Apprentices Living with Disability, First Nations Australian Apprentices, and Women in Trades report experiencing lower levels of support and higher wellbeing challenges, highlighting the need for more tailored and inclusive approaches.

The evidence is clear. Advancing good practice in how we support Australian Apprentices requires sustained, collective attention. More mature and coordinated approaches, particularly those that improve consistency in the first year, will be critical to lifting completion rates, strengthening workforce capability, and ensuring all apprentices and trainees have the opportunity to succeed.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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Improving first-year outcomes and strengthening retention will take more than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. A coordinated, tailored and system-wide response is required. The following recommendations are designed to target the key drivers of Australian Apprentice experience, with a focus on practical, scalable interventions:

1

## **Strengthen early-stage support**

- Establish minimum standards for first-year onboarding, including clear role expectations, structured induction and early capability planning.
- Provide employers with enhanced onboarding resources including standardised induction tools and practical checklists to clearly outline workplaces roles, responsibilities, behavioural expectations and communication channels.

2

## **Enhance the consistency and capability of supervision and mentoring**

- Invest in supervisor and employer capability by providing resources that strengthen communication and coaching skills.
- Extend mentoring services to ensure every apprentice and trainee has access to dedicated mentoring during their first year. This will enable earlier intervention, address emerging issues before they escalate and improve retention.
- Strengthen employers understanding and management of psychosocial factors that influence apprentice and trainee success.

3

## **Improve alignment between training and work**

- Strengthen coordination between workplaces and RTOs to ensure training is timely, sequenced and relevant.
- Establish and maintain a structured first year training plan to ensure strong alignment between workplace experience and formal training delivery.
- Address delays in access to off-the-job training, particularly in the first year.

4

## **Embed wellbeing as a core component of the Australian Apprenticeship experience**

- Support all employers to create psychologically safe workplaces where apprentices feel able to speak up, with specific emphasis on tools for small businesses.
- Normalise simple, regular wellbeing check-ins.
- Ensure Australian Apprentices are aware of and can access timely, confidential mental health and wellbeing support services, particularly during the first year.

**5****Target support to cohorts with higher risk and complex needs**

- Expand tailored support programs for First Nations Australian Apprentices and Women in Trades.
- Create specialist support services for Australian Apprentices Living with Disability.
- Support employers to strengthen culturally appropriate, inclusive and accessible workplace practices.
- Improve visibility and access to support services early in the apprenticeship journey.

**6****Enhance career advice as a pathway**

- Ensure schools are able to provide balanced, high-quality information on all post-school pathways, including Australian Apprenticeships.
- Embed more practical, real-world exposure to Australian Apprenticeship careers during school years.
- Support students, school leavers and job seekers through improved tools, guidance and job matching to support better informed choices.
- Equip students with clearer expectations of workplace realities, training commitments and career progression.

**7****Reinforce the 'earn while you learn' value proposition**

- Continue to protect and promote the financial viability and long-term value of Australian Apprenticeships through a national awareness campaign.
- Improve perceptions of apprenticeships and traineeships and encourage greater participation in skilled occupations critical to Australia's future workforce needs.
- Ensure apprentices and employers are aware of available financial supports and incentives.
- Monitor the impact of cost-of-living pressures on retention.

**8****Encourage good practice**

- Reward employers that support successful apprenticeship and traineeship outcomes with the introduction of a completion-based incentive.
- Identify and promote practices from high-performing employers.
- Use data to monitor and target areas where experiences fall behind to reduce variability in experience.

**9****Stabilise and broaden employer incentives**

- Establish a stable, broad-based employer incentive framework that encourages businesses of all sizes to employ and train apprentices and trainees.
- Ensure incentive settings are predictable, easy to understand and responsive to workforce needs, providing employers with the confidence to make long-term training and workforce development decisions.



## FINAL NOTE

The findings of this survey demonstrate that **small, targeted improvements, particularly in early support, mentoring, supervision and alignment, can deliver meaningful impact at scale.**

By focusing on consistency, strengthening early experiences, and taking a more coordinated and inclusive approach, industry and government can significantly improve retention outcomes and ensure more Australian Apprentices successfully complete their training and transition into long-term careers.



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

### Workplace training & quality - Current cohort differences

Note: Based on current apprentices only

|                                       | OVERALL | REGIONAL | FIRST NATIONS | WOMEN IN TRADES | CLEAN ENERGY | APPRENTICES WITH DISABILITY |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Employed by SMEs (<200 employees)     | 82%     | 83%      | 78%↓          | 61%↓            | 79%          | 80%                         |
| Less than 10 apprentices              | 84%     | 85%      | 84%           | 68%↓            | 79%↓         | 83%                         |
| Clear expectations first year         | 71%     | 73%      | 69%           | 63%↓            | 74%          | 63%↓                        |
| Good training                         | 76%     | 77%      | 76%           | 73%             | 81%↑         | 72%↓                        |
| Good progress                         | 77%     | 79%      | 77%           | 76%             | 82%↑         | 68%↓                        |
| Training prepared them to work safely | 97%     | 98%      | 97%           | 96%             | 98%          | 94%↓                        |

## Appendix 2

### Key metrics state differences

Note: Based on current apprentices only

|                                              | OVERALL | NSW<br>n=6,209 | QLD<br>n=514 | ACT<br>n=41 | VIC<br>n=2,299 | WA<br>n=2,387 | SA<br>n=556 | NT<br>n=12* | TAS<br>n=358 |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Level of Supervision (good +)                | 77%     | 78%            | 72%↓         | 71%         | 79%↑           | 77%           | 76%         | 100%        | 73%          |
| Adequate mentoring                           | 90%     | 90%            | 86%          | 90%         | 90%            | 88%↓          | 90%         | 86%         | 91%          |
| Comfortable raising concerns                 | 92%     | 92%            | 91%          | 86%         | 93%            | 92%           | 92%         | 100%        | 91%          |
| Felt cared for and supported in first year   | 83%     | 83%            | 79%↓         | 81%         | 85%            | 82%           | 80%         | 86%         | 82%          |
| Has a workplace friend                       | 92%     | 91%            | 92%          | 86%         | 91%            | 93%           | 89%         | 86%         | 92%          |
| Only apprentice at workplace                 | 24%     | 26%            | 20%↓         | 21%         | 25%            | 16%↓          | 18%↓        | 14%         | 26%          |
| Mental health impact (sadness/anxiety/worry) | 50%     | 50%            | 52%          | 54%         | 51%            | 48%           | 51%         | 25%         | 53%          |
| Wellbeing score / 150                        | 115     | 116            | 114          | 113         | 115            | 115           | 114         | 116         | 113          |
| Cost-of-living impact (quite/extreme)        | 55%     | 57%            | 56%          | 76%         | 52%            | 54%           | 59%         | 58%         | 50%          |
| Secured role close to home                   | 79%     | 83%↑           | 68%↓         | 64%↓        | 81%            | 68%↓          | 74%↓        | 29%         | 83%↑         |
| ASA support usage                            | 82%     | 80%            | 82%          | 80%         | 85%            | 83%           | 85%         | 58%         | 86%          |

### Appendix 3

#### Regional apprentices cohort differences

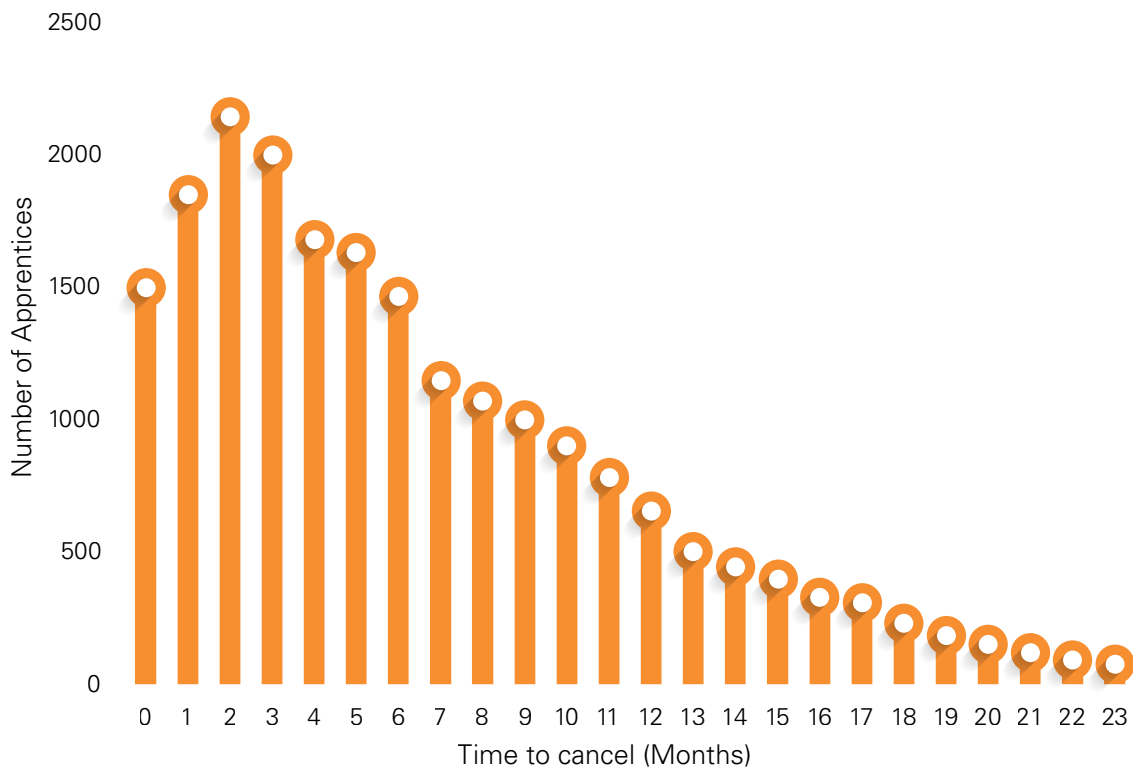
Note: based on current apprentices unless otherwise stated. \* indicates total sample (current + completed).

|                                                    | OVERALL | REGIONAL |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Level of Supervision (good +)                      | 77%     | 79%      |
| Adequate mentoring                                 | 90%     | 90%      |
| Comfortable raising concerns                       | 92%     | 93%      |
| Felt cared for and supported in first year         | 83%     | 84%      |
| Has a workplace friend                             | 92%     | 92%      |
| Only apprentice at workplace                       | 24%     | 25%      |
| Mental health impact (sadness/anxiety/worry)*      | 50%     | 50%      |
| Wellbeing score / 150*                             | 115     | 115      |
| Cost-of-living impact (quite/extreme)*             | 55%     | 54%      |
| Secured role close to home                         | 79%     | 82%      |
| ASA support usage                                  | 82%     | 82%      |
| Have left apprenticeship/traineeship               | 2%      | 2%       |
| Have thought of leaving apprenticeship/traineeship | 27%     | 25%      |
| Communicates well with supervisor                  | 92%     | 92%      |

### Appendix 4

#### Apprentice attrition trend

Source: ASA Jan 2024-Dec 2025





## ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT AUSTRALIA

Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA) operates under a contract with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, delivering trusted advice, services and support to employers and individuals to help them confidently navigate apprenticeships and traineeships.

As an Apprentice Connect Australia Provider, ASA's primary focus is on increasing apprenticeship commencements and completions by guiding employers, apprentices and trainees through every stage of the vocational training journey. We facilitate training contracts from sign-up to completion, assess and administer incentive payments, and provide mentoring and personal support services at no cost to employers or apprentices and trainees.

In addition, we deliver specialist provider services in various locations to support Women in Trades, First Nations Australian Apprentices, and apprentices in Clean Energy occupations, ensuring equitable access to career pathways.

With a combined experience of over 84 years, ASA delivers services across New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia. ASA is part of Australia's business chamber movement, with the backing of Business NSW, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia.

