



## **Skill Assessment Pilots Evaluation**

Appendices to the Final Evaluation Report  
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

June 2024



# Appendix A

## Pilot 1: Faster Migrant Skills Assessments



# Implementation of Pilot 1

The following section draws on interviews with Assessing Authorities and analysis of program data.



# Implementation of Pilot 1

## Do the Pilot operations and procedures enable effective implementation, and how does this vary across Assessing Authorities and Employer Assessment providers?

Assessing Authorities agreed that the guidelines and procedures provided by the Department were clear and easy to understand. On balance, Assessing Authorities reported that the material was highly detailed and comprehensive in nature; however, in one instance an Assessing Authority noted that it could be improved by using more simple and direct language. Instances where procedures were not followed was not due to omission of information in the guidelines, instead reflected cases where information was misunderstood by Assessing Authorities.

*"The guidelines were clear and well thought out, the main challenge operationalising these guidelines as each Assessing Authority had to do something differently. And at times the Department could've used simple and direct language so nothing was open to our own interpretation" – Assessing Authority*

## How does the uptake of the Pilots compare to the forecast / anticipated levels?

Pilot 1 had a combined 3,977 participants, equivalent to approximately 54% of the total participation target for Pilots 1-3 (7,300), in line with the Department's internal forecasting about Pilot 1 demand, that were based on previous skill assessment demand.

It is important to note, the SAP were re-scoped in 2023, with targeted participation across Pilot 1-3 lowered from 9,500 to 7,300 in response to lower than anticipated uptake in Pilot 2 and 3.

## What are the major barriers and enablers to different stakeholders engaging with the Skill Assessment Pilots?

### Assessing Authorities

The information sessions run by the Department were said to be very helpful in understanding the program, although Assessing Authorities highlighted that the overall implementation timeline for Pilot 1 was rapid and difficult to meet. Several

Assessing Authorities (particular larger Assessing Authorities) noted that the timeline from the Pilot being first announced to the contract start date did not always create sufficient time for consultation between the Department and Assessing Authorities, and for them to work through the internal legal and procedural challenge of implementing the program. Furthermore, it was noted that the fact that this period coincided with many organisations' end-of-year shutdown in late 2021 exacerbated this issue.

*"Ultimately the process was incredibly rushed and we needed to set up contracts, implement the Pilot in our organisation and find resources to deliver the Pilot in a very tight labour market" – Assessing Authority*

In future initiatives, the Department may consider affording additional time to Assessing Authorities to engage and implement the program.

Assessing Authorities agreed that the Migrant Skill Incentives (MSI) system was fit-for-purpose, although reported that it lacked some of the desired flexibility. Assessing Authorities noted that the system was generally intuitive to use, but that it could be overly restrictive in not allowing users to extract data from the system or modify records where a minor mistake was identified. In future, the Department may further consider the usability of the system, including by implementing data recall options.

*"Once a small error was made, which given the number of applications we needed to submit, of course happened several times, you could not go back and edit that field you needed to contact the Department to get it updated – which was quite time consuming" – Assessing Authority*



# Implementation of Pilot 1

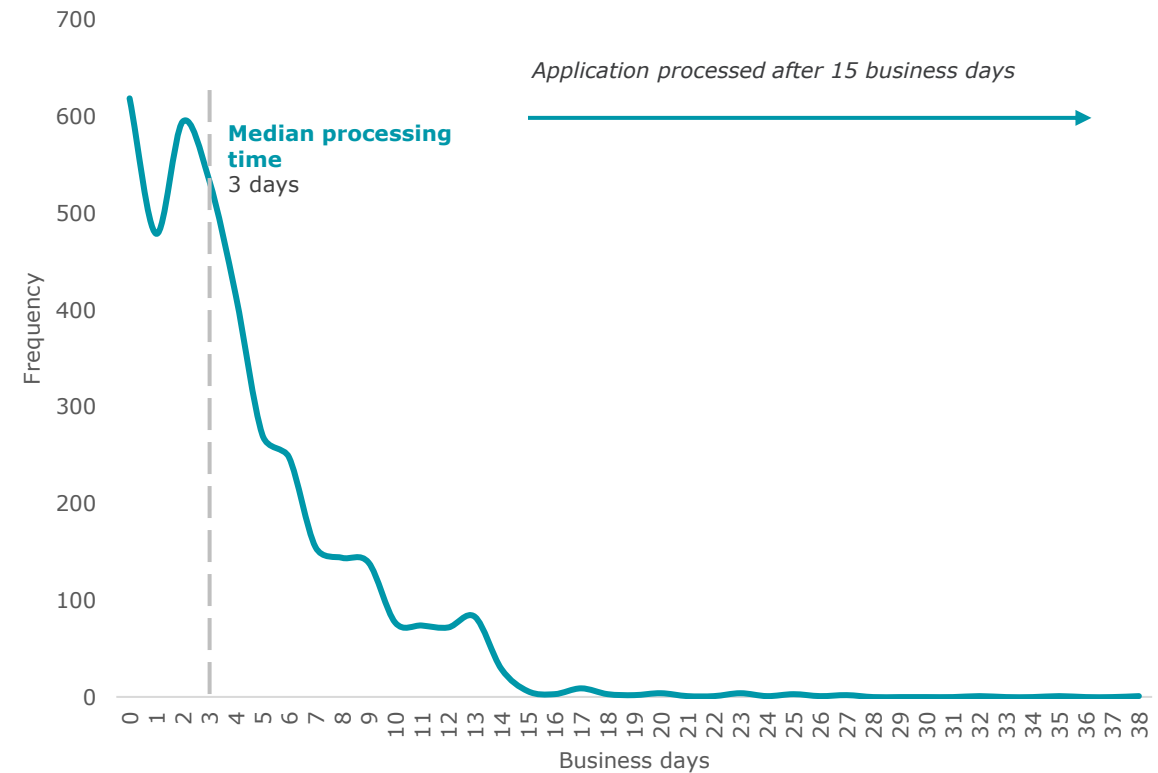
## Are skill assessments for migrants completed in a timely manner (in-line with the Pilot guidelines)?

A core component of Pilot 1's effectiveness is the extent to which skills assessment outcome processing times have been sped up. According to the operational guidelines, Assessing Authorities should aim to process applications from the 'Assessment ready date' to a 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' within 15 business days on average.

The data reveals:

- Overall, 99% of applications in Pilot 1 were processed from 'Assessment ready' to 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' within 15 business days (Chart A.1).
- All Assessing Authorities recorded an average processing time from 'Assessment ready' to 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' within 8 business days, effectively meeting the Department's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of 15 business days on average.
- The median processing time was 3 business days across all Assessing Authorities, suggesting there may be scope to adjust the KPI settings.
- Over a quarter (or 28%) of Pilot 1 applicants were notified of their skills assessment outcome within 1 business day of becoming 'Assessment ready', with 16% of these processed the day of being 'Assessment ready'. The maximum period between becoming 'Assessment ready' to 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' was 38 business days.

Chart A.1: Number of business days for application to be processed



Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2022)

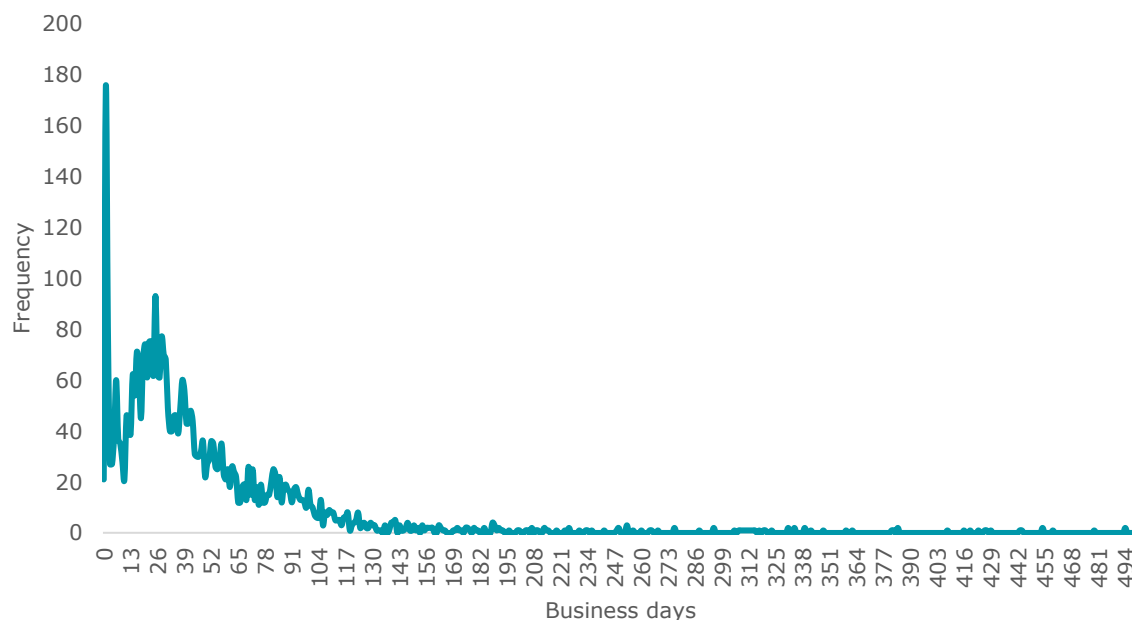
Note: Analysis considers public holidays which occurred over the period between an application being 'assessment ready' and 'date skills assessment outcome notified to applicant' based on the location of the Assessing Authority's head office. Analysis considers whether the assessment ready date occurred before or after the commencement date of Pilot 1, adding an additional business day if the 'assessment ready' date occurred after the contract commencement date.



# Implementation of Pilot 1

The variance between 'Date Application Submitted' and becoming 'Assessment ready' is larger, with the median processing time across all Assessing Authorities being 34 days (Chart A.2). This reflects the various circumstances that can be at play when working with applicants to ensure that the applicant has provided all the information required for an assessment to take place. Some Assessing Authorities possess a median processing time of 11 business days, meanwhile others have a much longer processing time of 339 business days. It is important to note that Assessing Authorities with longer median processing times, often represent those that require applications to undertake an examination.

**Chart A.2:** Business days between 'date application submitted' and when an application is considered 'assessment ready'



Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2022) (n=3,977)

Note: Analysis considers public holidays which occurred over the period between an application being 'date application submitted' and when an application is considered 'assessment ready' based on the location of the Assessing Authority's head office (excluding public holidays occurring over Christmas shutdown period). Excludes 58 values (values that are over 500 business days).

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The majority of Assessing Authorities reported an improvement in their processing times from the assessment ready date. Depending on the specific Assessing Authority, this improvement ranged from several days to several weeks. A small number of Assessing Authorities reported that they did not need to improve their processing times to meet the set KPIs and hence did not experience a change. While we would not expect all activity under the Pilot to be additional, in future the Department may consider how this could be minimised by adjusting the KPIs for organisations with lower average processing times. It should be noted that the average processing time for one Assessing Authority was reduced to 10 business days, as this organisation was already processing applications within 15 business days.

The skills assessment processing times for applicants outside of Pilot 1 (i.e., applicants who were ineligible for Pilot 1) were either unaffected or reduced. That is, the additional resources Assessing Authorities employed either meant that non-eligible applicants were unaffected, or benefited from broader process simplifications that were implemented. In fact, the vast majority of Assessing Authorities appeared to be highly conscious of ensuring that their processing system was equitable and that no applicants were disadvantaged by the introduction of Pilot 1. In one instance an Assessing Authority reported that it did not hire additional resources and in turn saw slight increases in internal timelines for ineligible applicants but noted that they were still able to meet their target deadlines.

Assessing Authorities noted that they generally do not have visibility over the extent to which fast-tracking skill assessments enables participants to gain a visa more rapidly. They expressed a desire to better understand the extent to which this outcome is achieved and noted that at times the skill assessment outcome process can account for a relatively small portion of the total time taken to obtain a visa.

*"The skills assessment process is just a small step towards applying for a new visa, there is more that happens after they receive their outcome which also delays that process so if the visa approval process took the same amount of time I'm not sure there would actually be any significant improvement overall" – Assessing Authority*



# Implementation of Pilot 1

## What levers did Assessing Authorities apply to provide faster and more efficient skills assessments?

Assessing Authorities implemented several strategies to fast-track applicants. These included bringing on additional resources, streamlining internal systems and restructuring their teams to generate efficiencies. Of these strategies, Assessing Authorities most commonly employed additional contract or temporary staff to increase the resources at their disposal and associated throughput. To a lesser extent, Assessing Authorities reviewed their internal processes and were able to simplify and/or streamline their workflows to reduce processing times, although most organisations indicated that their processes were already relatively efficient. Assessing Authorities who made changes to their internal processes indicated that they planned to maintain these approaches to performing skills assessment in the future, suggesting that Pilot 1 facilitated internal learning for some Assessing Authorities.

Assessing Authorities with pre-established fast-tracking processes were well equipped to meet the processing times KPIs but highlighted that it could be challenging to refund participants. That is, these Assessing Authorities noted that while they understood the necessity to refund applicants, it could be administratively complicated and time consuming to re-contact, explain the situation to and then refund these individuals.

*"While we knew why we had to refund applicants, it was administratively burdensome to get in contact with all the applicants and explain why we needed to refund them" – Assessing Authority*

## Are the Pilots funding appropriate to enable stakeholders to effectively achieve the desired outcome of the program?

Across Assessing Authorities, there was a consensus that the Pilot's funding was sufficient and appropriate. Some Assessing Authorities claimed that if the funding were lower it may have been challenging to participate in the program. However, given some Assessing Authorities observed no change to skill assessment processing times under the Pilot there may be scope to investigate if Assessing Authority specific timeframes should have been more widely enforced. While this approach was already adopted for one Assessing Authority (as the business-as-usual assessment timeframes were already within 15 business days and therefore was reduced to 10 business days), there may be scope to further investigate Assessing Authority specific

timeframe KPIs (to potentially increase the return-on-investment for government). Particularly given the variation across Assessing Authorities in performing skill assessments, with some requiring written or practical exams while others primarily require documentary evidence. Therefore, not all organisations face the same challenges to performing these assessments and this holds implications on the time required to process applications as well. Although, this would require more detailed analysis on the costs associated with organisations fast-tracking applicants and how this varies across different contexts.

While the level of funding provided was sufficient to participate in the Pilot, often Assessing Authorities with a low number of Pilot 1 applicants reported that the administrative burden and complexity of understanding and implementing the Pilot outweighed its benefit. These organisations typically noted that without the high case volumes and technical support teams the larger organisations have, it can be challenging to implement the program for only a few applicants. Despite these challenges, all Assessing Authorities would be interested in participating in a similar Pilot in the future.

*"It was worthwhile participating anyway because of the potential benefit to applicants and more broadly the public" – Assessing Authority*

## How did DEWR inform the development of the Pilots based on previous learnings with other similar programs?

DEWR undertook extensive consultations internally within the Department to inform the design of the Pilots, which included the Department's Skills Foundation Program, International Quality Frameworks, Vocational Education and Training (VET), VET Student Loans Compliance and the Employment Group. These consultations supported the application of evidence-based strategies to the design of the Skill Assessment Pilots as well as a forum to share best-practice and leverage learnings from existing programs such as Skills for Education and Employment (SEE). In addition, this forum provided a platform to test and agree to strategies to deliver ongoing program changes (in alignment with the broader policy objectives).

Alongside internal consultations within DEWR, the Department also undertook a series of consultations with external industry stakeholders, including a select number of Assessing Authorities (ACEQA, ACS, ANMAC, CPAA, TRA and VETASSESS) and Industry groups to inform the design and ongoing policy adjustments of the Pilots aimed at increasing uptake.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

The following section draws on interviews with Assessing Authorities, program data, 6-month, 12-month and 18-month survey data and publicly available evidence.





# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

## To what extent are the Pilots achieving the intended short, medium and long-term outcomes?

### Short-term

#### Applicants gain fast-tracked skills assessments

Pilot 1 supported 3,977 applicants to receive a fast-tracked skills assessment outcome. Approximately 89% of Pilot 1 participants achieved a 'suitable' skills assessment outcome which is a requirement for several visa subclasses such as a General Skilled Migration visa. This demonstrates that the Pilot was effective at meeting short-term outcomes of fast-tracking skills assessments. Further, this enables participants to be able to apply for a skilled visa in addition to secure employment in line with their skills assessment.

#### Strengthened relationship with DEWR and Assessing Authorities

The overwhelming majority of Assessing Authorities noted that participating in the Pilot had strengthened the relationship between Assessing Authorities and DEWR and increased the level of mutual understanding of the others context and operations. Assessing Authorities highlighted that the Pilot substantially increased the level of contact they had with the Department, and that these experiences were typically highly positive and led to an increased level of understanding from both parties. Practically, Assessing Authorities noted that this has increased their confidence and ability to contact the Department and work with them to resolve issues that may arise.

*"The impact of the Pilot on our relationship with the Department cannot be underestimated. The Pilot significantly enhanced our working relationship and as result, we engage a lot more frequently with the Department" – Assessing Authority*

*"The Pilot helped us to get to know the Department team and now we know who to email in the Department when we have questions instead of sending emails to a general mailbox, which has helped us a lot" – Assessing Authority*

#### Applicants are able to apply for a skilled migration visa

The top visas that survey respondents had at the time they received their skills assessment were the Temporary Graduate Visa (subclass 485) (24%), followed by the Skilled Nominated Visa (subclass 190) (18%) and the Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) visa (subclass 482) (15%). The remainder of survey respondents were on a combination of student, bridging, skilled, family and working holiday maker visas.

At the time of the 18-month survey, the majority of respondents (77%) indicated that they had or planned to use their skills assessment outcome to apply for a different visa (Chart A.3). Among the cohort of respondents planning to use their skills assessment to apply for a new visa, 37% have successfully applied for and obtained the new visa, while 30% have submitted applications but are still awaiting approval. The remaining 9% intend to apply for the new visa but have not yet initiated the application process. Meanwhile, nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents were not planning on using their skills assessment outcome to apply for a different visa.

Approximately half of respondents (50%) who were already in a job aligned with their qualifications, applied for a skills assessment outcome to support their visa application. With a high proportion (28%) of these respondents having already received their new visa at the time of the survey (i.e., 18-months).

**Chart A.3:** 'Have you used your skills assessment outcome to apply for a different visa?'



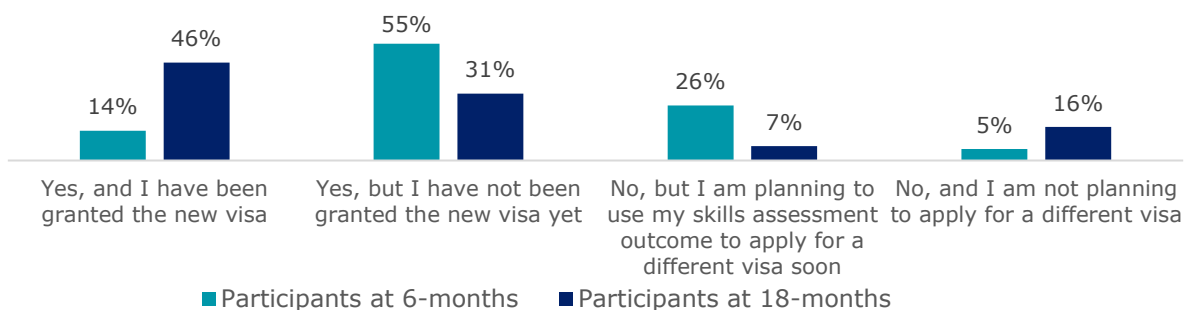
- Yes, and I have been granted the new visa
- Yes, but I have not been granted the new visa yet
- No, but I am planning to use my skills assessment outcome to apply for a different visa soon
- No, and I am not planning to apply for a different visa

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=190)

# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

Focusing the analysis on respondents who took part in the both 6 and 18-month surveys reveals that among those who planned to use their skills assessment to apply for a different visa, the share of respondents who have successfully received a new visa has grown from 14% to 46% (Chart A.4). Interestingly, the share who do not plan to use their skills assessment to apply for a different visa has also grown.

**Chart A.4:** 'Have you used your skills assessment outcome to apply for a different visa?' longitudinal respondents



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n= 96)

Furthermore, among this group of respondents intending to use their skills assessment outcome to apply for a different visa, the majority (77%) were transitioning or planning to transition from a temporary visa (or a temporary skilled visa) to a permanent skilled visa. This demonstrates that the short-term outcome was enabling participants to apply for a skilled migration visa was met. However, it is important to note that participants who received an 'unsuitable' skills assessment outcome were not mobilised to apply for a skilled migration visa.

The most common permanent visas respondents applied for were Skilled Nominated Visa (subclass 190) followed by Skilled Independent Visa (subclass 189) and Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186).

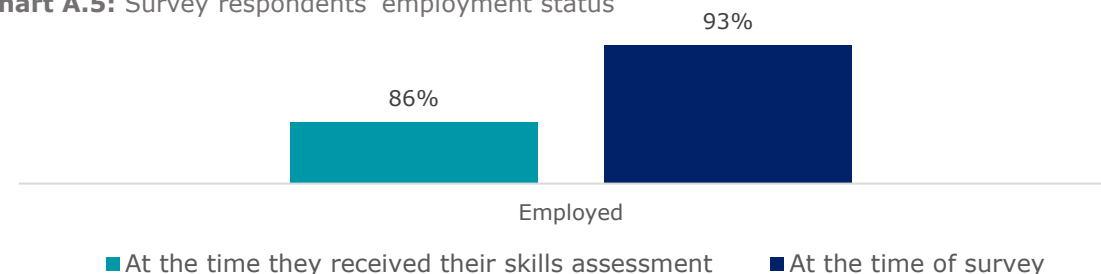
## Medium-term

*Applicants more quickly gain secure employment & Applicants exhibit greater participation in work and society*

At the time of the 18-month survey, 93% of respondents were gainfully employed

(Chart A.5), with a substantial portion engaged in full-time positions (85%, Chart 3.6) while the remaining 7% were unemployed/not in the labour force. More than half (56%) of respondents that were initially unemployed at the time of their skills assessment have since transitioned to paid employment at the time of the survey.

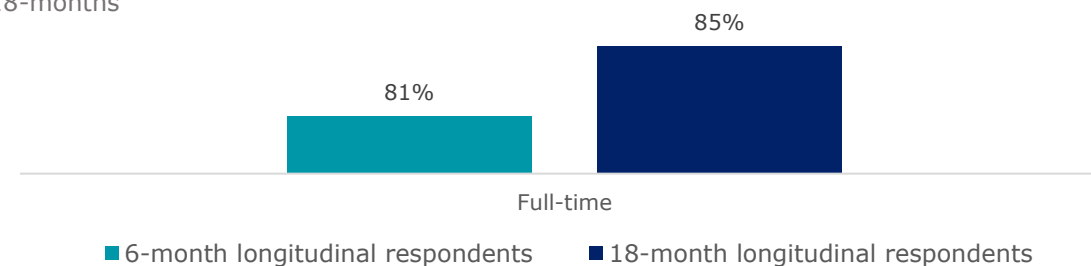
**Chart A.5:** Survey respondents' employment status



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n= 190)

Interestingly, comparing respondents' status in employment to 6-month survey, reveals that while the employment rate has remained relatively consistent, the share of respondents working full-time has increased from 81% to 85%, with the remainder working part-time (Chart A.6). This may suggest the possibility that receiving a skills assessment is associated with an improvement in participants' ability to transition into full-time work and as a result, secure more working hours. In fact, 7% of survey respondents indicated using their skill assessment outcome to secure more working hours. Demonstrating that participants were enabled to gain more secure employment faster as a result of receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment.

**Chart A.6:** Longitudinal employed survey respondents' status in employment at 6-months and 18-months



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n= 160)

# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

## Applicants transition into employment aligned with their education/ training

Among respondents who were employed at the time of the 18-month survey, 63% were working in the same job as when they received their skills assessment outcome while the remainder (37%) were working in a different job (Chart A.7).

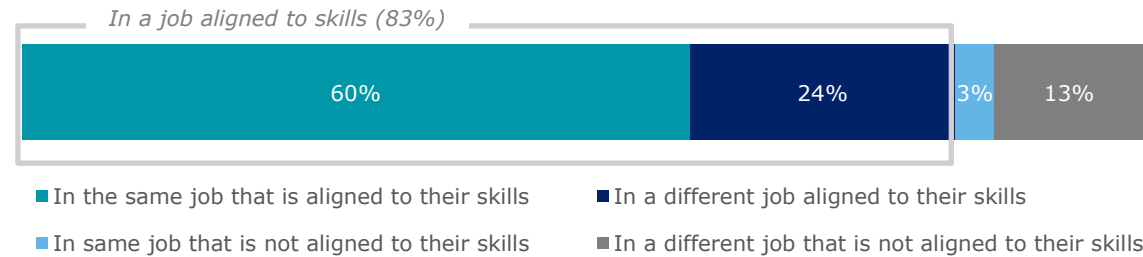
**Chart A.7:** 'Are you in the same job as when you received your skill assessment outcome?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=173)

Overall, at the time of the 18-month survey 83% were working in a job aligned to their skill assessment outcome (Chart A.8). Among respondents in the same job, nearly all these respondents (60%) were already working in the occupation for which they were receiving a skills assessment outcome, suggesting that these respondents only submitted a skills assessment for migration purposes. Meanwhile among respondents who transitioned to a different job (37%), nearly a quarter (24%) were now working in a job that was aligned to their skills assessment outcome.

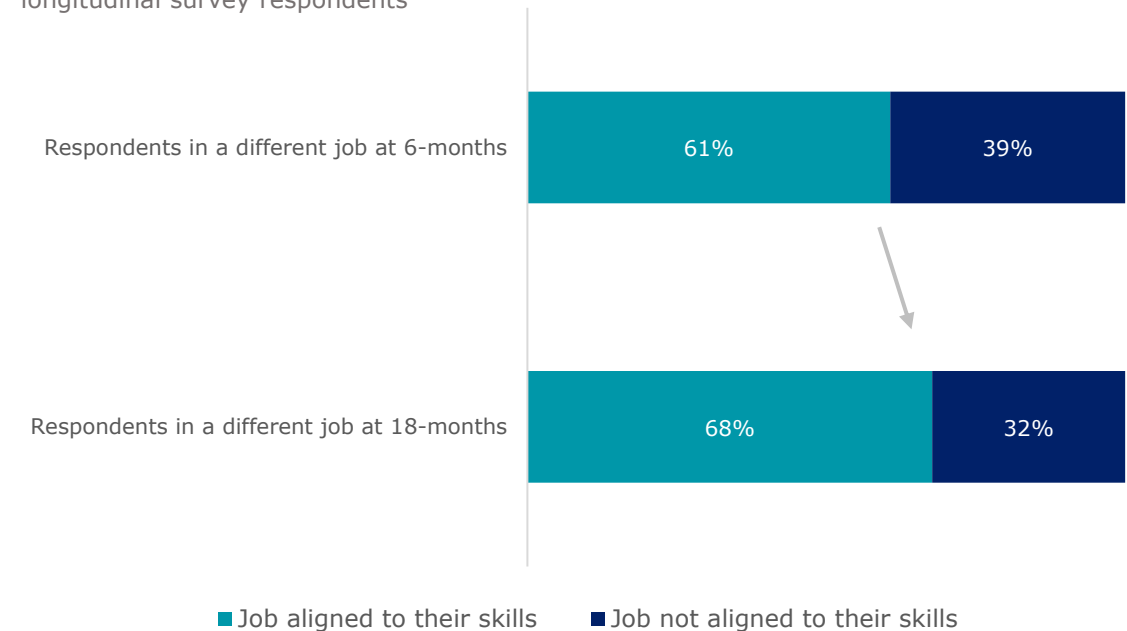
**Chart A.8:** 'Are you in the same job as at the time of skills assessment and is it aligned with your skills assessment outcome?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n= 237)

Narrowing the analysis to respondents who participated in both the 6-month and 18-month surveys, 31% were in a different job in the 6-month survey and 35% were in a different job in the 18-month survey. In the 6-month survey, 61% were in a different occupation aligned to their skills assessment (Chart A.9). Eighteen months later 68% were in a different occupation aligned to their skills assessment, revealing that respondents' employment circumstances improved overtime. Please note these statistics only, capture survey respondents who responded to both the 6 and 18-month surveys (i.e., longitudinal respondents). Demonstrating that receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment was effective in supporting some participants to secure employment aligned to their qualifications, more rapidly.

**Chart A.9:** 'For those in a different job, is this the job you received a skill assessment in?' for longitudinal survey respondents



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) 6-month (n=28) and 18-month (n=89)



# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

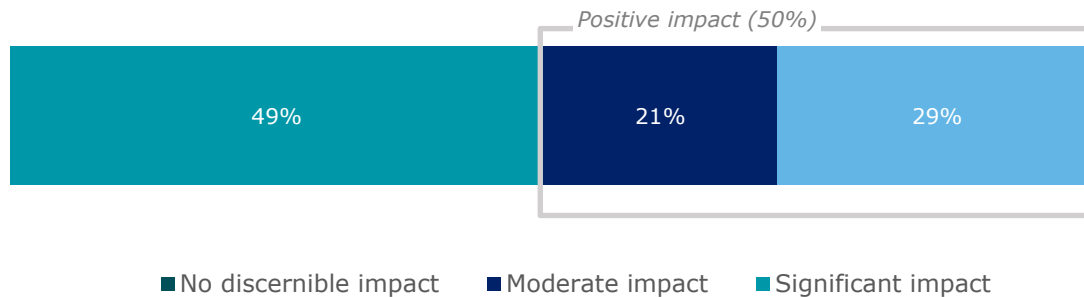
## Long-term

Applicants experience improved economic, financial and social wellbeing and inclusion

### 1 | Economic & financial wellbeing

Among the cohort of survey respondents who received a suitable skills assessment (limited to those who provided consent), nearly a third (29%) of respondents attributed receiving their skills assessment as a significant factor in securing their current job (Chart A.10). An additional 21% reported that it had a moderate impact, while 49% indicated no discernible effect. Narrowing this analysis to those who completed both the 6-month and 18-month surveys, the share of respondents who attributed receiving a skills assessment as a significant factor in securing their current employment has remain relatively consistent meanwhile those who found it somewhat helpful have risen from 14% to 22%.

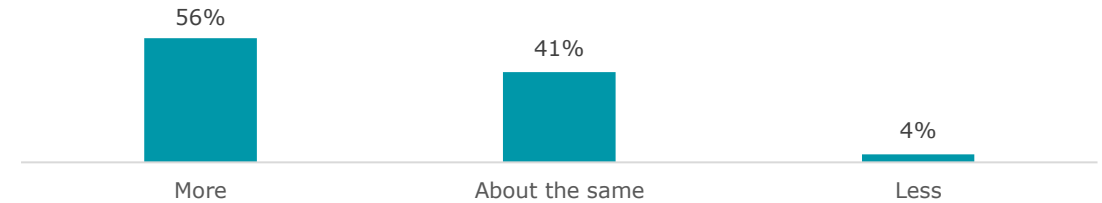
**Chart A.10:** 'Did your skills assessment outcome help you to get a job or support your job application?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=163), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'

After receiving a skills assessment, more than half (or 56%) of survey respondents reported earning more (Chart A.11), meanwhile 41% were earning about the same and 4% were earning less. This is consistent with other survey findings, with 29% of survey respondents indicating that they have used their skill assessment outcome to secure a pay rise, while a further 9% secured a promotion.

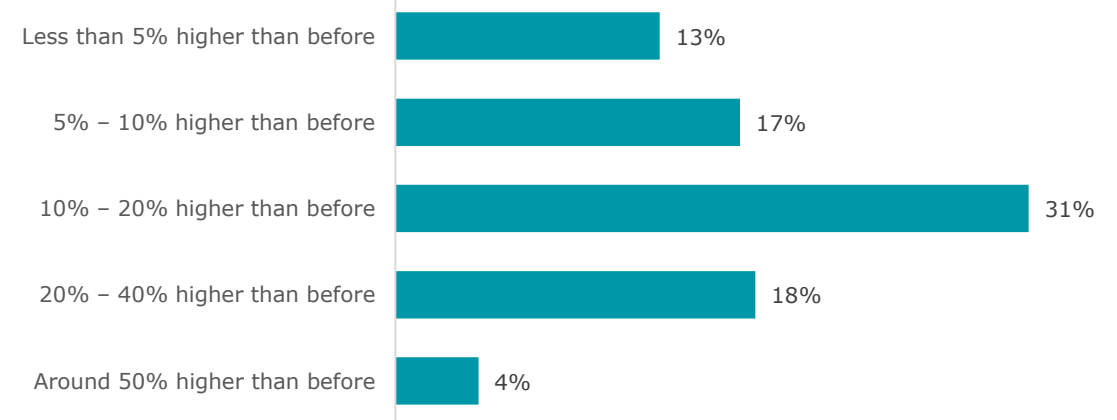
**Chart A.11:** 'Do you earn more or less money now than you did at the time you received a skills assessment?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=138) excludes respondents who selected 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'

Among survey respondents who reported earning more after receiving a suitable skills assessment outcomes (56%), 30% of respondents noted a small increase of 0-10% over their previous income, while a further 31% reported a moderate gain of 10-20%. An additional 18% enjoyed a substantial increase of 20-40%, and the remaining 4% experienced a significant jump of 50% or more compared to their previous income (Chart A.12).

**Chart A.12:** 'As a percentage, how much higher is your average monthly income now than at the time of you received a skills assessment outcome?'

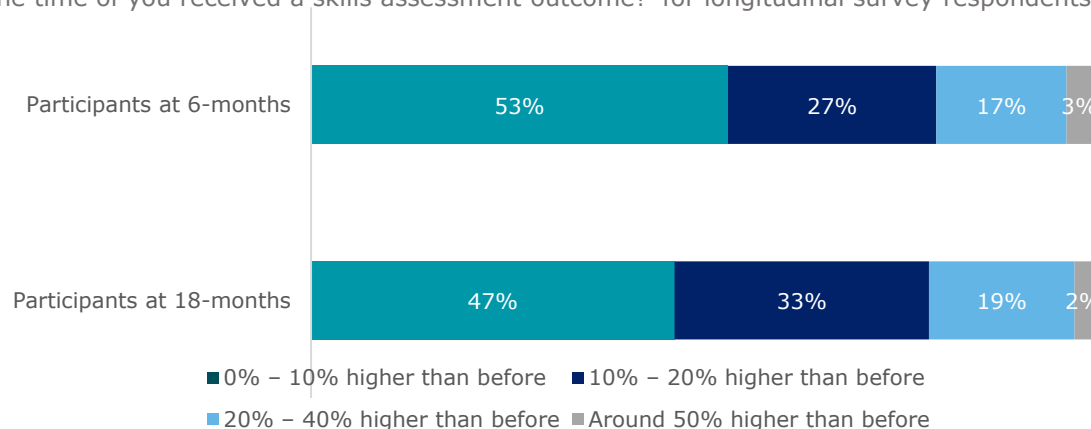


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=73), excludes 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'

# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

Focusing on the subgroup of respondents who participated in both the 6-month and 18-month surveys and received a suitable skills assessment outcome, reveals that the share of respondents who now earn more than they did at the time of their skills assessment has risen from 37% to 54%. Of the longitudinal respondents who participated in both the 6-month and 18-month surveys, the share of respondents earning 10-20% more grew from 27% to 33% (Chart A.13).

**Chart A.13:** 'As a percentage, how much higher is your average monthly income now than at the time of you received a skills assessment outcome?' for longitudinal survey respondents

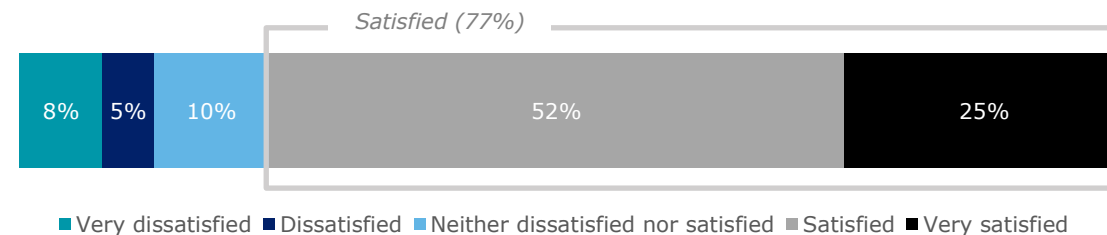


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) 6-month (n=30) and 18-month (n=43), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'

## 2 | Social wellbeing & inclusion

Overall, most employed survey respondents (77%) indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied with their current job, while 13% reported being dissatisfied (Chart A.14). The remaining individuals were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Interestingly, the levels of satisfaction remained similar between the group currently employed in roles aligned with their skills assessment and those in roles that were not. Given many participants were in roles aligned to their skills assessment, it generally make sense that many would be satisfied with their current position. Demonstrating that the Pilot may have sped up enhanced life satisfaction for those who were able to use their skills assessment to secure a new role aligned with qualifications.

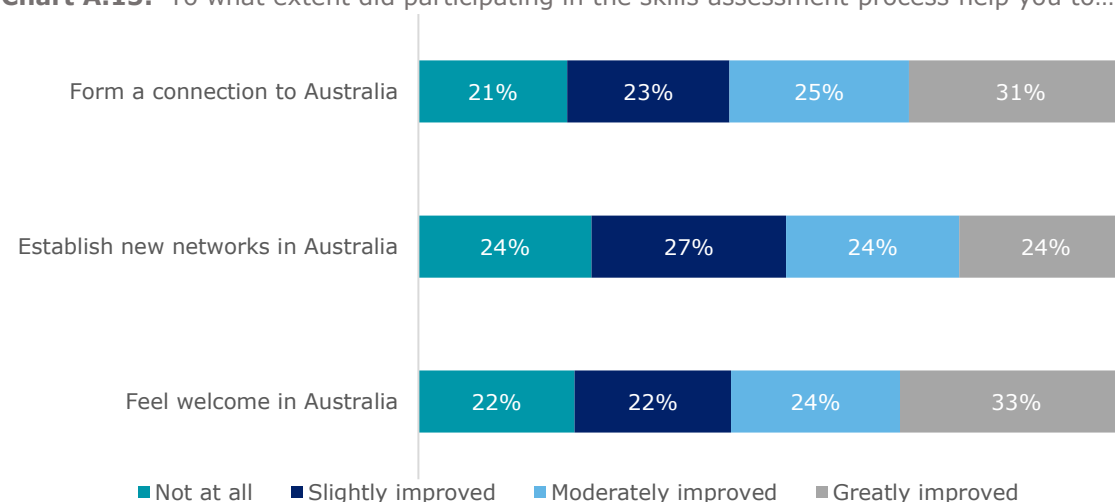
**Chart A.14:** 'How satisfied are you with your current job?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=141), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'

Survey respondents reported a high sense of belonging in Australia overall and reported that participating in the skills assessment process enhanced their sense of connection to Australia (89%), establish new networks (86%) and feeling welcome in Australia (88%) (Chart A.15).

**Chart A.15:** 'To what extent did participating in the skills assessment process help you to...'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=190), excludes respondents who indicated 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

## Reduced skill shortages in the labour market

Among the Pilot 1 participants who underwent a skills assessment and were found suitable, the top five occupations they received skills assessments for were: Accountant (17%), Chef (11%), Civil Engineer (10%) and Mechanical Engineer (10%). There exists strong alignment between the 2022 Skills Priority List (SPL) and the occupations for which respondents received suitable skills assessment outcomes, with the vast majority (80%) of participants obtaining a skills assessment outcome in occupations experiencing national shortages<sup>a</sup> (Chart A.16). Significantly, more than half (or 51%) of participants received suitable skills assessment outcomes for occupations classified at the highest skill level (ANZSCO skill level 1).

Within this cohort of participants, nearly a third (or 29%) received skills assessment outcomes for occupations deemed both in short supply and forecasted to experience strong demand. Nearly one-fifth (or 19%) of participants received a suitable skills assessment outcome for occupations not currently facing shortages.

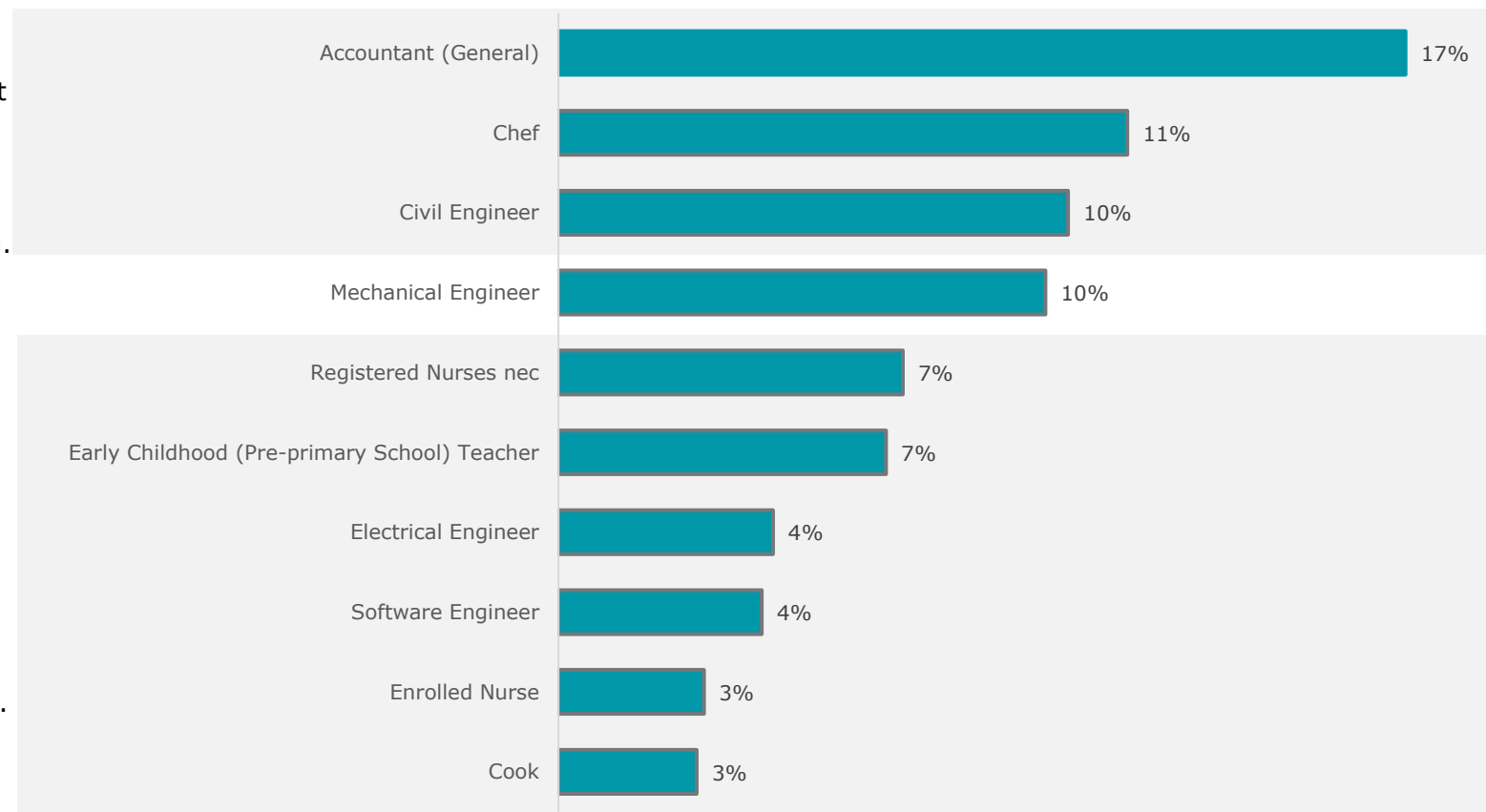
Given only 24% of participants secured employment in line with their skills assessment after receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment, it is likely that the contribution to more quickly addressing skill shortages would be minor.

## Have the Pilots met the targets that have been set by DEWR?

As earlier noted, participation in Pilot was in line with the Department's internal forecasting, representing 54% of the targeted population for Pilot 1-3 (7,300).

<sup>a</sup> An earlier year of the SPL (i.e., the 2022 SPL) was selected to align with when Pilot 1 was available to participants.

**Chart A.16:** Occupations Pilot 1 participants received skills assessment outcomes for, by skill shortage and future demand rating



— In national shortage    □ National future demand is strong or moderate

Source: Department of Employment and Workforce Relations and Jobs and Skills Australia (2024) (n=3,217)

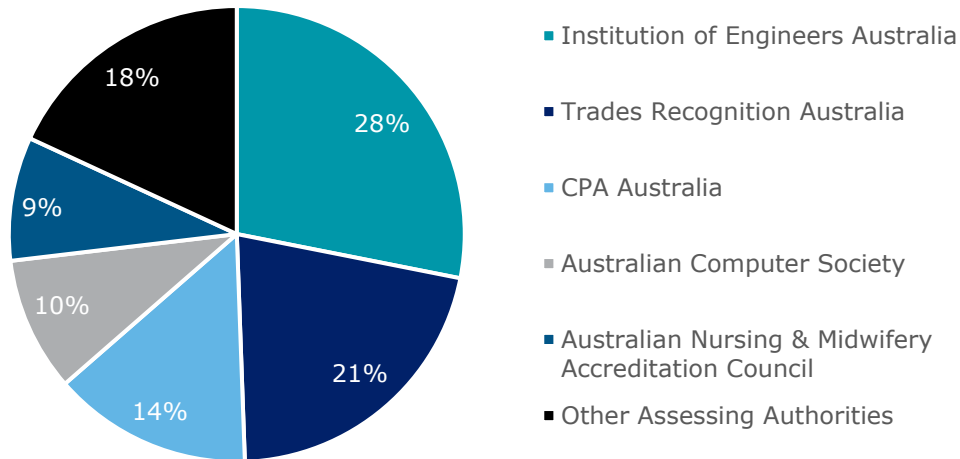
Note: The 2022 SPL reported future national demand in a different way to following years, therefore Pilot 2 and 3 report national demand in a different manner.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

## What are the characteristics of pilot participants and how does this differ across Pilots?

There exists a large amount of variation in the volume of applicants across Assessing Authorities (Chart A.17). Nearly two-thirds of applicants (or 63%) were concentrated across three Assessing Authorities – Institution of Engineers Australia, Trades Recognition Australia and CPA Australia. This appears to broadly align with the eligibility criteria for the Pilot, where a substantial number of priority occupations were associated with these Assessing Authorities. Other Assessing Authorities had very few eligible applicants, including some Assessing Authorities which had no eligible applicants.

**Chart A.17:** Pilot 1 participants by Assessing Authority (% of applications submitted for assessment)



Source: Department of Employment and Workforce Relations (2024) (n=3,977)

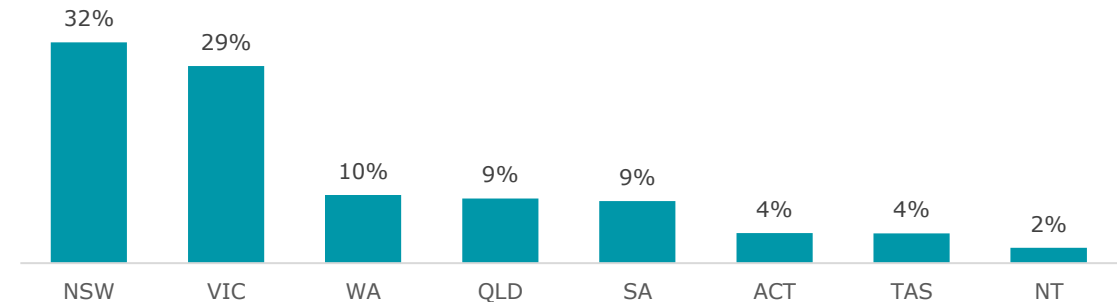
Note: Other Assessing Authorities includes: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Pharmacy Council, Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services, Institute of Public Accountants, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, Australian Physiotherapy Council, Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, Institute of Managers and Leaders, Speech Pathology Association of Australia.

More than half (54%) of applicants were male, with the remainder either female (34%) or gender was unspecified (12%).

Pilot 1 had participants from 80 different countries, with the most common nationalities including India (37%), followed by Nepal (14%) and China (8%). This source market distribution appears to be broadly consistent with participation in the overall permanent skilled migration system.

The geographic spread of participants is broadly consistent with the distribution of the Australian population, with 61% of applicants from New South Wales and Victoria (Chart A.18).

**Chart A.18:** Location of Pilot 1 participants by State and Territory, Australia



Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2022) (n=3,969)

Note: Postcode mapping is based on the Australian Census (2021)

- There exists more variation across Assessing Authorities relative to Pilot 2 and 3, however similar to Pilot 2 and 3 there were some Assessing Authorities who had very few eligible applicants.
- The top occupations assessed are relatively similar across Pilot 1 and 3, and relatedly the Assessing Authorities with the highest caseloads.
- A higher share of applicants received 'suitable' skills assessment outcomes relative to Pilot 2.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 1

## What did Assessing Authorities learn about process efficiencies for skills assessments, and will they apply these learnings in the future?

Some Assessing Authorities noted that the Pilot provided an opportunity to critically review skills assessment processes and identify areas that could be practically sped up, which primarily included system improvements both internal and external or streamlining internal team structures. For example, one Assessing Authority noted that they have observed some efficiencies in adopting a model of various sub-teams to focus on different types of applications – a learning that was facilitated through participation in the Pilot. While another Assessing Authority, noted that the Pilot encouraged their organisation to review the user interface and make improvements by providing more examples of the types of information required to submit a skills assessment application.

*"We introduced changes to the user interface so that the assessment is submitted correctly the first time and we're already seeing a massive impact from this change" – Assessing Authority*

These Assessing Authorities reported that they plan to continue to apply these learnings in the future.

Meanwhile, other Assessing Authorities who observed no change in processing times, as they were already meeting the Department's KPI, indicated that the Pilot did not facilitate any process efficiency learnings.

The Pilot was available during a relatively busy period for Assessing Authorities, as the majority reported having a large backlog of applications as international borders had recently reopened following COVID-19 induced closures. Across Assessing Authorities, there was no consensus on what the optimal time in the year would be to run a similar program. Assessing Authorities emphasised that they are typically 'demand takers' and that their case volumes are highly unpredictable. Beyond this, there was no agreement on whether it would be best to run the program during a busy or relatively slow period. Some Assessing Authorities noted that it would be most impactful to run the program during a period of high intensity when processing times are under pressure, others noted it would be better to run in a slower period

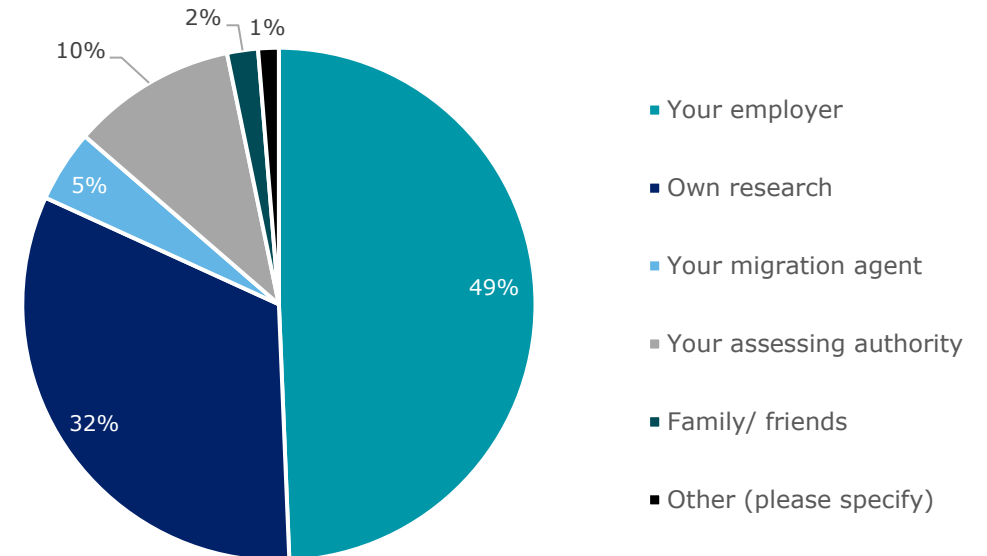
when they had more time to understand the administrative processes.

## Have there been any unintended positive or negative outcomes associated with the programs?

Outside of the learnings associated with process efficiencies facilitated by the Pilot (which will be applied to all skill assessment applicants), Assessing Authorities did not report any additional unintended positive or negative outcomes.

More broadly, most of the employed respondents (93%) expressed awareness of workplace rights and entitlements for migrant workers in Australia with 10% receiving this information from their Assessing Authority – an unintended positive outcome associated with receiving a skills assessment (Chart A.19). It is worth noting this outcome would have likely been achieved in the absence of the Pilot, given the Department only covered the cost associated with fast-tracking skills assessments.

**Chart A.19:** 'How did you learn about the workplace rights and entitlements for migrant workers in Australia?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=154), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'





# Impact of Pilot 1

The following draws on 6-month, 12-month and 18-month survey data and publicly available evidence.

# Impact of Pilot 1


## Did Pilot 1 have a meaningful and/or additional impact on participating migrants (and other Pilot stakeholders)?


### 1 | Additional skills in the economy

Some participants would not have completed a skills assessment if they had not participated in the Pilot. These participants are now able to contribute additional skills to the economy as a result of the program, and their impacted is measured using counterfactual impact evaluation. In its simplest form, counterfactual impact evaluation is a method of comparison which involves comparing the outcomes of interest of those having benefitted from a policy or program (the “treated group”) with those of a group similar in all respects to the treatment group (the “comparison/control group”). The only difference between these two groups is that the comparison/control group has not been exposed to the policy or programme.<sup>1</sup>

Practically, this often involves considering hypothetical ‘what if’ scenarios, to understand what the impact of the program truly was by considering what additional outcomes participants have likely been able to achieve compared to what they would have achieved if they had not participated in the program. Some caution should be applied when interpreting these results, as they are based on self-reported survey responses which are subject to various biases.

For Pilot 1, based on responses to the 18-month survey (Chart A.20):

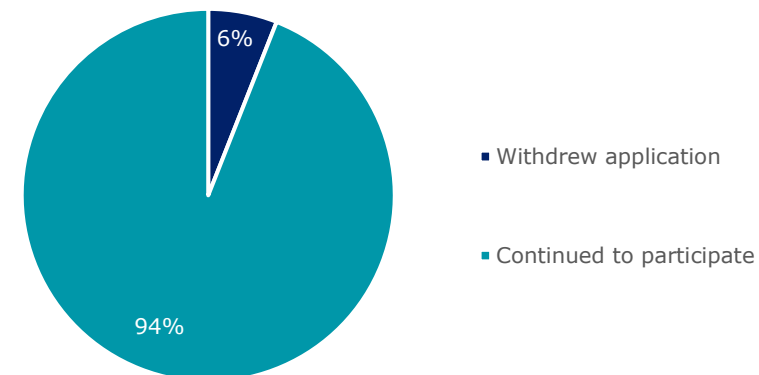
 **94% of participants would have completed a skills assessment even if they had not participated in the program.** Hence, the benefit of the program to this cohort is just a fast-tracking or ‘bringing forward’ of the benefits associated with a skills assessment outcome.

 **6% of participants would not have completed a skills assessment if they had not been fast-tracked.** That is, while this group may have already signed up for a skills assessment, it is likely that for some individuals if their application was not fast-tracked, they may have withdrawn their application / not pursued a skills assessment.

Applying these proportions to the broader Pilot 1 population, given the survey is broadly representative of participants, noting some limitations, 238 participants would have withdrawn their application or not pursued a skills assessment outcome if their application had not been fast-tracked. Applying this to the share of respondents who received a ‘suitable’ skills assessment outcome, 212 participants who received a ‘suitable’ skills assessment would have withdrawn their application in the absence of the Pilot.

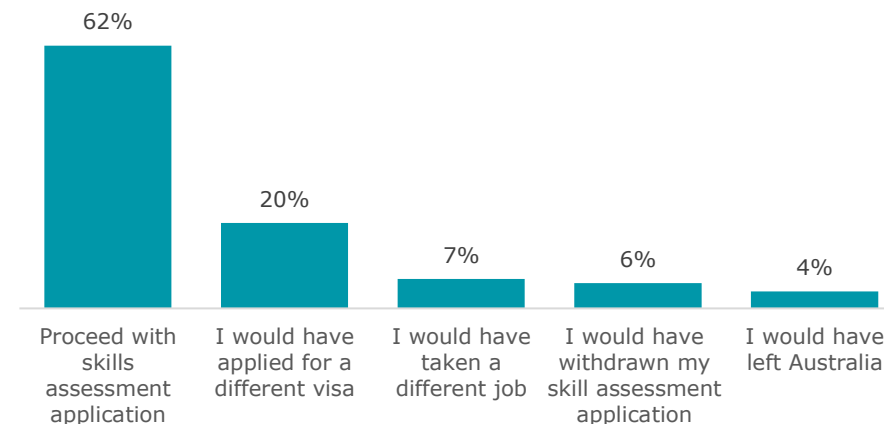
Alongside this, respondents revealed other actions they would have taken if their skills assessment was not fast-tracked. The most reported action was applying for a different visa (20%), followed by pursuing a different job (7%) and leaving Australia (4%) (Chart A.21). This suggests that there may be broader benefits associated with the fast-tracking of assessments beyond those which are additional. In addition, these findings signal that lengthy processing timeframes can have a significant impact on some migrants and there may be scope to better triage skill assessments.

Chart A.20: Counterfactual impact of Pilot 1



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=301)

Chart A.21: ‘Imagine your skills assessment took 8 weeks to complete instead of 3 weeks. Which of the following actions, if any, would you have taken?’



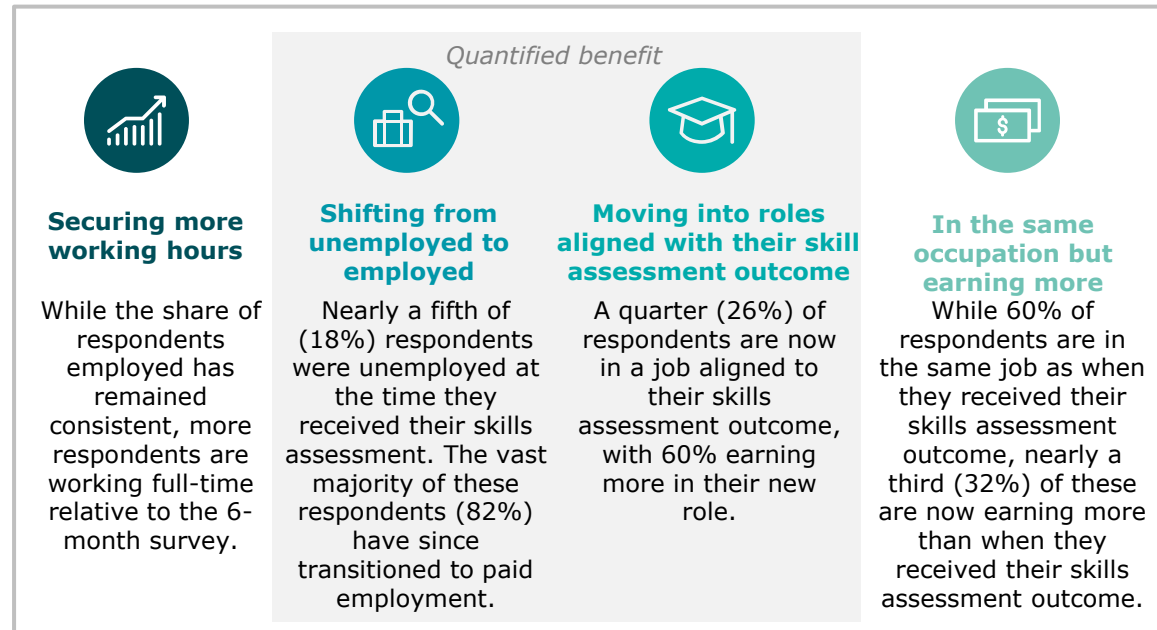
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=301)

# Impact of Pilot 1

## 2 | Increased earnings

For those who would've still pursued a skills assessment outcome regardless of their assessment being fast-tracked, there still exists other benefits of participating in the Pilot. These benefits primarily relate to 'bringing forward' the benefits associated with a skills assessment outcome, which relate to changes in employment circumstances, and as a result an increase in earnings. Figure A.1 below outlines the benefits Pilot 1 participants have experienced as a result of receiving their skills assessment outcome. These benefits are based on outcomes observed in the analysis of the Pilot 1 6-month, 12-month and 18-month surveys. The below analysis only considers respondents who received a suitable skills assessment outcome, in other words respondents for which the Pilot 'worked' for.

**Figure A.1:** The benefits of receiving a skills assessment outcome on participants earnings



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024). Please note this is based on the Pilot 1 6-month and 12-month surveys to enable comparisons across Pilots.

## Benefits of moving into roles aligned with participants skills assessment outcomes

According to the 12-month survey, approximately a quarter (26%) of the 294 respondents who had received a suitable skills assessment outcome and were in paid employment had secured employment in a different occupation which was now aligned to their skills assessment. Please note this analysis only captures survey respondents who provided consent to link survey responses to the Department's existing data.

Within the cohort of respondents who had secured new employment aligned with their skills assessment, nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents reported earning more now relative to when they received their skills assessment outcome. Analysis of survey data, alongside ABS average weekly earnings data reveals that, in the 12-months following receiving their skills assessment outcome, participants earned on average \$26,599 more<sup>a</sup>, as a result of securing a job aligned to their skills assessment outcome. This result also captures productivity benefits (through wages) associated with moving into a job aligned to skill level. Notably, three-fifths (60%) of these participants indicated that receiving their skills assessment outcome helped them secure a job (or support job applications). This resulted in an approximate impact of receiving a skills assessment outcome of \$16,051 per participant in the year post outcome.

Pilot 1 involved a free fast-tracked skills assessment as opposed to a free skills assessment, therefore, the increase in earnings can only be attributed to the reduction in time between the 'Assessment Ready Date' and 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant'. On average, Pilot 1 reduced the time period between the 'Assessment Ready Date' and 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' by approximately 6 weeks. This estimate is likely to be conservative given interviews with Assessing Authorities revealed that other aspects of the skills assessment process were also accelerated, which are not captured in the available data. Applying the above analysis to the reduction in time period between the 'Assessment Ready Date' and 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant', reveals that fast-tracking a skills assessment enabled a participant to on average earn \$5,204 more<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 95% confidence interval of \$17,764 to \$35,434

<sup>b</sup> 95% confidence interval of \$3,790 to \$6,617



# Participants' outcomes in the context of the Australian labour market

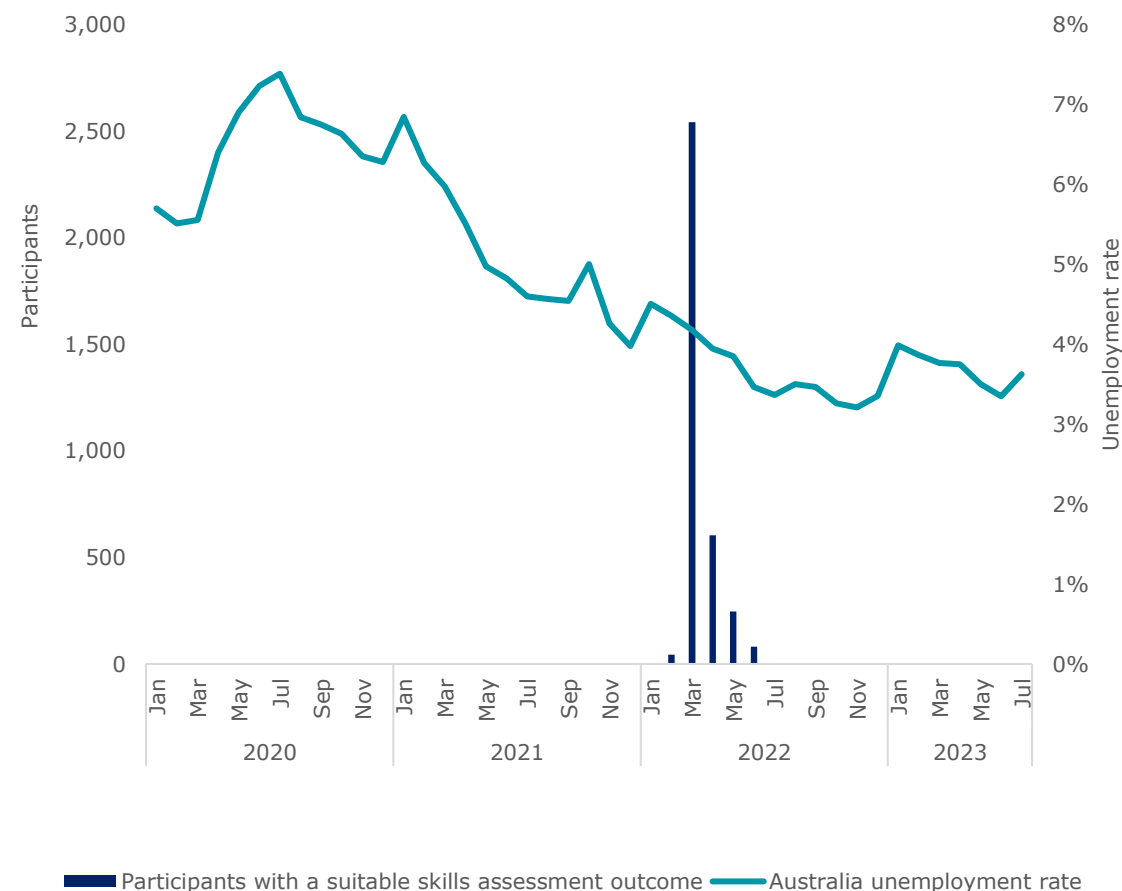
All Pilot 1 program participants received their suitable skills assessment outcome in 2022, at a time when the labour market was experiencing increasingly strong labour market conditions (Chart A.22). These favourable conditions likely contributed to participants' generally positive employment outcomes both before and after obtaining their assessment results. However, as labour market conditions are expected to worsen in the future, the significance of receiving a suitable skills assessment outcome may become even more pronounced in shaping outcomes.

In 2022, the Australian labour market exhibited remarkably strong conditions, characterised by historically low unemployment rates which were driven by high job vacancies and persistent labour shortages. The closure of international borders during the COVID-19 pandemic led to critical skill shortages in Australia, a challenge that has continued to shape the labour market. Consequently, job vacancies increased across all states and territories in the country, while total employment reached unprecedented levels.<sup>2,3,4</sup> While we would expect improvement in labour market outcomes naturally over time, these favourable economic conditions likely had a positive impact on participant employment outcomes, making it notably easier for individuals to secure employment.

While 2022 saw robust economic conditions, 2023 experienced a significant slowdown in Australia's and more broadly, global economic growth with projections indicating growth will remain below historical norms for the next couple of years. This can be primarily attributed to the tightening of monetary policies, which is dampening demand and impeding economic activity. In fact, several labour market indicators suggest that the market have cooled in recent months, with broader economic weakness and the impact of interest rate increases stalling momentum, leading to increases in unemployment and underemployment rates (which aligns to when Pilot 2 and 3 was available to participants).<sup>5,6</sup> This shift in labour market dynamics may impact participant outcomes, emphasising the importance of obtaining a suitable skills assessment for improved employment prospects or requiring enhanced post-program support to secure jobs aligned with their assessments.

Similarly, the recent review of Australia's migration system in tandem to changes to student visas, notably those relating to Temporary graduate visas, further emphasises the important role of skills assessments in bolstering the integrity of Australia's migration system.<sup>7,8</sup>

**Chart A.22:** Pilot 1 participants with a suitable skills assessment outcome and the unemployment rate, by month

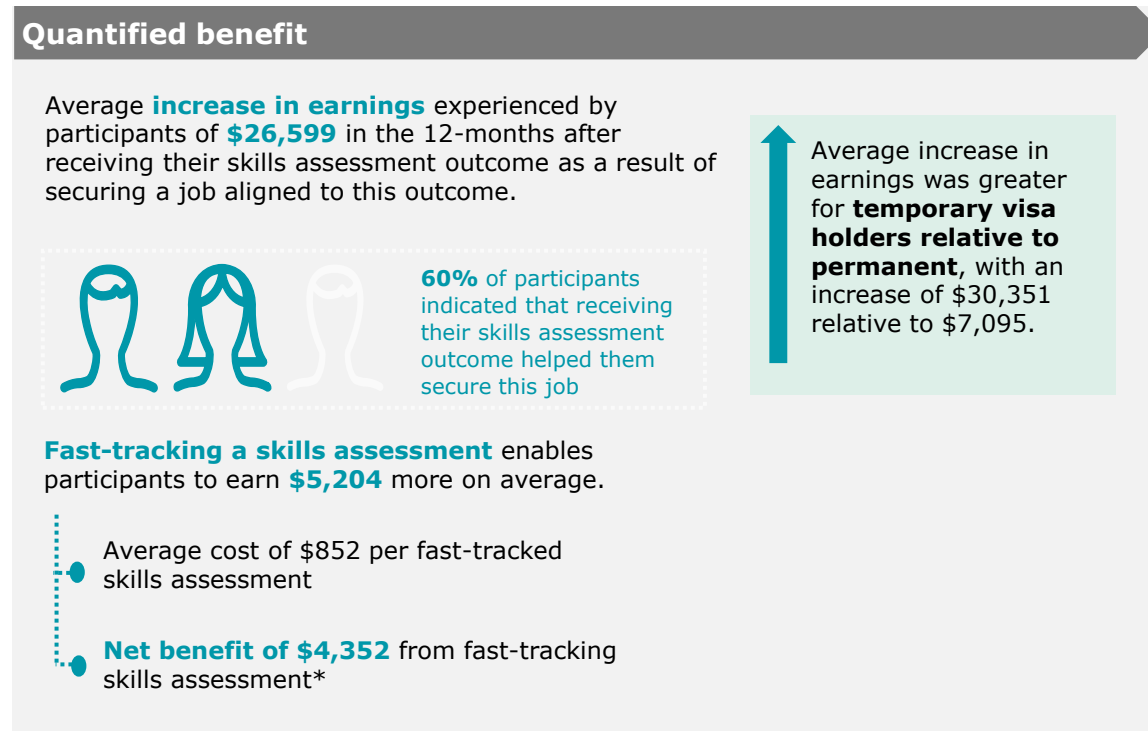


Source: Deloitte Access Economics, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2023) and ABS (2023)

# Impact of Pilot 1

Figure A.2 summarises the quantified benefits associated with receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment outcome.

**Figure A.2:** The quantified benefits associated with receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment outcome on participants earnings



Notably, the impact of receiving a free fast-tracked skills assessment was much greater for survey respondents who were on a temporary visa at the time of receiving their skills assessment outcome compared to those with permanent visas. On average, in the 12-months after receiving their skills assessment outcome, respondents on temporary visas experienced a \$30,351 increase in earnings, in contrast to the \$7,095 average increase observed among respondents with permanent visas. Furthermore, the impact of obtaining a fast-tracked skills assessment relative to the free skills assessment amounted to \$5,822 for individuals with temporary visas, whereas those with permanent visas saw a more modest increase of \$1,752. This is in line with expectations, given research confirms that temporary migrants tend to fare worse in the labour market than long-term residents.<sup>9</sup>

On average, the cost of the fast-tracked skills assessment was \$852, inclusive of both the fast-tracking fee and the 20% administration fee. This cost varied across Assessing Authorities, with Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council having the lowest fee at \$408 and Trades Recognition Australia reporting the highest fee of \$1,892 (among those Assessing Authorities for which cost information was made available).

Source: Deloitte Access Economics based on responses to the Pilot 1 6-month and 12-month surveys.

\* Note that the net benefit quantified is not intended to be a full Cost Benefit Analysis, and as such, some benefits may not be captured in this figure, such as the benefits to employers and Assessing Authorities, as well as the broader societal benefits.

# Impact of Pilot 1

While the preceding analysis predominately focuses on individuals who have secured employment in roles aligned to their skills assessment since receiving their outcomes, it's worth noting that numerous other respondents experienced improvements in their earnings. However, it's not feasible to quantify the income increase experienced by respondents who have remained employed in the same job or switched jobs (which was still not aligned with their skills assessment outcome) between receiving a skills assessment outcome and the survey periods as these outcomes cannot be attributed to the intervention.

Importantly too, there exists social benefits associated with receiving a skills assessment outcome on participants and more broadly, their families.

## 3 | Improved social wellbeing

Pilot 1 survey respondents associated receiving a skills assessment outcome with a variety of positive influences on their lives and those of their families. Chart A.25 illustrates some of the ways that receiving a skills assessment outcome positively influenced respondents and their families.

Broadly speaking, these positive impacts fell into four categories:





-  Enhancing future life opportunities and providing greater stability.
-  The ability to apply for a different visa or permanent residency.
-  Increasing employment and career prospects and feeling more confident.
-  Valuable or having a greater sense of belonging.

Figure A.3 below illustrates some of the ways that receiving a skills assessment outcome positively influenced respondents and their families.

**Figure A.3:** Participants survey responses to 'what difference the skills assessment outcome made to the participant or their family'



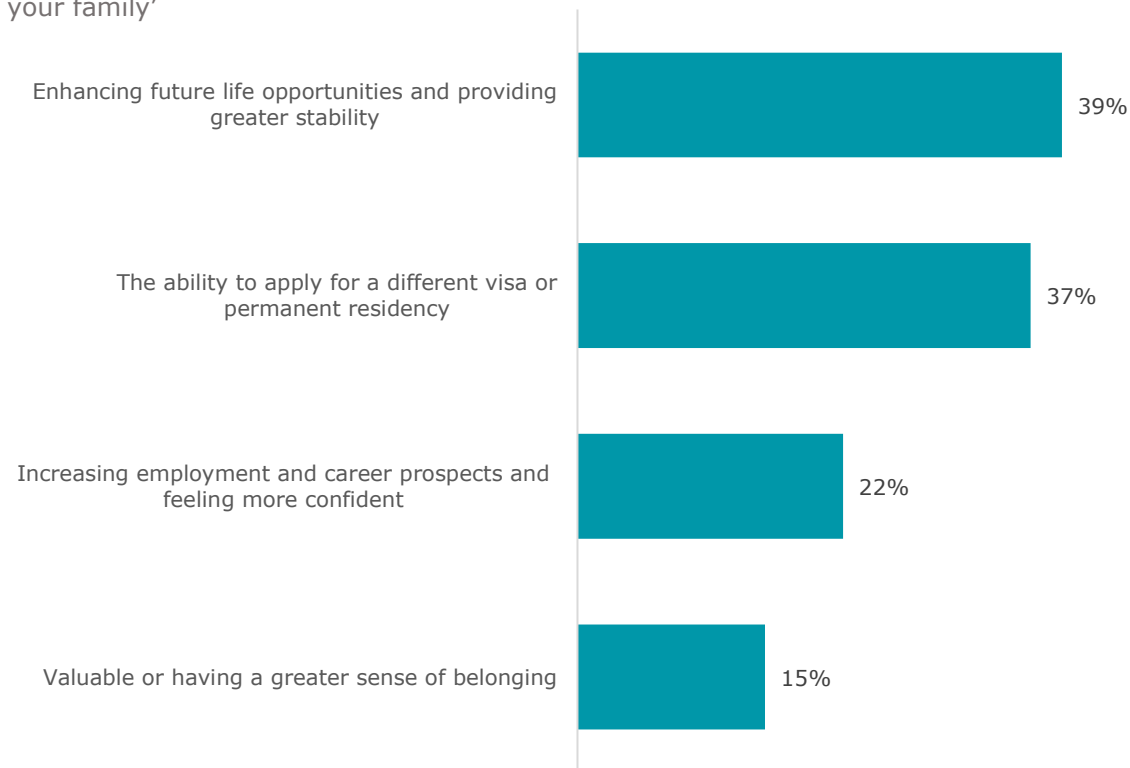
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024)

# Impact of Pilot 1



Nearly two in five survey respondents (or 39%) indicated that receiving a suitable skills assessment outcome had positively influenced future life opportunities and provided them with an enhanced sense of stability and security (Chart A.23). A significant subset of these respondents also identified the ability to apply for a different visa or permanent residency as a key benefit associated with receiving a skills assessment outcome.

**Chart A.23:** 'What difference, if any, did your skills assessment outcome make to you or your family'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=79), the percentages do not add up to 100%, as some responses align to multiple categories

The benefits of transitioning to permanency status have also been further explored in the literature. Transitioning from a temporary to a permanent visa offers migrants crucial stability, easing the anxiety associated with uncertain immigration outcomes. Temporary migrants often grapple with building lives in a host country while uncertain about the permanency of their stay. Shifting to permanent status, as demonstrated by Robertson and Runganaikaloo (2014), grants the stability needed for a secure and settled life.<sup>10</sup>

Migrants holding permanent residency generally enjoy more favourable employment prospects when compared to their temporary resident counterparts. Permanent visa holders encounter fewer work restrictions, which enhances their bargaining power and reduces vulnerability to exploitation. Conversely, temporary migrants often confront limited job options due to factors such as unrecognised qualifications, job-specific visa requirements, and a lack of local networks, which frequently lead to lower-quality employment.<sup>11</sup>

The social ramifications of over-qualification on migrants' wellbeing in academic literature is further explored in Pilot 2 (page 47).

## What pilot factors appear to determine and/or impact success (as defined in the program logic)?

Participants who received an 'unsuitable' skills assessment outcome were most likely to be receiving assessments for STEM or health related roles – this is likely to reflect the highly skilled nature of these occupations. There exists no other notable differences to the Pilot population across gender, location in Australia or country of origin.



# Appendix B

## Pilot 2: Skills Assessment Opportunities for Migrants





# Implementation of Pilot 2

The following draws on Assessing Authority interviews and program data analysis.

# Implementation of Pilot 2



## Do the Pilot operations and procedures enable effective implementation, and how does this vary across Assessing Authorities and Employer Assessment Providers?

The vast majority of Assessing Authorities indicated that Pilot 2's guidelines were relatively clear and easy to understand. In one instance, an Assessing Authority indicated that the guidelines were not clear to implement however this represented an isolated occurrence.

Most Assessing Authorities indicated that there were some issues surrounding the early communication processes where further clarification from the Department was required. For example, Assessing Authorities frequently highlighted the need to update the skills assessment outcome letter was not completely considered in the initial Pilot guidelines. However, Assessing Authorities consistently noted that the Department was very accessible and quick to provide guidance.

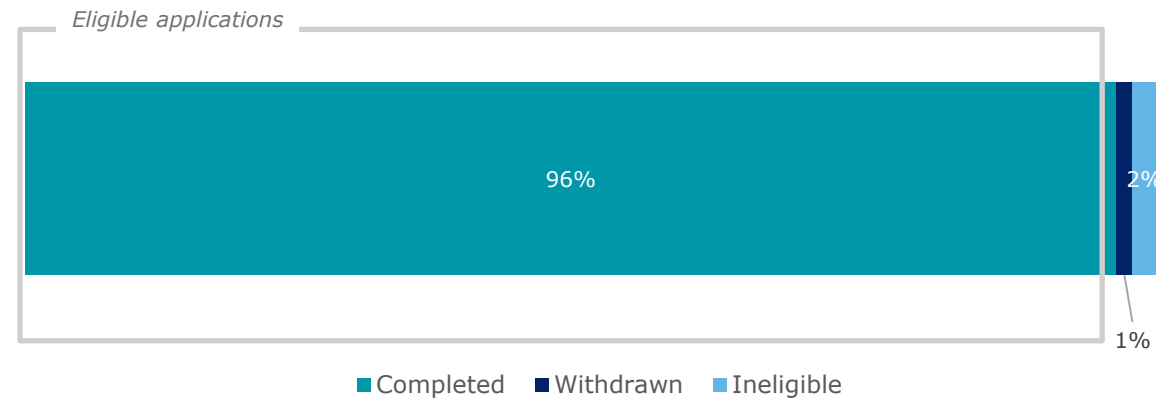
A number of Assessing Authorities noted that Pilot 2's guidelines could have better emphasised that the Pilot was not associated with skills assessments for migration purposes earlier in the guidelines to reduce confusion. However, it should be noted that the Pilot's guidelines clearly stated that the skills assessment outcome letter was not intended to support visa applications and would need to be tailored accordingly Pilot participant (under the 'Outcome Letter' heading).

## How does the uptake of the Pilots compare to the forecast / anticipated levels?

Pilot 2 had a total of 283 applications, equivalent to approximately 4% of the total participation target for the Pilot 1-3 (7,300), likely below the Pilot 2 intended uptake target. As earlier highlighted, the SAP were re-scoped in 2023, with targeted participation across Pilot 1-3 lowered from 9,500 to 7,300. Among the applications (283), the vast majority of applicants (95%) had completed their skills assessment with the remainder withdrawn (1%) or ineligible (2%) (Chart B.1).

The bulk of Assessing Authorities noted that participation in the Pilot was in line with their expectation to receive few applications for the Pilot or lower than anticipated, given the Department's forecasts of eligible participants.

Chart B.1: Pilot 2 application status breakdown



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=283)

## What are the major barriers and enablers to different stakeholders engaging with the Skills Assessment Pilots?

### Assessing Authorities

Assessing Authorities indicated that the information sessions run by the Department were very useful in understanding the program. In addition, the website material prepared by the Department was said to be very helpful as Assessing Authorities were able to upload this material directly to their websites. This website material also allowed the Pilot to be delivered in a consistent manner.

A small number of Assessing Authorities, particularly those which require a written exam, highlighted that the design of the Pilot did not align with their assessment structure. For example, one interviewed Assessing Authority requires applicants to complete several written exams with some only available to complete twice a year. Given this Assessing Authority agreed to participate in the Pilot towards the end of 2023, there was not sufficient time to complete the entire assessment process, which meant they were not able to support any participants through the Pilot. Other Assessing Authorities did not allow for greater exam capacity or frequency to support the delivery of the Pilot.



## Implementation of Pilot 2

Consistent with Pilot 1, while Assessing Authorities agreed that the MSI system was fit-for-purpose, it lacked some of the desired flexibility. Assessing Authorities reported that they were frequently locked out of the system, only allowed a limited number of users (which was challenging for larger organisations) and did not allow users to modify records when a minor mistake was identified. Assessing Authorities noted that despite providing this feedback for Pilot 1 to the Department no improvements were introduced.

### *Barriers to participation*

According to Assessing Authorities, the key barrier to participation in the Pilot was misalignment with the eligibility criteria, which included a combination of:

- holding an ineligible visa,
- being located offshore as a number of Assessing Authority primarily receive applications from offshore applicants,
- skilled in an occupation that was not eligible for the Pilot.

Some Assessing Authorities noted that the eligible occupations were highly specialised and as a result, they often receive a low volume of applications for these occupations each year.

*"In a typical year, we'd only receive a handful of applicants in these occupations that were eligible for the Pilot anyway" – Assessing Authority*

This is likely a reflection of the shortage nature of these occupations, where there is a very limited supply of these skills in the economy. Which suggests there is a limited number of unrecognised skills in this economy.

A few Assessing Authorities highlighted that the concept of a skills assessment for employment purposes is not well understood which contributed to low participation in the Pilot. For example, participants may not understand what the process involves as well as the outcomes associated with receiving a skills assessment for employment purposes. In addition, some Assessing Authorities noted that the skills assessment

outcome letter is not widely recognised within the industry, suggesting the outcome letter could be better marketed as being based on industry standards to employers. Consistent with this, some occupations do not require a skills assessments in order to secure a job, which brings into question the value provided by receiving a skills assessment for employment purposes.

Some Assessing Authorities noted that identifying eligible applicants for the Pilot was challenging, as the Pilot relied on previous successful applicants sharing the information with their personal networks.

*"The approach to identifying applicants over relied on putting out the information and hoping that the right people would find it" – Assessing Authority*

Instead, Assessing Authorities highlighted that the Department could have utilised more appropriate promotional channels to reach the desired cohort. For example, one Assessing Authority highlighted the success to the Victorian Government's Overseas Qualification Unit (OQU) which heavily targeted in-person events such as refugee forums to reach a similar cohort.

A number of Assessing Authorities highlighted that there was a lack of awareness surrounding the Pilot across the broader sector, such as across peak bodies and other government agencies. This lack of awareness of the Pilot may have also contributed to lower than anticipated participation.

# Implementation of Pilot 2



## Are skill assessments for migrants completed in a timely manner (in-line with the Pilot guidelines)?

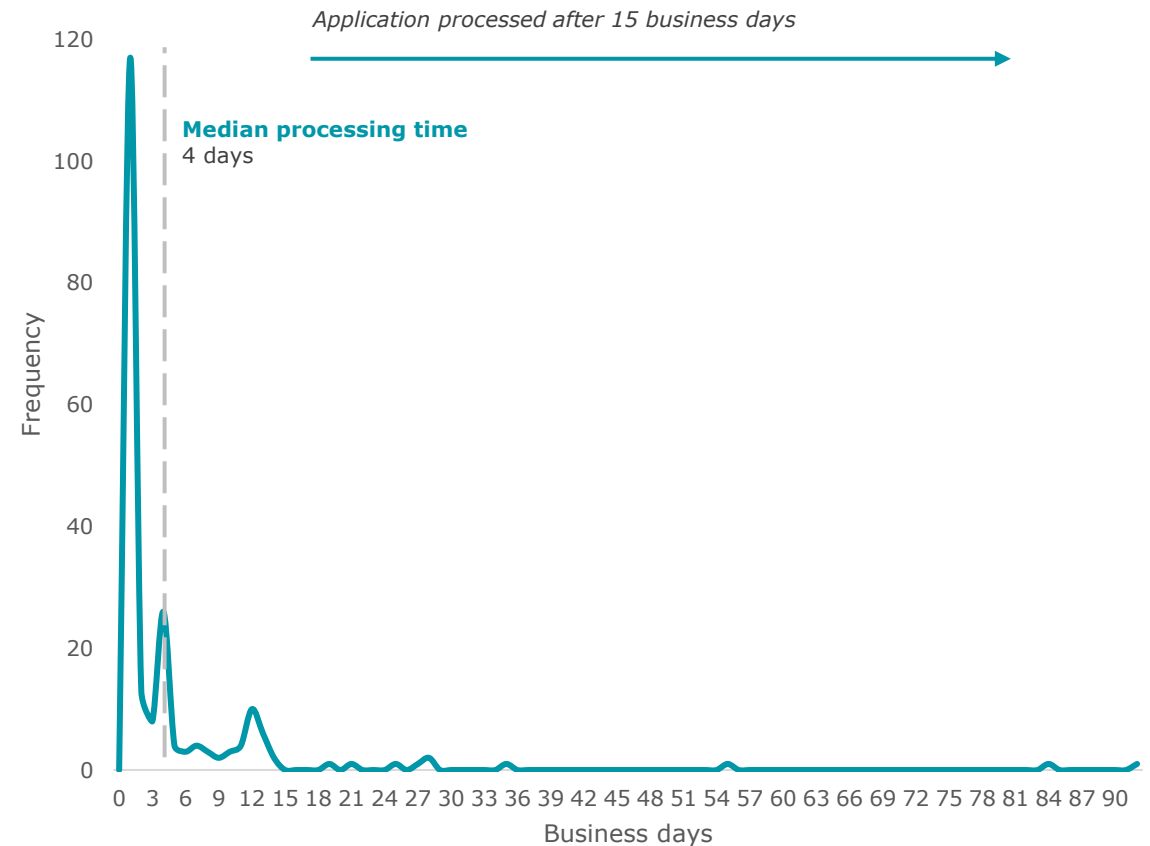
A measure of Pilot 2's implementation is the extent to which skill assessment outcome processing times have been sped up. According to the Pilot 2 operational guidelines, Assessing Authorities should aim to process applications from the 'Assessment Ready Date' to 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' within an average of 15 business days.

The data indicates:

- Overall, 96% of applications in Pilot 2 were processed from the 'Assessment Ready Date' to 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' within 15 business days – the Department's key performance indicator (KPI) for Pilot 2.
- All Assessing Authorities achieved an average processing time from 'Assessment Ready' to 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' within 12 business days, effectively fulfilling the Department's KPI of 15 business days on average.
- The median processing time across all Assessing Authorities was 4 business days, although this duration varied between 1 and 13 days, across different Assessing Authorities (Chart B.2). Suggesting there may be scope to adjust the KPI settings, particularly for some Assessing Authorities, to align more closely with their specific processing capabilities and potentially streamline the overall assessment process.
- The majority of participants (or 76%) of Pilot 2 participants received notification of their skills assessment outcome within 5 business days of 'Assessment Ready'. The maximum interval between 'Assessment Ready' and the 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant' was 92 days.

Consistent with the above, all Assessing Authorities reported that applications were processed within the processing times KPIs. Assessing Authorities with low Pilot caseloads, indicated that eligible Pilot applications were simply prioritised within the existing queue. In other words, these applications were pushed to the front of the queue. Meanwhile, Assessing Authorities with larger caseloads often had introduced additional resources to support with the delivery of the Pilot which meant applicants outside the Pilot were unaffected (as outlined in the Department's contracts).

**Chart B.2:** Business days between 'Assessment Ready Date' and 'Date Skills Assessment Outcome Notified to Applicant'



Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=274)

Note: Analysis considers public holidays which occurred over the period between an application being 'assessment ready' and 'date skills assessment outcome notified to applicant' based on where the Assessing Authority's head office is located.

# Implementation of Pilot 2



## What levers did Assessing Authorities apply to provide faster and more efficient skills assessments?

Assessing Authorities applied several strategies to implement the Pilot. These included bringing on additional resources, streamlining or introducing new internal systems and diverting existing resources. Of these strategies, Assessing Authorities with lower caseloads commonly diverted existing resources, often keeping these teams insular from broader assessment teams to minimise the need to upskill the entire team.

Meanwhile Assessing Authorities with larger caseloads often utilised a combination of employing additional contract or temporary staff or introducing new or modifying existing systems to identify and take carriage of Pilot applications. Some of the Assessing Authorities who hired resources noted that the additional contract or temporary staff were not often required given lower than anticipated caseloads. Assessing Authorities who also participated in Pilot 1 often were able to leverage the same infrastructure to deliver Pilot 2, given the similar nature of the two Pilots.

The majority of Assessing Authorities also utilised in-house marketing teams to identify and promote the Pilot to potential applicants, which primarily involved contacting previous applicants in addition to designing webpages, newsletters and posting on social media. A selection of Assessing Authorities did engage external stakeholders, including Registered Training Organisations, peak bodies and industry groups in order to further promote the Pilot.

Assessing Authorities often noted that fielding enquiries from potential applicants often represented the most resource intensive component of delivering the Pilot, particular for Assessing Authorities who received no eligible applications.

*"The most time-consuming part of the Pilot was responding to 'Am I eligible' enquiries as people would see 'free skills assessments' and want to check if they were eligible with reading the eligibility criteria" – Assessing Authority*

Larger Assessing Authorities reported that implementing the Pilot was administratively burdensome as they needed to coordinate across several teams, including the marketing, membership, IT and assessment teams to effectively implement the Pilot.

## Are the pilots implemented in a culturally appropriate manner?

Pilot 2 had participants from 50 different countries, with the largest share of participants originating from India (26%), followed by Pakistan (12%) and the Philippines (7%). This source market distribution appears to be broadly consistent with participation in the overall permanent skilled migration system. This wide uptake across a diverse range of countries suggests that the Pilot was implemented in a culturally appropriate manner to support the participation across a wide range of nationalities.

## Is the pilots funding appropriate to enable stakeholders to effectively achieve the desired outcome of the program?

Across Assessing Authorities with larger caseloads, there was a consensus that the Pilot's funding was sufficient to cover resources required to deliver the Pilot however, the funding was not always sufficient to cover additional investments to support the effective implementation of the Pilot such as IT infrastructure or marketing.

Assessing Authorities with no eligible applicants highlighted that the funding was generally not sufficient to cover the costs associated with setting up the Pilot as payments were purely associated with skill assessments. Despite this, the vast majority of Assessing Authorities agreed that participation in the Pilot was still worthwhile to further the Department's objectives.

## How did DEWR inform the development of the Pilots based on previous learnings with other similar programs?

Consistent with Pilot 1, DEWR undertook extensive consultations both internally within the Department and externally with industry stakeholders to inform the design of the Pilot. This consultation process also involved workshopping and testing policy changes aimed at increasing participant uptake in Pilot 2 and 3. Please refer to page 7 for further information surrounding the input into the design and development of the Pilots.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

The following draws upon Assessing Authority interviews, program data, publicly available data, 6-month and 12-month survey data.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## To what extent are the Pilots achieving the intended short, medium and long-term outcomes?

### Short-term

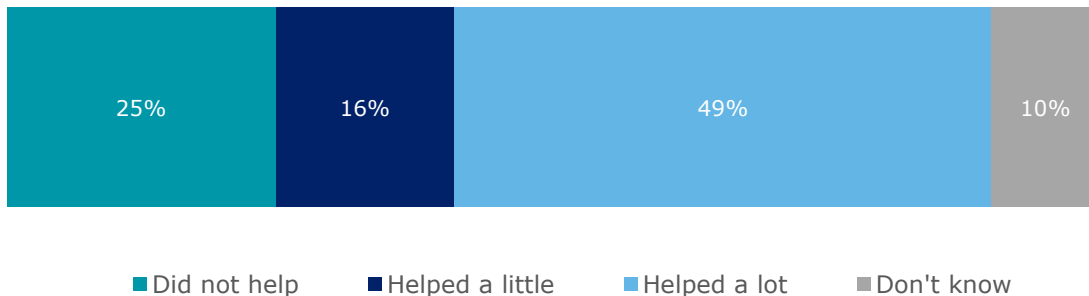
#### More applicants completing skills assessments & Applicants gain fast-tracked skills assessments

Pilot 2 supported 272 applicants to receive a free and fast-tracked skills assessment outcome. Among applicants who completed the skills assessment (272), more than half (54%) achieved a 'suitable' skills assessment outcome. This demonstrates that Pilot 2 was not as effective as Pilot 1 in supporting applicants to receive a fast-tracked skills assessment outcome.

#### Applicants are able to support job applications with skills assessment outcomes

Among the cohort of survey respondents who received a suitable skills assessment and were employed at the time of survey, 65% reported that their assessment outcome supported with securing a job or aiding job application (Chart B.3).

**Chart B.3:** 'Did your skills assessment outcome help you to get a job or support job applications?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=61)

#### Applicants become eligible for Pilot 3

Among Assessing Authorities who participated in both Pilot 2 and 3, no Assessing Authorities reported referring applicants to Pilot 3. However, analysis of the Pilot 3 6-

month survey reveals that 8% of respondents participated in both Pilot 2 and 3.

#### Improved understanding of applicants on non-skilled visas

A number of Assessing Authorities noted the Pilot helped to enhance their understanding of the barriers faced by applicants on non-skilled visas. Some of the common barriers faced by these applicants identified include:

- **Meeting English language requirements.** Non-skilled visas do not include minimum English language requirements as part of the visa application, meanwhile skilled visa holders are required to demonstrate a certain level of English competency in order to secure a visa.
- **Evidence of qualifications undertaken or previous employment.** It is often difficult for humanitarian visa holders to secure prior employment or education records, given they have often rapidly left their country of origin. Furthermore, securing previous employment documentation (i.e., work experience or references) is a challenge faced by all types of migrants as applicants are often hesitant to request references from current employers as they are concerned about losing their job.
- **Fees.** Assessing Authorities consistently indicated that the fee associated with skills assessments often represent a key barrier to many migrants.
- **Difficulty understanding the skill assessment criteria.** A number of Assessing Authorities noted that all types of applicants particularly where English is a second language, struggle to comprehend the skills assessment criteria and as a result, Assessing Authorities receive a lot of applications which are not assessment ready.
- **Understanding what it means to work in Australia** is often described as a gap faced by non-skilled visa holders, particularly those with no prior local work experience.

In response to these barriers, Assessing Authorities reported concessions are made with respect to fee and evidence provided for non-skilled visa holders, particularly for those on a humanitarian visa. Among Assessing Authorities providing these concessions, they were implemented prior to introduction of Pilot 2.

Given Assessing Authorities were already supporting non-skilled visa holders to complete skills assessments, it is unclear the extent to which the Pilot facilitated this enhanced understanding of barriers faced. Nonetheless, Assessing Authorities demonstrated a strong understanding of the challenges faced by non-skilled visa holders.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

The employment obstacles voiced by participants in Pilot 2 surveys closely mirrored those identified by Assessing Authorities. More than half of the respondents (54%) identified the primary hurdle to securing a job that matches their qualifications as a lack of work experience or references. Language barriers were cited by 31% of respondents as a significant challenge. Additionally, a notable portion of participants (25%) mentioned the requirement for additional licenses or certifications, along with family or caregiving responsibilities (23%), as additional barriers (Chart B.4).

**Chart B.4:** 'Based on your experience in the Australian job market, what are some of the challenges you've faced getting a job aligned to your qualifications?'



Note: Percentages total more than 100% as respondents can select more than one answer.  
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=61). Given all participants were eligible to work, 'visa restrictions' may refer to employed mandated restrictions.  
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Similarly, the most common barrier faced to securing employment for female and male respondents alike was lack of local work experience and references (Chart B.5). However, female respondents were more likely to identify 'applied for additional licenses or certifications', 'family and caring duties' and 'transport difficulties' as barriers to participating in the labour market.

**Chart B.5:** 'Based on your experience in the Australian job market, what are some of the challenges you've faced getting a job aligned to your qualifications?' by gender



Note: Percentages total more than 100% as respondents can select more than one answer.  
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=49)



# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## Strengthened relationship with DEWR and Assessing Authorities

Consistent with Pilot 1, all Assessing Authorities reported that participating in the Pilot has strengthened the relationship between Assessing Authorities and the Department. Assessing Authorities highlighted that participation in the Pilot has increased the frequency of contact with the Department in addition to their comfort reaching out to the Department with queries.

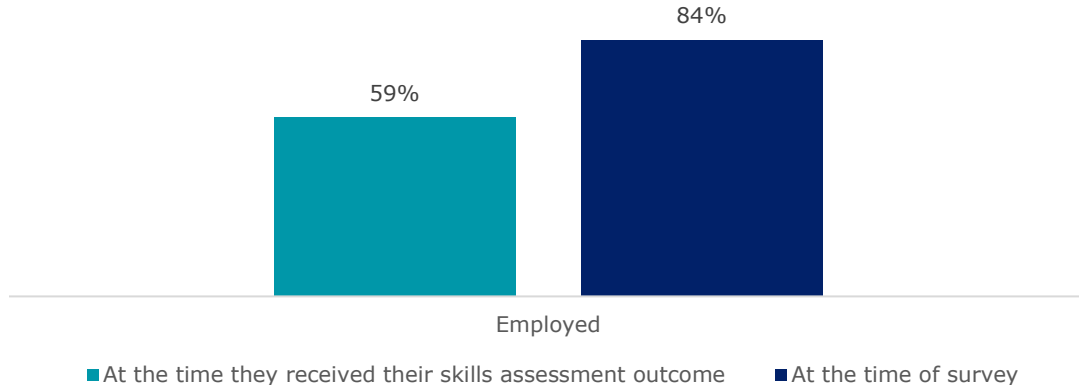
*"We engage with the Department a lot more now and attend regular catch-ups with the Department so the relationship is definitely a lot better than before the Pilot" – Assessing Authority*

### Medium-term

#### More applicants gain secure employment

At the 12-month survey mark, 84% of respondents were gainfully employed, a significant increase from the 59% employed when they first received their skills assessment outcomes, while the remaining were unemployed or not in the labour force (Chart B.6). While we would expect some improvement in employment outcomes over time naturally, this suggests that receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment may have supported some respondents to secure employment.

**Chart B.6:** Survey respondents' employment status (12-months)



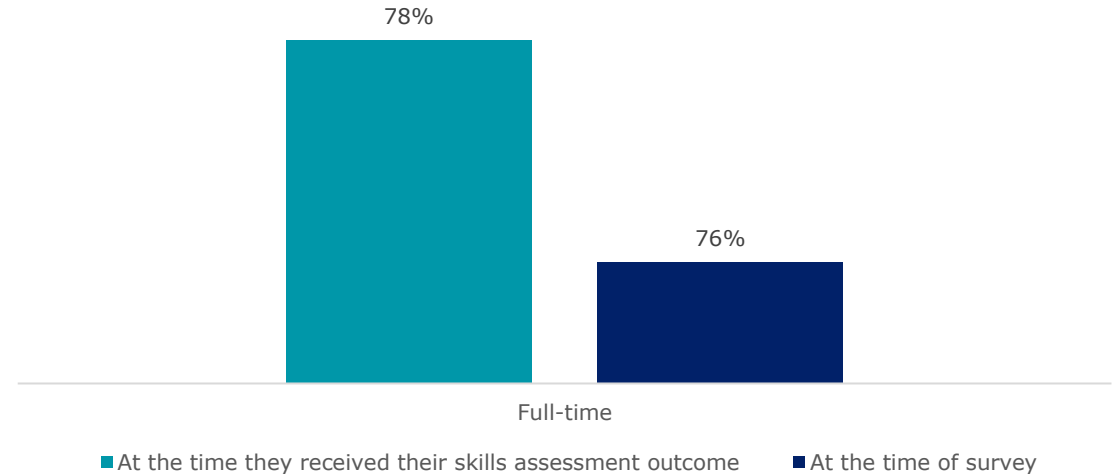
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=74)  
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Notably, since receiving their outcomes, 62% of those initially unemployed secured a job and moved into paid employment by the time of the survey. Furthermore, among those already employed at the time of receiving their outcome, 98% remained employed at the time of survey.

At the time respondents received their skill assessment outcomes, 78% were in full-time employment, while 23% were in part-time employment. This distribution remained relatively consistent at the time of the survey, with 76% in full-time roles and 24% in part-time positions (Chart B.7). The high share of part-time work is likely a reflection of the fact that nearly two-thirds of participants were female – who are much more likely to be working part-time.

Interestingly despite part-time work increasing overall, among those who have sustained employment since receiving their outcomes, 10% have transitioned from part-time to full-time employment. Suggesting that the Pilot may have been effective in supporting some participants to gain more secure work.

**Chart B.7:** Employed survey respondents' status in employment



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=59)

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

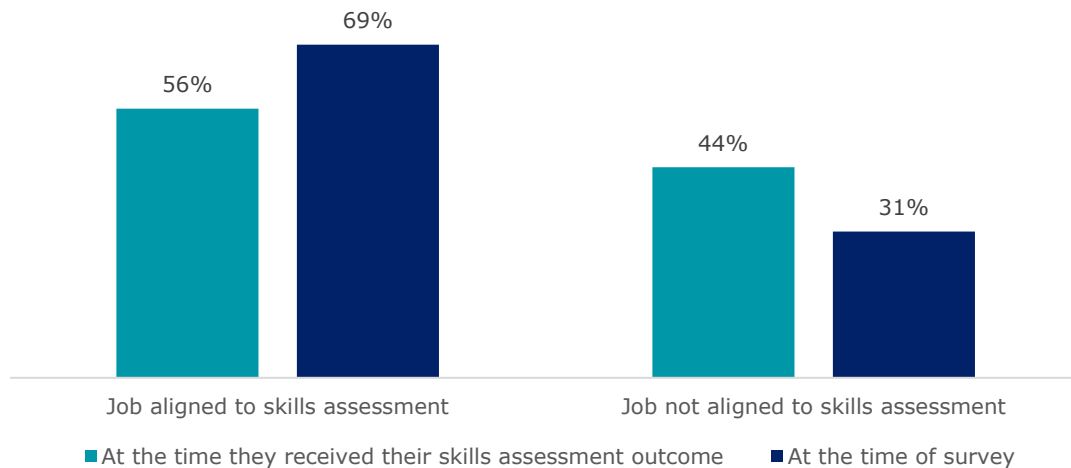


## Applicants transition into employment aligned with their education/ training

Of the respondents who were employed at the time of the survey, 13% of respondents were now employed in roles that aligned with their skills assessment relative to at the time they received their skills assessment outcome (Chart B.8). While we would naturally expect some improvement in employment circumstances overtime, this suggests that receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment may have supported a small share of respondents to secure employment in line with their qualifications.

Furthermore, among those who changed jobs since receiving their skills assessment outcome, a substantial 71% are now working in a role that aligns with their skills assessment.

**Chart B.8:** Survey respondents' alignment to skills at the time they received their skills assessment outcome and the time of the survey



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=59)

Males were more likely to work in occupations aligned with their qualifications before receiving their skills assessment outcome (61% of males compared to 40% of females). However, the proportion of respondents working in their assessed occupation at the time of the survey was relatively similar (63% of males and 65% of females).

At a high-level respondents who required additional licenses or qualification in order to secure a job in line with their skills assessment were likely to observe worse employment outcomes at the time they received their skills assessment and at the time of the survey. Indicating that licensing and registration requirements remain a significant barrier to securing a role in line with their skills, even after receiving a skills assessment outcome.

Respondents who required additional licenses or qualifications were less likely to be employed at the time of receiving their outcome (45% relative to 63%) and at the time of the survey (73% compared to 85%) (Table B.1).

Similarly, these respondents were less likely to be employed in a job matching their skills assessment both at the time of receiving their outcome (30% compared to 70%) and at the time of the survey (50% relative to 82%).

**Table B.1:** Employment circumstances by respondents who additional licensing or qualification requirements to secure employment

	Respondent who require additional licenses or qualifications	Respondent who do not require additional licenses or qualifications
<i>Employment status</i>		
At the time received skills assessment outcome	45%	63%
At the time of the survey	73%	85%
<i>In a role aligned to skills assessment</i>		
At the time received skills assessment outcome	30%	70%
At the time of the survey	50%	82%

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) Note: Identification of respondents who require additional licenses or qualifications in order to secure employment in line with skills is based on a self-reported survey question.

At the time of survey, 21% of respondents were engaged in study or training activities, with most of this group (75%) pursuing training or study directly relevant to the occupation for which they completed their skills assessment.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## Applicants with unsuitable skills assessments enrol in further education/ training

Nearly half (46%) of applicants received an 'unsuitable' skills assessment outcome, with 10% of these applicants recommended for upskilling. Given the survey captured few Pilot 2 participants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome, it is difficult to understand the extent to which these participants enrolled into further education and training.

Most Assessing Authorities indicated that they provide unsuitable skills assessment applicants with further guidance, including referrals to relevant training either formally (i.e., in the outcome letter) or informally through follow-up conversations. This suggests that the Pilot was effective in supporting applicants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome to enrol in further education. However, a few Assessing Authorities reported that they generally do not provide this information to unsuitable applicants. The reasoning behind this decision involved not wanting to over-promise unsuitable applicants that they will be found suitable if this additional training is obtained, or alternatively, supporting applicants to make decisions about study and work based on achieving a certain visa outcome.

While some Assessing Authorities offer additional aftercare programs, notably the accounting and engineering Assessing Authorities via their respective professional year programs or engagement with universities and/ or employers, the majority do not provide these programs. As a result, Assessing Authorities generally do not have visibility over suitable skills assessment applicants' employment journey and transition to work.

### Long-term

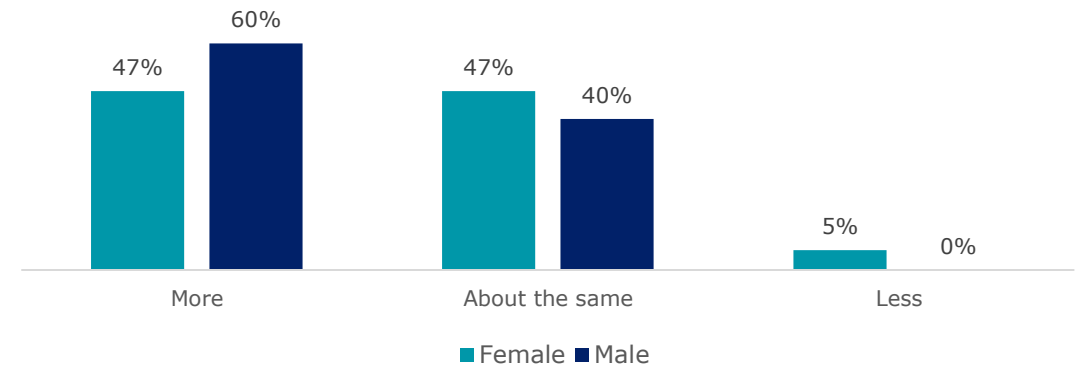
#### Applicants experience improved economic, financial and social wellbeing and inclusion

##### 1| Economic & financial wellbeing

At the time of survey, 49% of employed respondents stated that their current earnings exceeded those at the time of their skills assessment. This suggests that that receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment may have enhanced participants economic and financial wellbeing.

Notably, males were more likely to experience increased earnings compared to females. Specifically, 60% of males reported increased earnings, contrasting with 47% of females. Furthermore, 5% of female respondents reported lower earnings, whereas none of the male respondents did (Chart B.9).

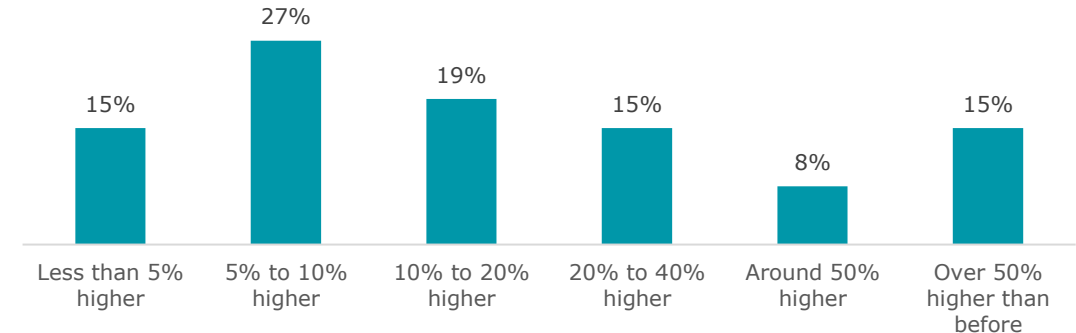
**Chart B.9:** 'Do you earn more or less money now than you did at the time you received a skills assessment outcome?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=56) excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

Of those who reported higher earnings, around a quarter (23%) noted an increase of around 50% or more compared to their previous earnings, while over one-third saw an increase ranging from 10% to 40% (Chart B.10).

**Chart B.10:** 'As a percentage, how much higher is your average monthly income now than at the time you received a skills assessment outcome?'

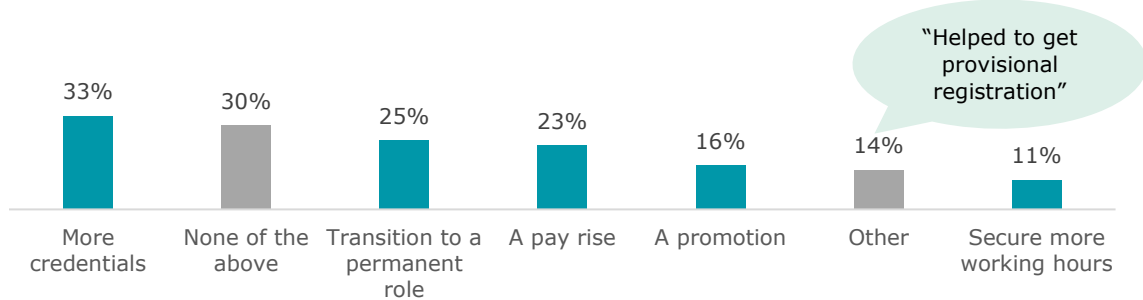


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=26) excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

A third (33%) of respondents used their skills assessment outcome to acquire more credentials and nearly a quarter (23%) of survey respondents utilised their assessment outcome to negotiate a pay rise. Moreover, slightly over one-eighth used their skills assessment outcome to secure a promotion (16%), increase their working hours (11%), or transition from a casual or fixed-term position to a permanent role (11%). Some respondents in the "Other" category indicated that they utilised their skills assessment outcome to obtain employment opportunities or receive registration (Chart B.11).

**Chart B.11:** 'Did your skills assessment outcome help you to achieve any of the below'

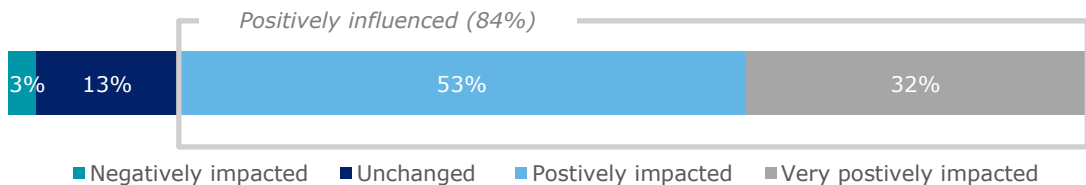


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=57)

## 2 | Social wellbeing & inclusion

The vast majority of respondents noted that engaging in the skills assessment process positively influenced their perceptions about their position and prospects in Australia. Specifically, 32% reported a very positive impact, while an additional 53% reported a positive impact. Remarkably, only 3% expressed a negative impact, and none indicated a very negative impact on their sentiments (Chart B.12).

**Chart B.12:** 'To what extent did participating in the skills assessment process change how you feel about your place and future in Australia?'

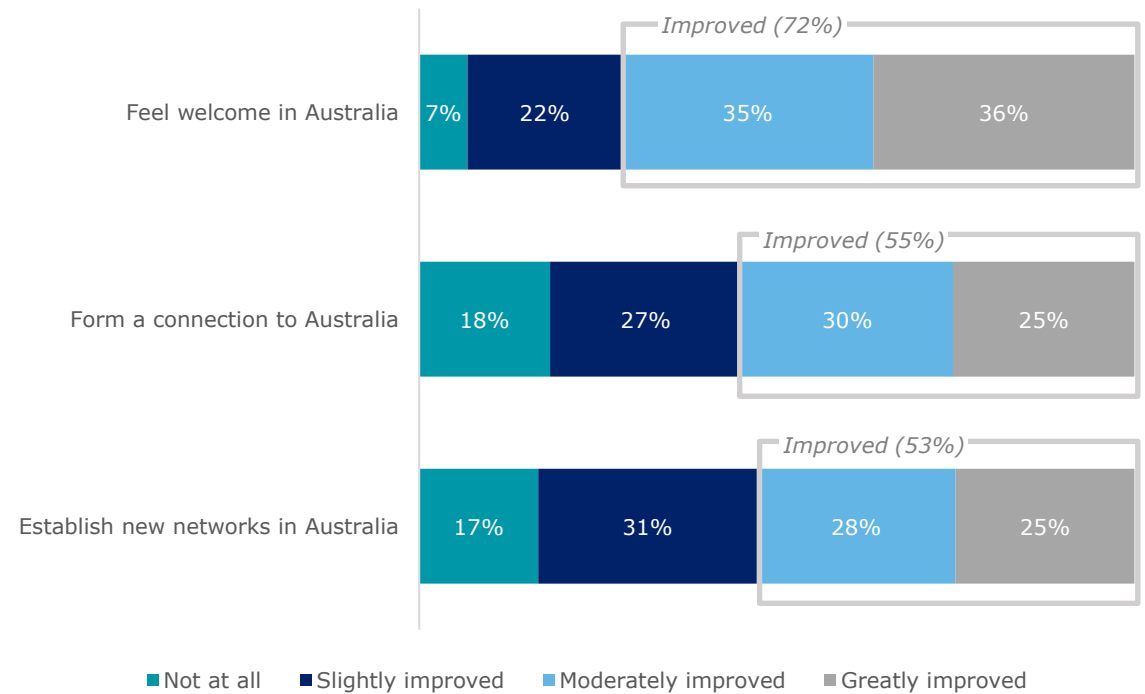


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=76)

Note: Where categories are not displayed (i.e., 'very negatively impacted') in the chart, the value represents 0%.

A significant majority of respondents noted that engaging in the skills assessment process contributed to enhancing their overall life satisfaction in Australia. Notably, most respondents indicated that participation greatly or moderately improved their ability to form a connection to Australia (72%), feel welcomed in Australia (55%) and establish new networks in Australia (53%) (Chart B.13). These findings reveal that receiving a fast-tracked skills assessment enhanced participants social wellbeing.

**Chart B.13:** 'To what extent did participating in the skills assessment process help you?'



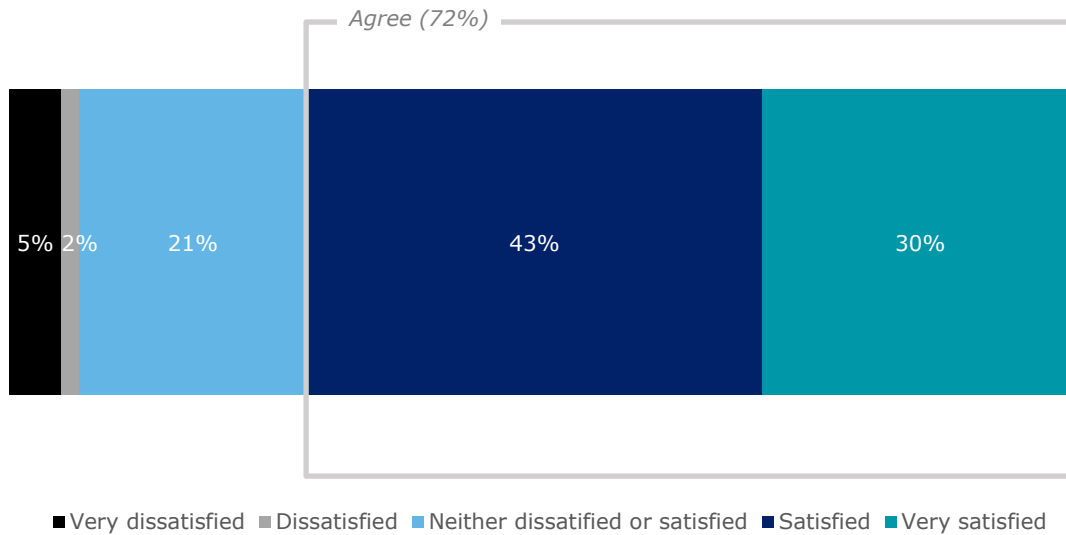
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=74), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'



# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

The majority (or 72%) of respondents were satisfied with their current job at the time of survey, meanwhile a 21% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and a small share reported being dissatisfied (7%) (Chart B.14). The high share of respondents who were satisfied with their current job is a reflection of the high share of respondents in a job aligned to their qualifications.

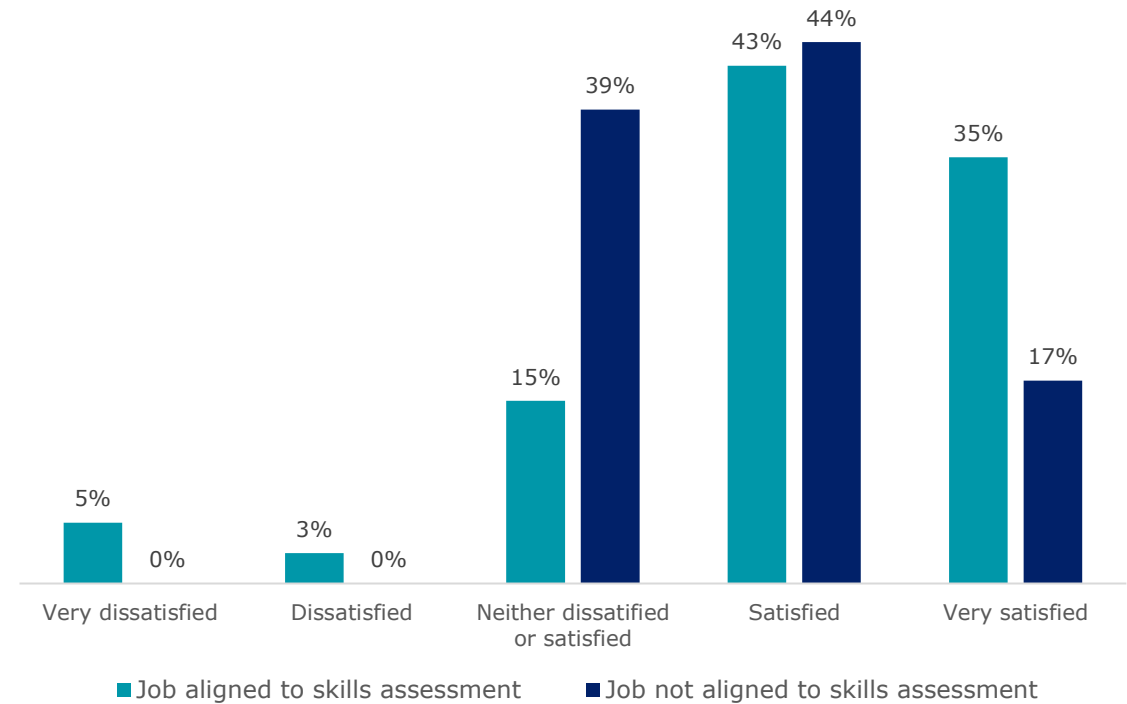
**Chart B.14:** 'How satisfied are you with your current job?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=61), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'

Respondents currently employed in a role aligned with their skills assessment outcome were more likely to report satisfaction. A significant 35% of these respondents mentioned being very satisfied with their job, whereas only 17% of those not employed in a role aligned with their skills assessment reported similar satisfaction levels (Chart B.15). This suggests that employment in a role aligned to qualifications is a significant contributor towards migrants' overall job satisfaction levels.

**Chart B.15:** 'How satisfied are you with your current job?' by alignment to skills assessment



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=58)

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## Long-term

### Reduced skill shortages in the labour market

Among Pilot 2 participants who underwent a skills assessment and were found suitable, the top five occupations they received a skills assessment for were: Hospital Pharmacist (34%), Electrical Engineer (11%), Civil Engineer (10%), Mechanical Engineer (9%) and Electrician (General) (5%). There exists a strong alignment between the Skills Priority List (SPL) and the occupations for which respondents received a suitable skills assessment, with the bulk (99%) of participants obtaining a suitable skills assessment outcome were trained in occupations experiencing national shortages (Chart B.16). This is largely a reflection of the eligibility criteria for the Pilot, limited to skills in shortage and expected to experience strong future demand.

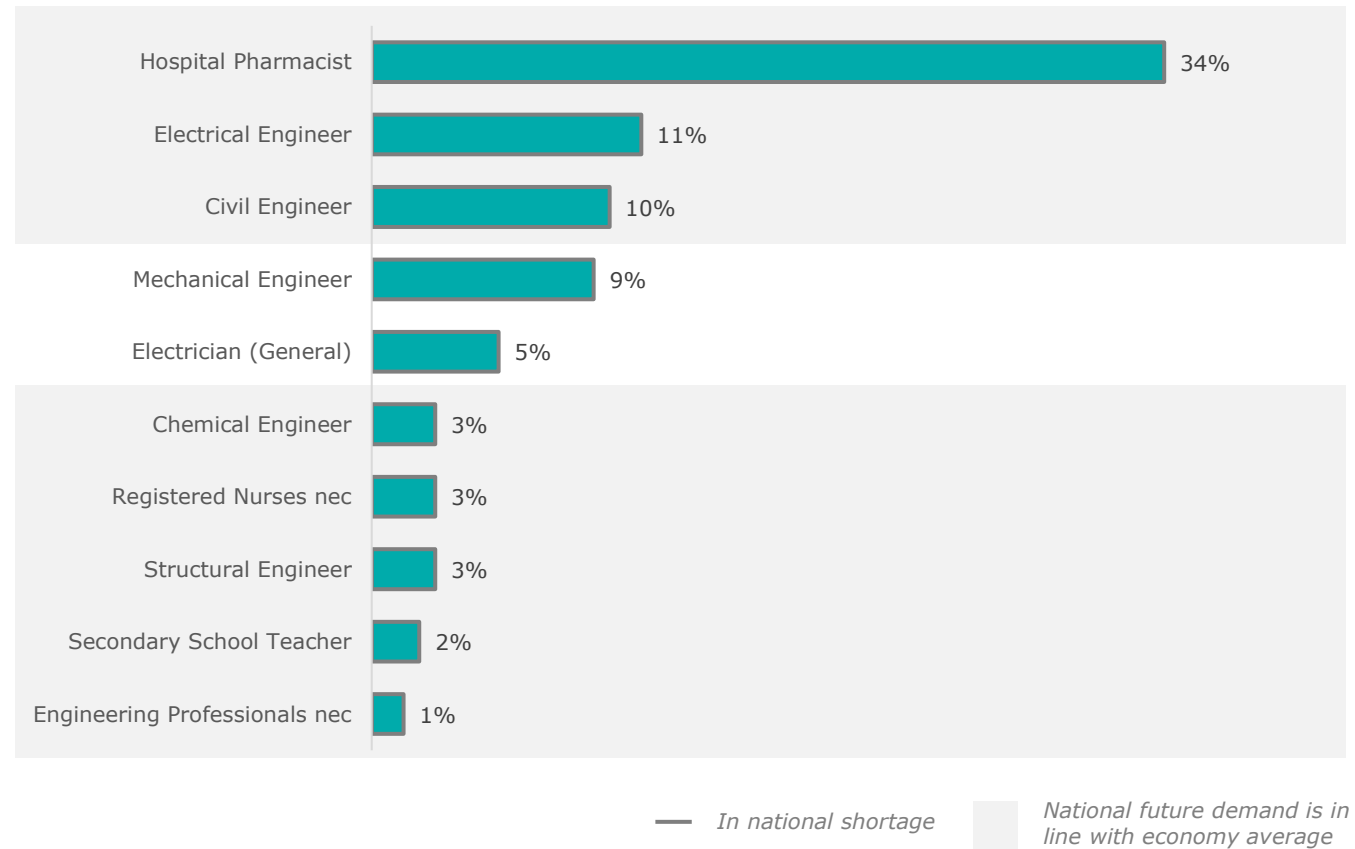
Nearly all participants (82%) were assessed in occupations that were deemed to experience demand in line with the economy-wide average, with the remainder expected to experience below economy-wide average growth. Importantly too, nearly all participants (91%) received suitable skills assessment outcomes for occupations classified at the highest skill level (ANZSCO skill level 1).

It should be noted that given the low volume of suitable applications (148), the impact of the Pilot on alleviating pressure on existing shortages in the Australian economy would be minor.

### In what circumstances have the Pilots been more or less effective at achieving their intended outcomes (including investment effectiveness)?

Assessing Authorities agreed that there were generally no observed differences across gender, age, visa type or whether they had a migration agent, highlighting that the barriers faced to completing a skills assessments were felt broadly across all types of applicants. However, some Assessing Authorities noted differences by country of origin, with some countries located in Africa more frequently associated with fraudulent activity.

**Chart B.16:** Occupations Pilot 2 participants received a suitable skills assessment outcomes for, by skill shortage and national demand rating



Source: Deloitte Access Economics, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Jobs and Skills Australia (2024) (n=148)

Note: Between the 2022 and 2023 SPL, the approach to categorising future national demand ratings has changed therefore the analysis of Pilot 2 and 3 will slightly differ to Pilot 1.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## Have the Pilots met the targets that have been set by DEWR?

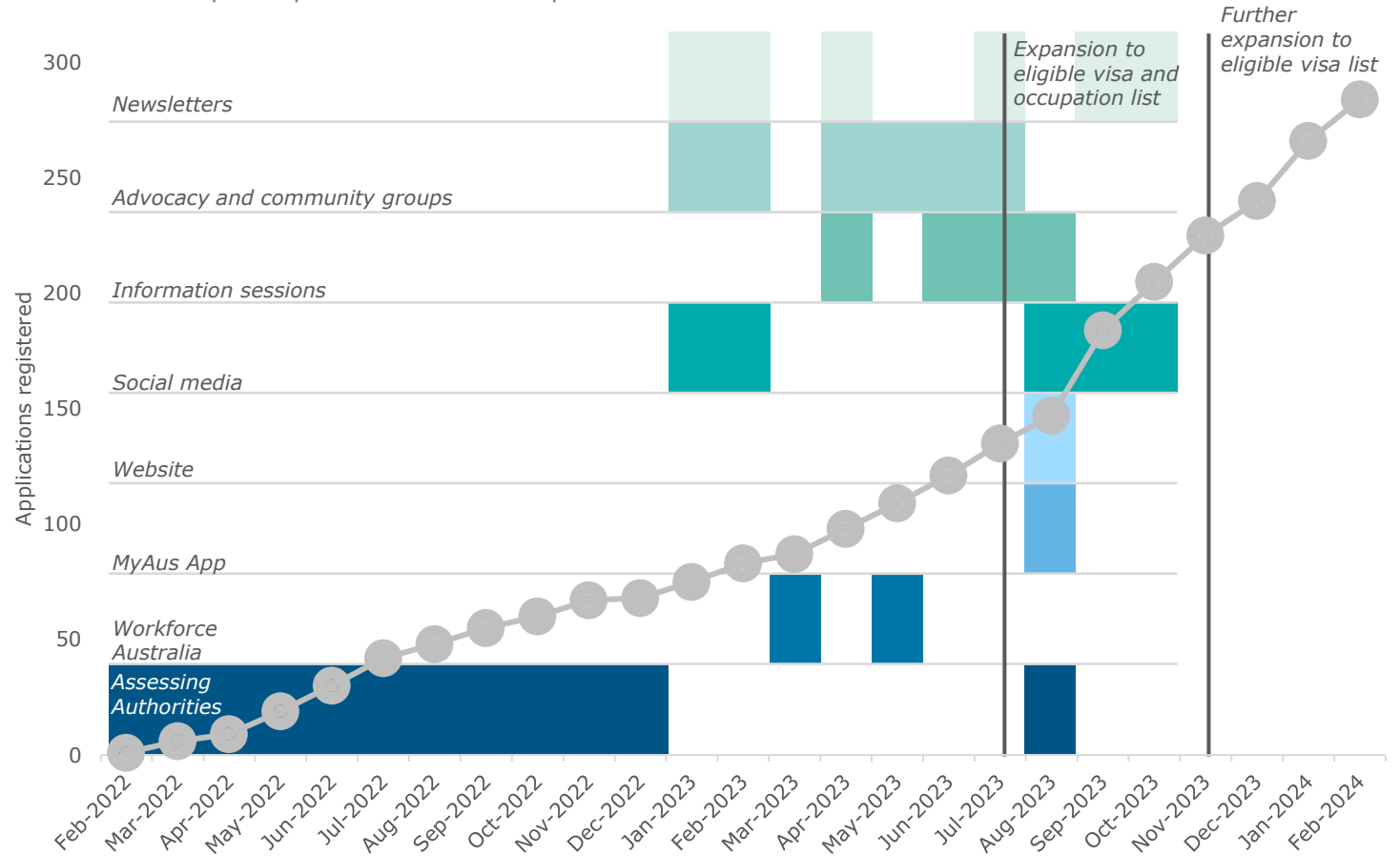
Total participation in the Pilot was below the Department's forecast expectations about Pilot 2 demand, representing 4% of the targeted population for the SAP (7,300).

Whilst Pilot 2 was not effective in reaching its target, DEWR undertook various promotional activities to bolster engagement. Commencing in 2022 with a focus on collaboration with Assessing Authorities, these initiatives occurred predominantly throughout 2023. The promotional strategies were diverse in nature, encompassing activities such as newsletters, information sessions, meetings with advocacy and community groups, and an active presence on social media. In addition, efforts extended to the website, MyAus App, and collaborative initiatives with Workforce Australia.

Analysis of Pilot 2 participant engagement reveals a consistent uptick in the number of registrations from 2022 into 2023, with a notable growth in registrations towards the end of 2023. The surge in registrations in Pilot 2 aligns with the heightened promotional activities undertaken by DEWR, suggesting that these efforts were effective in enhancing participation in the Pilot (Chart B.17). It should be noted that in parallel, eligibility criteria for the Pilot was expanded in July and November 2023, which appears to have provided a significant contribution towards greater participation in the Pilot.

According to the survey, respondents typically heard about the Pilot through their Assessing Authorities (19%), followed by family and friends (13%), Government websites (13%) and social media (11%).

Chart B.17: Participant uptake in Pilot 2 and promotional initiatives



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024)  
 Note: DEWR's promotional activities included above are based on a summary provided by the DEWR in November 2023.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## What are the characteristics of pilot participants and how does this differ across Pilots?

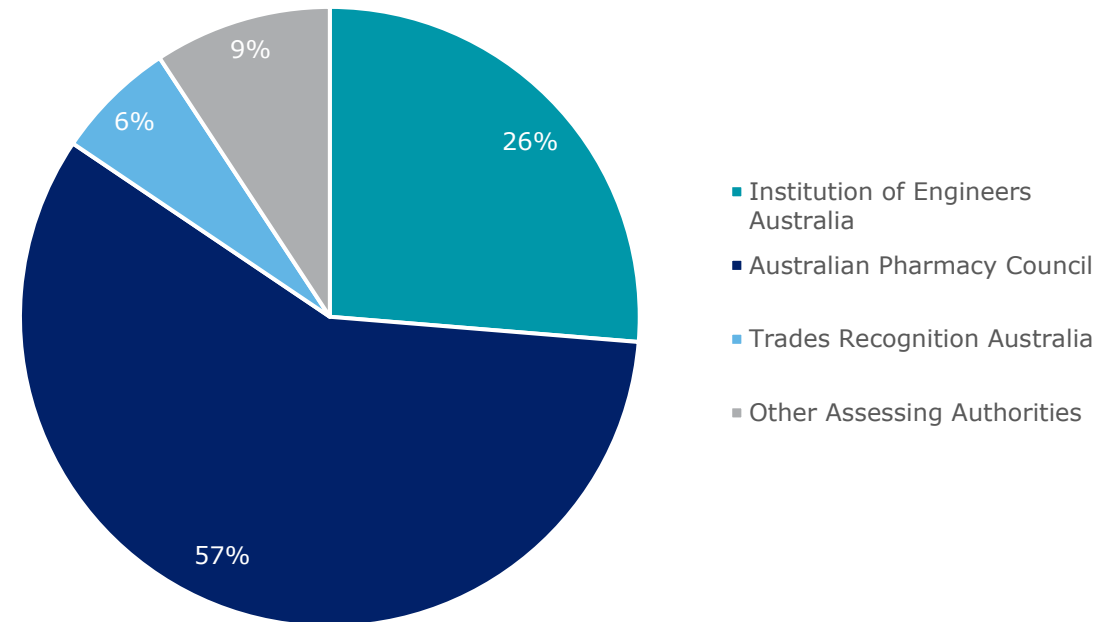
There exists a significant amount of variation in the number of applicants assessed by different Assessing Authorities (Chart B.18). Almost all applications (or 89%) of applicants were concentrated across three Assessing Authorities – the Australian Pharmacy Council (57%), the Institution of Engineers (26%) and Trades Recognition Australia (6%). This is somewhat in line with the eligibility criteria for the Pilot, as these Assessing Authorities are responsible for assessing 51% of all eligible occupations. The remaining 11% skill assessments were dispersed among the other 13 other Assessing Authorities.

There exists a misalignment between the educational and skill profile of humanitarian and family visa holders and the distribution of participants across Assessing Authorities. The fields of education pursued by recent migrants on permanent family or humanitarian visas cover a diverse range of occupations. The main fields of study include management and commerce (25%), society and culture (16%), engineering and related technologies (12%), and health (12%).<sup>1</sup> This distribution contrasts with the concentration of applications observed across Assessing Authorities, which may suggest that these Assessing Authorities have implemented more effective engagement strategies.

Other Assessing Authorities had very few eligible applicants, including some Assessing Authorities which had no eligible applicants such as Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, Australian Psychological Society, Speech Pathology Association of Australia, Australian Dental Council, Australian Community Workers Union, Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, and the Australian Society of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Note that the Australian Dental Council, Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Community Workers Association and Optometry Council of Australia additionally joined as Assessing Authorities in August 2023.

**Chart B.18:** Pilot 2 participants by Assessing Authority (% of eligible applications submitted for assessment)



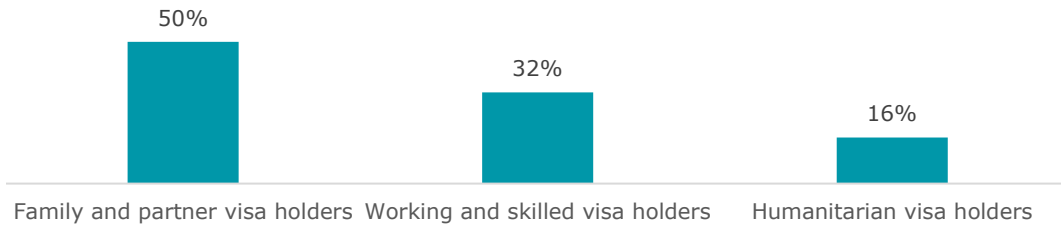
Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n= 274)  
Note: Other Assessing Authorities includes Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council, Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services, CPA Australia, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Computer Society, Institute of Public Accountants, CAANZ, Speech Pathology Association of Australia, Australian Dental Council, Australian Community Workers Association, Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, Australian Society of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy, Geospatial Council of Australia.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

Half of the participants (51%) were on a family and partner visa when they submitted their skills assessment application (Chart B.19). Among those on a family and partner visa, the majority were on a Partner visa (subclass 100) (14%), Partner (Provisional and Migrant) visa (subclass 309) (12%) and Partner visa (subclass 820) (9%). Nearly a third of participants (32%) were on a secondary working and skilled visa, with the bulk of these participants on a Temporary Skill Shortage visa (subclass 482) (13%).

**Chart B.19:** Pilot 2 participants by broad visa type (% of eligible applications submitted for assessment)

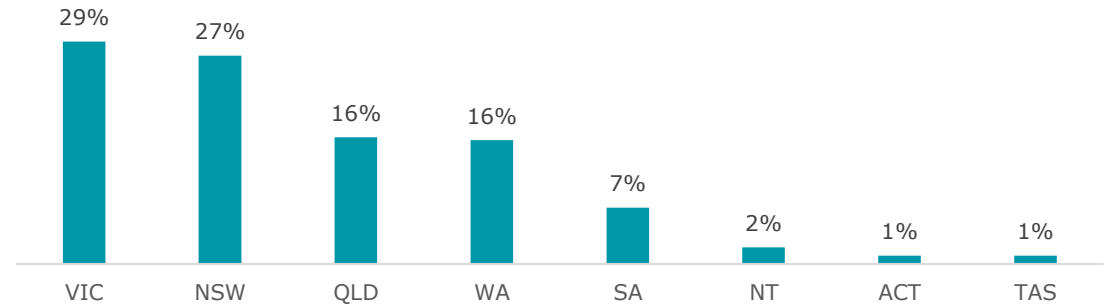


Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=274)

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of applicants were female, with the remaining 39% representing male applicants. The higher representation of female applicants is likely a reflection of the types of visas that were eligible for the Pilot, largely consisting of family and partner visas and working and skilled secondary visa holders (i.e., spouses of primary visa holders).<sup>1</sup>

The majority of participants were located in Victoria (29%) and New South Wales (27%), Queensland (16%) and Western Australia (16%), with smaller shares from South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory (Chart B.20). This is broadly in line with the distribution of the Australian population, however, there exists an over representation of participants from Western Australia and Victoria and an underrepresentation of participants from New South Wales and Queensland. This does not appear to be aligned with states or territories that offer more supports to migrants, instead it is more likely associated states with larger intakes within the subgroup of eligible migrants. For example, Victoria historically has accepted the highest volume of humanitarian migrants and people seeking asylum.<sup>2</sup>

**Chart B.20:** Pilot 2 participants by Australian State and Territory (% of eligible applications submitted for assessment)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=274)

Compared to Pilot 1 and 3, there exists key differences in participants characteristics, notably:

- There exists a much larger concentration across a select few Assessing Authorities relative to Pilot 1 and a significant difference in the types of occupations assessed.
- A significant difference in the share of respondents receiving an 'unsuitable' skills assessment outcome, which may suggest that applicants who submitted an application under Pilot 2 would have not submitted a skills assessment application if the process was not free. Alternatively, it may signal some of the additional barriers that humanitarian and family and partner migrants in particular face in receiving a suitable skills assessment outcome.
- Pilot 2 received a much higher share of applications from family and partner visa holders relative to Pilot 1 and 3, which is largely a reflection in the differences in eligibility criteria between Pilots.
- Since the Pilot had a large uptake of family and partner visa holders, Pilot 2 received significant a higher share of applications from female migrants relative to Pilot 1 and 3.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 2



## What did Assessing Authorities learn about process efficiencies for skills assessments, and will they apply these learnings in the future?

The overwhelming majority of Assessing Authorities indicated that given the low caseload for the Pilot, their organisation operated under business-as-usual conditions. Suggesting that there was little to no opportunity for Assessing Authorities to consider process efficiencies for skills assessments as there was simply no need to. Where Assessing Authorities also participated in Pilot 1, these organisations were able to leverage process efficiencies to also deliver Pilot 2.

Some large Assessing Authorities noted that their day-to-day operations already include a focus on continuous improvement and identifying opportunities to streamline operations, particularly leveraging new technologies.

## Have there been any unintended positive or negative outcomes associated with the programs?

Most Assessing Authorities noted that the Pilot provided the opportunity to consider how applicants can be better supported along their employment journey. Demonstrating that the outcome of further progressing consideration to employment outcomes was achieved as a result of the Pilot.

*"We know that transitioning to working in the industry is tough for some applicants and the Pilot made us think about what more we could do to support these transitions for this cohort" – Assessing Authority*

In addition, some Assessing Authorities felt it provided an opportunity to better understand the issues facing their respective industries.

*"The Pilot encouraged us to connect and collaborate with peak bodies and industry groups whose occupation was eligible for the Pilot. Through these connections we've been to develop a better understanding of some of the issues facing the industry" – Assessing Authority*

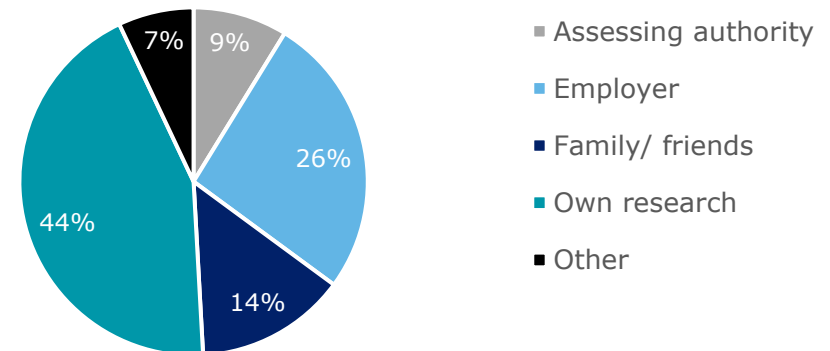
Furthermore, a few Assessing Authorities noted that the Pilot provided an opportunity to review and audit existing systems and identify opportunities to streamline systems and identify – enhancing productivity within individual Assessing Authorities.

*"To implement the Pilot we needed to review our existing processes, which gave us the chance to audit these systems and make sure we were actually performing skills assessments in the most efficient way" – Assessing Authority*

For a selection of Assessing Authorities, the Pilot provided an opportunity to connect and collaborate with the broader settlement sector. For example, the Institute of Engineers noted an intent to work with the Settlement Services International to better support refugees with a background in engineering in the future. This further emphasises the success of the Pilot in supporting Assessing Authorities to develop a better understanding of non-skilled visa holders.

More broadly, the majority of the employed respondents (70%) expressed awareness of workplace rights and entitlements for migrant workers in Australia with 9% receiving this information from their Assessing Authority – an unintended positive outcome associated with receiving a skills assessment (Chart B.21).

**Chart B.21:** 'How did you learn about the workplace rights and entitlements for migrant workers in Australia?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=57), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'



# Effectiveness of Pilot 2

## To what extent have changes to the Pilot's design post commencement impacted their effectiveness?

### *Changes to eligibility criteria*

While changes to the Pilot's eligibility criteria helped to expand the pool of eligible applicants, Assessing Authorities noted that these changes were difficult to implement from a resourcing perspective. Potential applicants were often highly confused as to why the eligibility criteria had changed if they had previously been found ineligible which required Assessing Authorities to explain the changes made in detail. Alternatively, changes to eligibility criteria often led to additional enquiries from the same group of ineligible applicants, which required Assessing Authorities to respond to the same enquiries again.

*"When the eligibility rules changed, you'd often receive the enquiries from the same group of people and we'd need to explain to them again that they still weren't eligible" – Assessing Authority*

Despite these limitations, Assessing Authorities agreed that expanding the eligibility criteria was an important adjustment to the design of the Pilot.

### *Extensions to the timeline*

Assessing Authorities agreed that changes to the Pilot's timeline were critical, given most Assessing Authorities did not receive many applications until mid-2023.



# Impact of Pilot 2

This section combines program data and the 6-month and 12-month survey data with publicly available evidence.

# Impact of Pilot 2



## Did Pilot 2 have a meaningful and/or additional impact on participating migrants (and other pilot stakeholders)?

### 1 | Additional skills in the economy

Some participants would not have completed a skills assessment if they had not participated in the Pilot. These participants represent additional skills to the economy as a result of the program, and their impact is measured using counterfactual impact evaluation. Please refer to page 18 for further information about counterfactual impact evaluation. As with Pilot 1, some caution should be applied when interpreting these results, as they are based on self-reported survey responses which are subject to various biases.

For Pilot 2, based on responses to the 12-month survey (Chart B.22):



75% of participants would have completed a skills assessment even if they had not participated in the program. Hence, the benefit of the program to this cohort is the free and fast-tracked benefits associated with a skills assessment outcome.



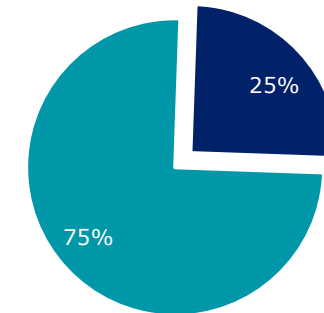
25% of participants would not have completed a skills assessment if they had not participated in the program. That is, if the skills assessment was not free and fast-tracked they would have not signed up for a skills assessment.

Applying these proportions to the broader Pilot 2 population, given the survey is broadly representative of participants, noting some limitations (see Appendix D), 70 participants would not have pursued a skills assessment outcome if their application was not free and fast-tracked.<sup>a</sup> Applying this to the share of participants who received a 'suitable' skills assessment outcome, 38 participants would not have received a suitable skills assessment outcome in the absence of the Pilot.

Alongside this, respondents revealed other actions they would have taken if their skills assessment was not free and fast-tracked. The most commonly reported action was maintaining current job (35%), followed by taken a different job (10%) and withdrawn skills assessment application (6%) (Chart B.23). Among respondents who would have maintained their current job, very few (11%) were already working in a job aligned with their qualifications.

<sup>a</sup> Calculation based on Pilot 2 completed applications (274 applications).

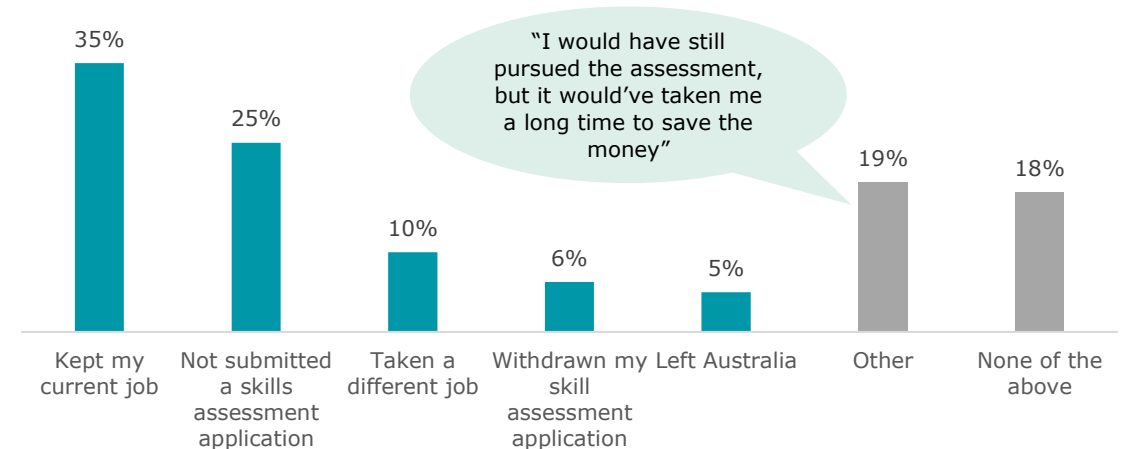
Chart B.22: Counterfactual impact of Pilot 2



Submitted a skills assessment application Not submitted a skills assessment application

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=77)

Chart B.23: 'Imagine that your skills assessment would have cost \$900 and took 8 weeks to complete instead of 3 weeks. Which of the following actions, if any, would you have taken?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=77)

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% as respondents can select multiple response options.

# Impact of Pilot 2

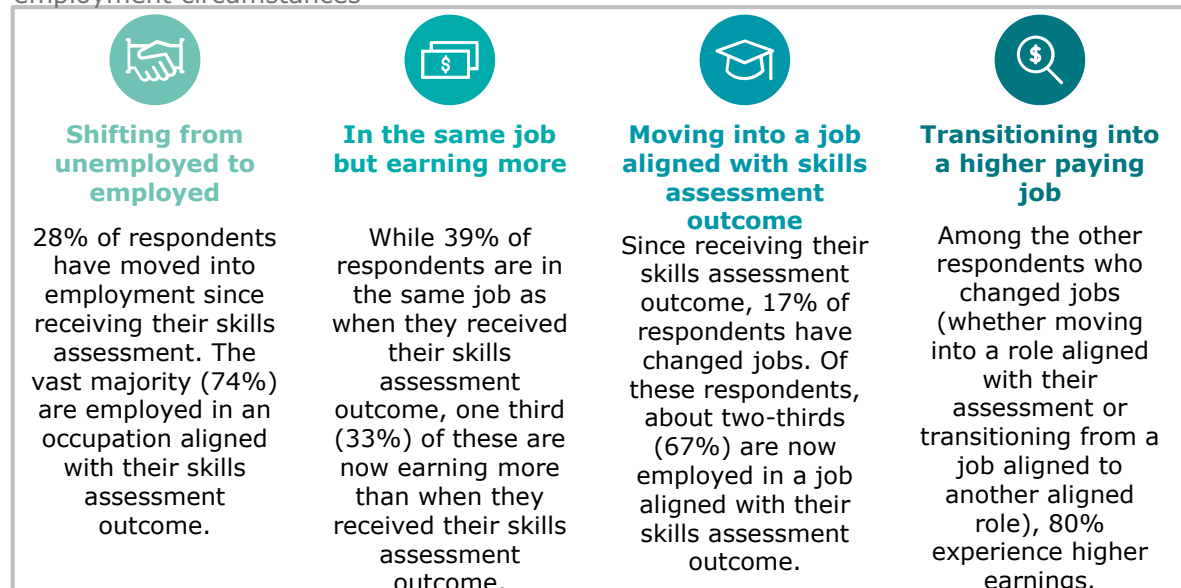


## 2 | Increased earnings

Even for participants who would have pursued a skills assessment regardless of it being free and fast-tracked, participating in Pilot 2 offers additional benefits. These benefits mainly involve 'bringing forward' the positive impacts associated with a skills assessment outcome, leading to changes in employment and subsequent income increases, further emphasising the contribution to financial wellbeing of the Pilot. The extent to which the benefits were brought forward is difficult to understand as it is unclear when participants might have otherwise undertaken a skills assessment.

The following analysis seeks to provide insight into the various benefits of receiving a suitable skill assessment outcome (Figure B.1), based on analysis of the 6-month and 12-month surveys. Data limitations in the survey, in parallel to gaps in the Department's program data, have resulted in a very small sample size. Therefore, the following analysis adopts a less sophisticated methodology to the earnings analysis presented in Pilot 1 and therefore any results are not comparable.

**Figure B.1:** The benefits of receiving a skills assessment outcome on participants employment circumstances

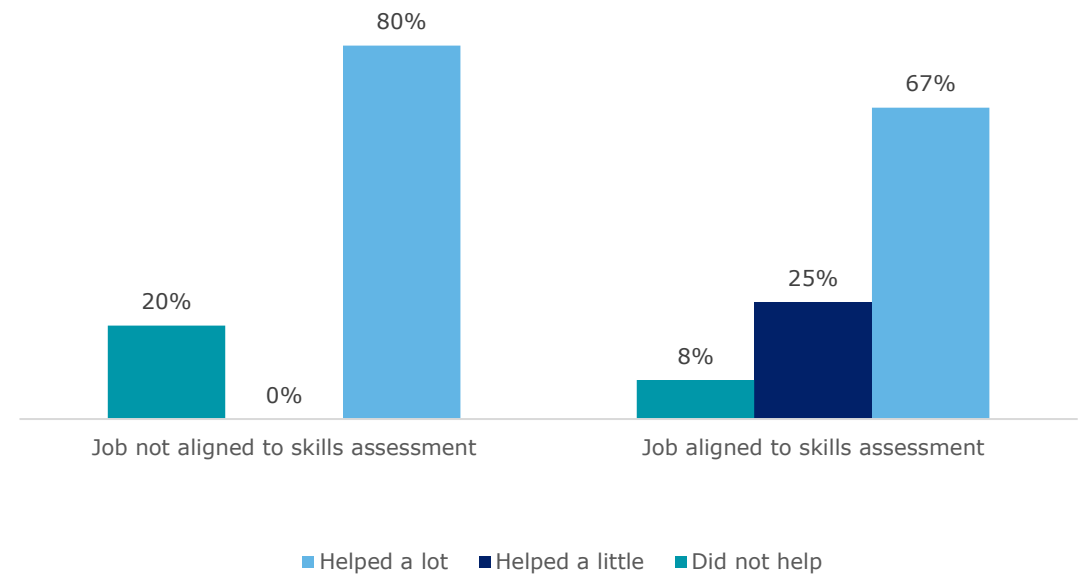


## Benefits of shifting from unemployment to employment

Since receiving their skills assessment outcomes, 28% of respondents moved from unemployment to employment, with 74% securing jobs that matched their assessed skills. Among these respondents, 53% were working full-time and 47% part-time.

About 72% of newly employed respondents found the skills assessment outcome very helpful in obtaining a job or improving their job applications, while 17% found it somewhat helpful. Those in unaligned roles were more likely to feel the assessment was not very useful compared to those in aligned roles (20% versus 8%) (Chart B.24).

**Chart B.24:** Impact of skills assessment on job application or obtaining a job by alignment



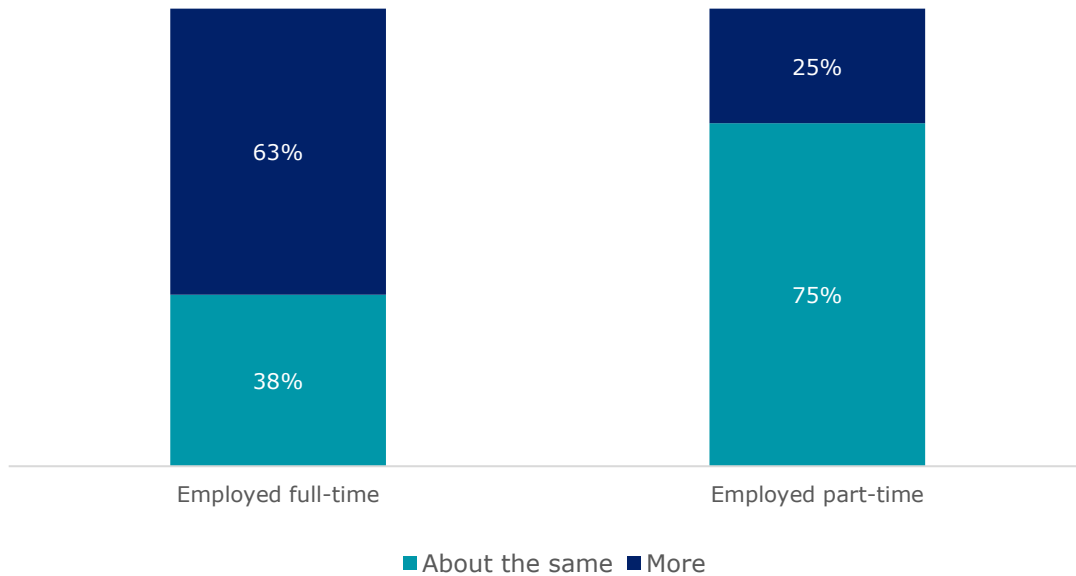
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n= 17)



# Impact of Pilot 2

Nearly half (47%) reported increased earnings, with full-time workers more likely to experience a salary increase compared to part-time workers (53% versus 25%). However, alignment with skills assessment outcomes did not necessarily correlate with higher earnings (Chart B.25).

**Chart B.25:** 'Do you earn more or less money now than you did at the time you received a skills assessment outcome?' by status in employment



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n= 16)

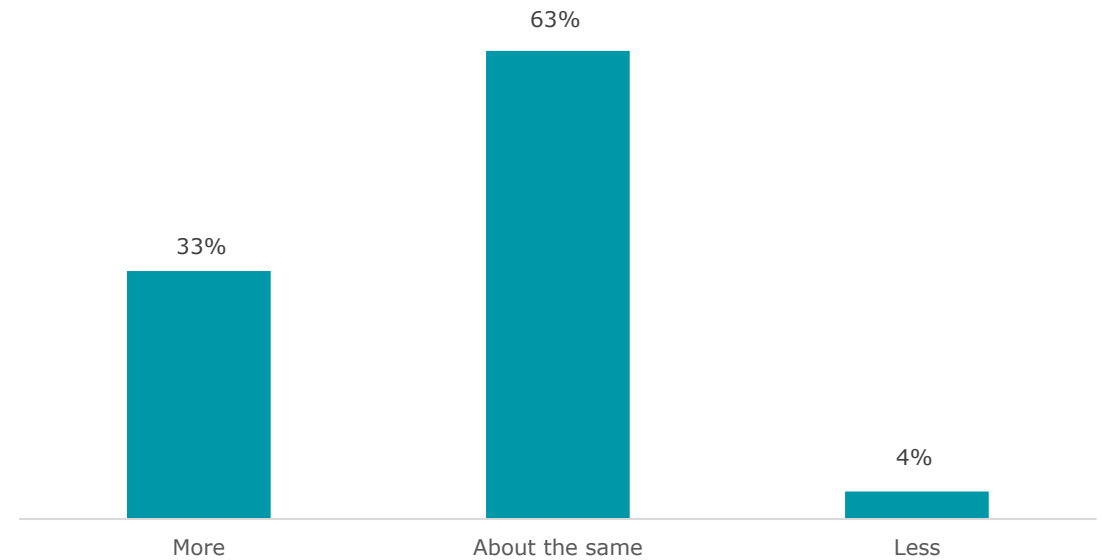
Of those with increased earnings, 43% saw a significant increase of more than 50%, 14% reported a rise of 20% to 40%, 29% experienced an increase of 10% to 20%, and 14% had a modest rise of 5% to 10%.

## Benefits of staying in the same job

According to the 12-month survey data, 39% of participants remained in the same job they had when they received their skills assessment outcome. Among these, 68% were in roles that matched their assessment, while 32% were not. Most (82%) were employed full-time, 14% part-time, and 4% transitioned from part-time to full-time.

Among those staying in the same occupation, 33% reported higher earnings, 63% similar earnings, and 4% less (Chart B.26). Among those with increased earnings, 11% saw a 20% to 40% increase, 22% experienced a 10% to 20% increase, 56% had a 5% to 10% increase, and 11% had less than a 5% increase.

**Chart B.26:** 'Do you earn more or less money now than you did at the time you received a skills assessment outcome?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=27)

# Impact of Pilot 2

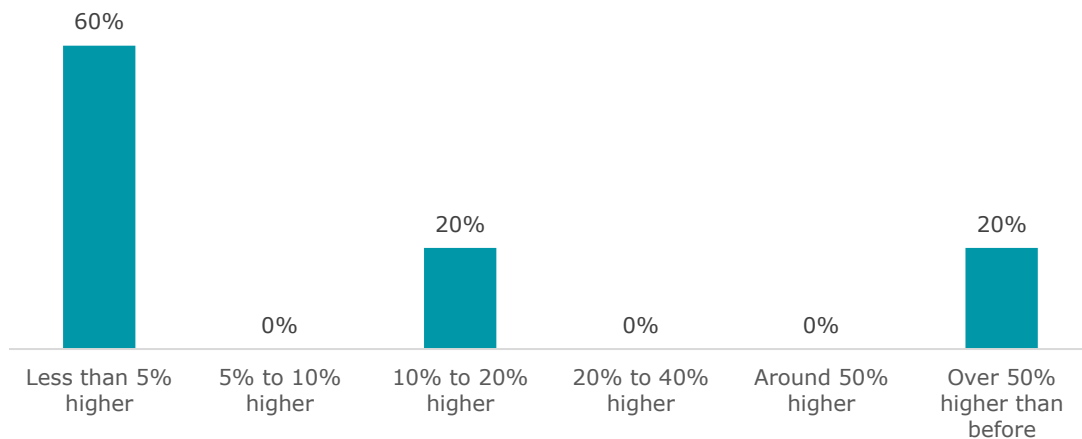


## Benefits of moving into employment now aligned with skills assessment outcome

According to the 12-month survey, 17% of respondents who received a suitable skills assessment outcome changed jobs. Of these, 42% transitioned from employment not aligned with their skills assessment outcome to employment that was aligned. Notably, 60% moved from a lower-skilled occupation to a higher-skilled one, while the rest maintained the same skill level.

All participants who transitioned into employment aligned with their skills assessment reported higher earnings since the change, with 20% earning approximately 60% more, 20% earning 20-40% more, and 60% earning less than 5% more (Char B.28).

**Chart B.28** : 'As a percentage, how much higher is your average monthly income now than at the time you received a skills assessment outcome?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=5)

Analysis of survey data and ABS average weekly earnings data suggests that these respondents earn an average of **\$241 more per week** due to securing employment aligned with their skills assessment. Notably, 80% of these respondents said the skills assessment outcome significantly helped them secure a job or support their job

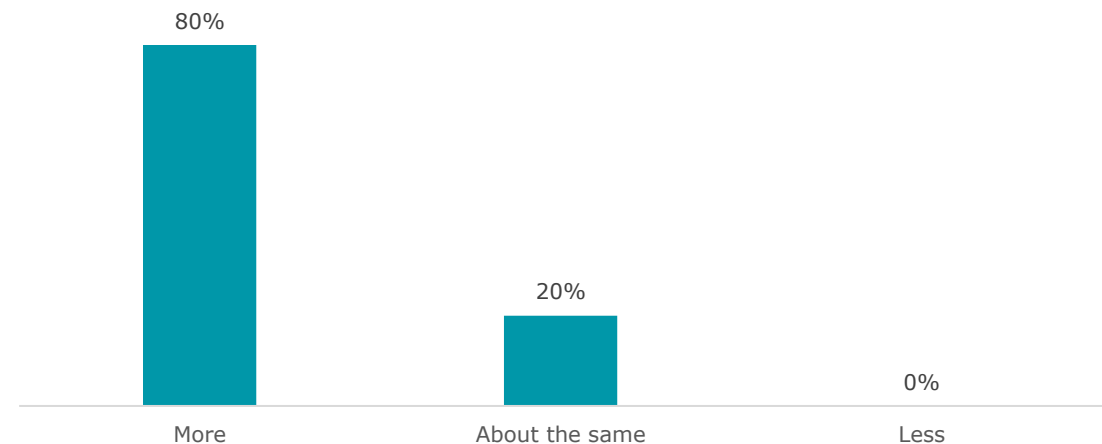
application, while the remaining 20% saying it helped a little.

## Benefits of transitioning into a higher paying job

Among the respondents who changed jobs, 25% moved to another job aligned with their skills assessment outcome, while 33% moved to a job not aligned with their assessment. Most (86%) transitioned into employment at an equivalent skill level to before, as many were already in roles aligned with their assessed skills. One third (33%) transitioned from part-time job to full-time employment.

Within this cohort, one third (33%) credited their skills assessment with significantly helping them secure a job or support their application, while the rest found it somewhat helpful. Most respondents (80%) reported earning more since receiving their skills assessment outcome (Chart B.29). Of those with increased earnings, 25% saw an increase of around 50%, 50% reported an increase of 20-40%, and 25% saw an increase of 5-10%.

**Chart B.29**: 'Do you earn more or less money now than you did at the time you received a skills assessment outcome?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=5)



# Impact of Pilot 2







In addition to improvement in participants employment outcomes, there exists social benefits associated with receiving a skills assessment outcome on participants and more broadly, their families.

## 3 | Improved social wellbeing

Pilot 2 survey respondents attributed receiving a skills assessment outcome with a variety of positive influences on their lives and those of their families. Figure B.2 illustrates some of the ways that receiving a skills assessment outcome positively influenced respondents and their families.

Consistent with Pilot 1, these positive impacts fell into four categories:

-  Enhancing future life opportunities and providing greater stability.
-  The ability to apply for a different visa or permanent residency.
-  Increasing employment and career prospects and feeling more confident.
-  Valuable or having a greater sense of belonging.

Given Pilot 2 was not intended to support visa applications, it is concerning that some respondents attributed receiving a skills assessment outcome with the ability to apply for a different visa or permanent residency. While some participants may have naturally progressed to permanent residency or a different visa due to their current visa, this suggests that the intent of the Pilot was not well communicated and as a result understood by participants – a message which was echoed by some Assessing Authorities.

*"Some participants only realised that their skills assessment outcome was not for migration purposes when they received their visa rejection letter from the Department of Home Affairs" – Assessing Authority*

**Figure B.2:** Participant survey responses to 'what difference the skills assessment outcome made to the participant or their family'



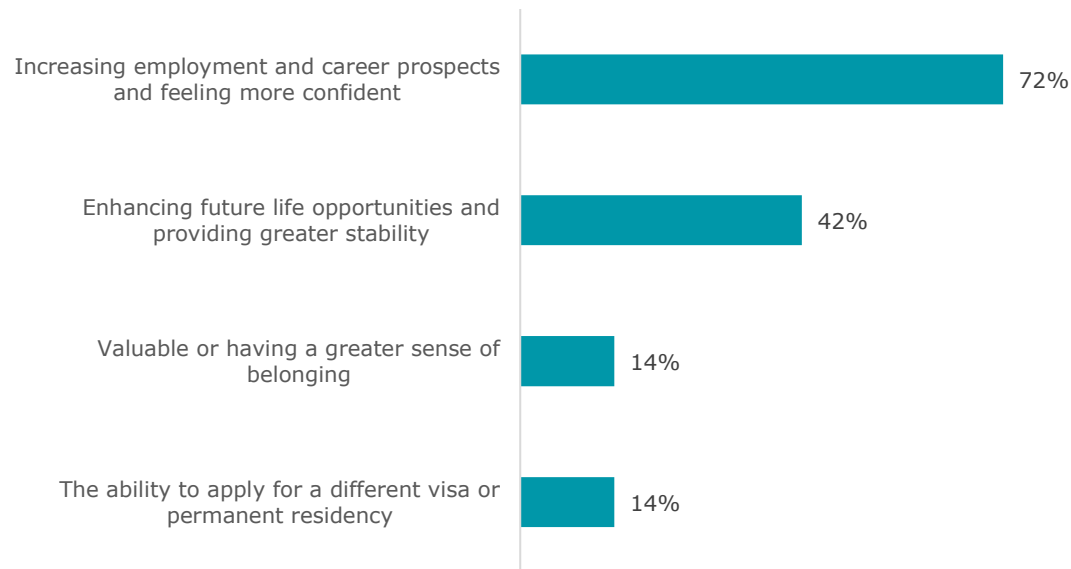
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024)

# Impact of Pilot 2



The top identified impact of the Pilot on respondents was improved employment and career prospects and sense of confidence (72%), followed by enhanced future life opportunities and greater stability (42%) and finding the skills assessment valuable and having a greater sense of belonging (14%).

**Chart B.30:** Categorisation of responses to 'what difference, if any, did getting your skills assessment outcome make to you or your family?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=50)

Migrants facing underemployment frequently grapple with substantial stressors that affect their mental and emotional states. The social ramifications of over-qualification among migrants are challenging to quantify but stem from their inability to apply their chosen expertise and secure meaningful employment. As various studies have noted, this circumstance is associated with adverse mental health outcomes, marked by persistent feelings of sadness, depression, and loneliness.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, poorer mental health can significantly reduce labour market participation highlighting the intricate relationship between mental wellbeing and employment.<sup>3</sup> Stressors like underemployment or over-qualification, which may lead to feelings of unfulfillment, adversely affect migrants' mental health, diminishing their motivation to seek and maintain employment, thereby compounding labour market challenges. Attaining permanent residency can offer the stability and security needed to address these stressors potentially enhancing migrants' mental health and, in turn, their labour market outcomes.

Moreover, empirical research in Australia and New Zealand confirm that successful settlement, particularly for humanitarian migrants, in Australia is largely dependent on the extent to which they are able to convert their skills and qualifications for use in Australia.<sup>4</sup> Analysis reveals that just under one in three humanitarian migrants were in roles not aligned to their qualifications. Interestingly, this research also finds that the underuse of migrant's skills tends to be greater for those who arrive with higher educational qualifications.<sup>5</sup> Compared with skilled visa holders, humanitarian migrants fare much worse in the labour market and their economic integration and income rewards were much slower to materialise. Reinforcing other research which finds that humanitarian visa holders are more likely to suffer than other groups through non-recognition of their skills and as result, display a relative high propensity to form their own business than other types migrants to overcome these barriers to employment.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the Continuous Survey of Adult Migrants confirms secondary skilled visa holders and family and partner visa holders face similar barriers to employment observing higher rates of unemployment or employed in low-skilled roles relative to skilled migrants. For example, one in eight (11%) secondary skilled visa holders (i.e., partners of skilled visa holders) were working in low-skilled roles relative to less than one in every twenty (4%) primary skilled visa holders after living in Australia for six-months in 2019.<sup>7</sup> However, evidence suggests that partners of skilled migrants are often as well qualified as the primary applicant.<sup>8,9</sup> Similarly, the gap in employment outcomes between family visa holders and skilled counterparts is significant, despite the fact that more than a third (36%) of family stream visa holders possess a tertiary-level qualification.<sup>10</sup> While outcomes typically improve overtime, it still significantly lags behind skilled counterparts.

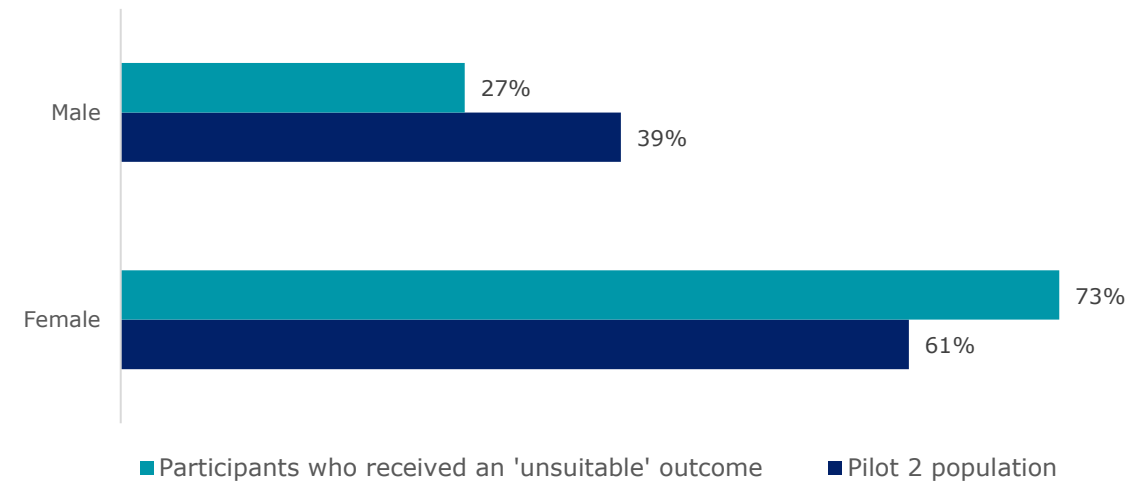
# Impact of Pilot 2



## What pilot factors appear to determine and/or impact success (as defined in the program logic)?

Participants who received an 'unsuitable' skills assessment outcome were more likely to be female respondents with 73% receiving an 'unsuitable' outcome compared to 61% of the total population (Chart B.31). This may suggest that female applicants face more barriers to undertaking a skills assessment than male applicants.

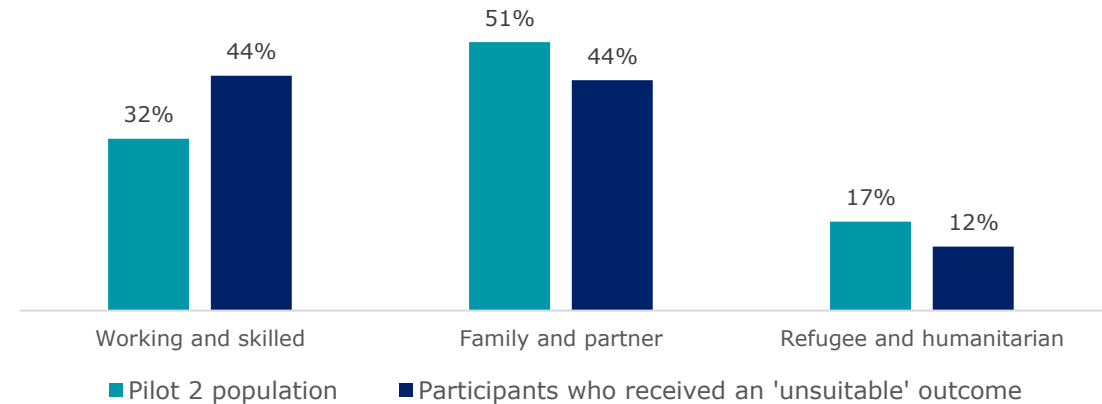
**Chart B.31:** Gender of the Pilot 2 population and participants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) Pilot 2 population (n=272), Participants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome (n=124)

These participants were also more likely to hold a secondary working and skilled visa with 44% receiving an 'unsuitable' outcome compared to 31% of the total population (Chart B.32).

**Chart B.32:** Broad visa type of the Pilot 2 population and participants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) Pilot 2 population (n=272), Participants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome (n=124)

Furthermore, participants who received an 'unsuitable' outcome were most likely to be assessed by the Australian Pharmacy Council representing 87% of 'unsuitable' respondents relative to 57% of the Pilot 2 population. There exists no other notable differences to the Pilot population across location in Australia or country of origin.



# Appendix C

## Pilot 3: Employability Assessments



# Implementation of Pilot 3

The following draws upon Assessing Authority interviews, withdrawn participant interviews and the Department's program data.



# Implementation of Pilot 3

## Do the Pilot operations and procedures enable effective implementation, and how does this vary across Assessing Authorities and the EAP?

While most Assessing Authorities noted there was a lot of information to digest, the guidelines were clear and easy to understand. In a small number of instances, Assessing Authorities indicated that the guidelines were not clear and often required a significant amount of clarification from DEWR. The EAP agreed that the guidelines were clear and easy to understand, while there were points of clarification required, DEWR was easy to contact and provide additional guidance.

*"While there was a lot of information to understand, particularly given our limited role in delivering the Pilot, the guidelines were clear and easy to understand. Where we needed to clarify things, DEWR were and quick to provide a response" – Assessing Authority*

Some Assessing Authorities also noted that it was not always clear which stakeholder (i.e., Assessing Authority or the EAP) was responsible for each step in the process. For example, one Assessing Authority noted it was unclear if after data was entered into the MSI system this would automatically be picked up by the EAP or the Assessment Authority needed to contact the EAP to alert them of the referral.

## How does the uptake of the Pilots compare to the forecast / anticipated levels?

Pilot 3 had a total of 229 applicants, equivalent to approximately 3% of the total Pilot 1-3 target (7,300), significantly below the Department's forecast expectations. As earlier highlighted, the SAP were re-scoped in 2023, with targeted participation across Pilot 1-3 lowered from 9,500 to 7,300.

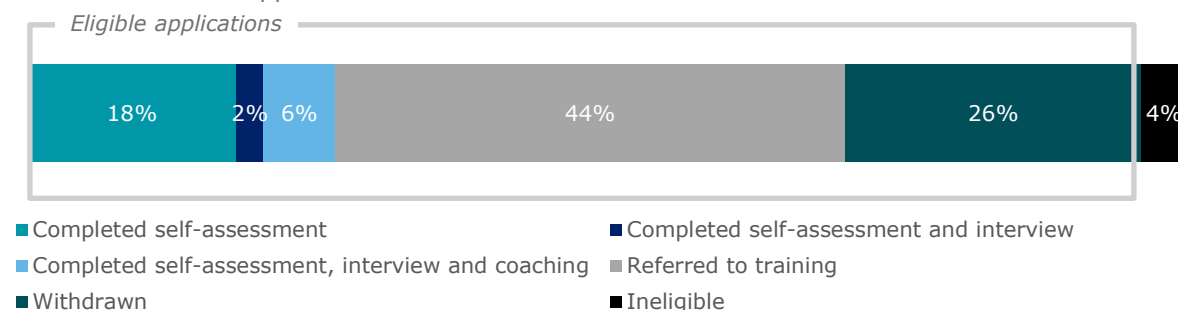
More than half of applicants who had not withdrawn (53%) had completed more than one stage of the Pilot – consisting of self-assessment, followed by an interview and coaching session (Chart C.1). Where additional training was identified as required, applicants are referred to additional employability skills training – with 44% of applicants referred to training. Among participants who were referred to training, 63% enrolled into training – below the enrolment of participants in training KPI target of 70%.

More than half of Assessing Authorities noted that participation in the Pilot was consistent with their expectations to receive few applications. These Assessing

Authorities typically represented organisations who received no eligible applications. The remaining Assessing Authorities noted participation in the Pilot was lower than anticipated, particularly relative to the effort required to deliver the Pilot. The EAP agreed that participation in the Pilot was lower than expected.

Given Assessing Authorities possessed existing data surrounding potential eligible applicants (based on internal records of previously deemed 'suitable' applicants), it was anticipated that referrals would largely originate from Assessing Authorities. However, lower than anticipated uptake suggests there were difficulties reaching the intended cohort (which are further explored below), emphasising the importance of earmarking a dedicated marketing budget in future initiatives to appropriately reach this cohort.

Chart C.1: Pilot 3 application status breakdown



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=229)

## What are the major barriers and enablers to different stakeholders engaging with the Skills Assessment Pilots?

### Assessing Authorities

Most Assessing Authorities noted that DEWR's information sessions were very helpful, in particular the resources shared (i.e., templates and information packs) were very useful to support the quick implementation of the Pilot.



# Implementation of Pilot 3

However, some Assessing Authorities noted that the information packs provided by DEWR were not clear in articulating to participants what the employability skills assessment involved (as it did not represent a traditional skills assessment), as well as who was eligible to participate. For example, Assessing Authorities indicated that applicants often thought the employability assessment was intended to help support them to find a job or provide workplace training – this message was echoed in withdrawn participant interviews.

Assessing Authorities noted that when they adjusted some of the information shared notably the wording in outreach material to align with occupation specific terminology, they received fewer ineligible applicant enquiries.

While Assessing Authorities agreed that the concept of supporting migrants' employability skills was valuable, it was frequently reported that the Pilot did not align well with their industry, indicating that while some Assessing Authorities were consulted widening this initial consultation process to all participating Assessing Authorities would have been beneficial to inform the design of the Pilot. Consistent with this, some Assessing Authorities indicated that a bespoke approach for each industry would have been valuable, given the innate differences and barriers to employment between industries included in the Pilot (i.e., skill levels, whether the occupation was regulated) as opposed to the general approach adopted.

## Employability Assessment Provider

The EAP found the initial consultation process particularly resource intensive, noting that some stakeholders included in the consultation series (notably unions) were extremely challenging to contact, which was made more difficult by tight consultation timelines.

## Barriers to participation

A number of Assessing Authorities identified no eligible applicants and attributed this to a combination of the below:

- **In-demand occupations** (i.e., optometry, teaching, early childhood education and care), often do not face barriers to securing employment after receiving a skills assessment outcome. Often these types of applicants may be working below their skill level while applying for a skills assessment, but quickly transition to a role in line with their skills once they receive a skills assessment outcome and/ or become registered.

- Applicants were ineligible for the Pilot due to **misalignment to the eligibility criteria** which included a combination of holding an ineligible visa type, already working in the same skill level, no longer located in Australia or became an Australian citizen.
- The **primary promotion strategy** involved Assessing Authorities contacting previous suitable applicants. Some Assessing Authorities noted that this strategy relied on applicants having the same email account as when they completed a skills assessment as well as assuming that this email was not detected as spam.

As earlier noted, more than one in every four (26%) withdrew from the Pilot. According to Assessing Authorities, this was commonly attributed to the employability skills training offered, which despite being developed in consultation with industry, was described as foundational in nature and often not relevant to highly skilled participants. Interviews with withdrawn participants confirmed these findings, with participants reporting that the skills gaps identified and referrals to training were often not relevant. This suggests that employability skills training did not enhance migrants' overall career prospects or support their employment journey.

*"I did not feel like this training would have helped me further my career in any way, I was referred to foundational numeracy training, which I don't need as I have a Masters in Engineering" – Withdrawn participant*

Often, withdrawn participants noted that if training provided an opportunity to learn the Australian context of their industry in addition to technical training, they would have seen more value in the training provided and been willing to enrol.

Assessing Authorities also noted that migrants are often seeking support in securing their first job, indicating that if this was provided as part of the Pilot, uptake would have likely been much higher. This was echoed in withdrawn participant interviews, with participants indicating that if the program included the opportunity to engage with employers or expand their networks, it would've been more valuable.

The EAP also noted that given eligible migrants were employed in some capacity, it was challenging to find time to engage in the Pilot itself, as they may not be willing to miss hours of work to participate in components of the Pilot. The EAP provided workarounds by offering sessions during lunch time and outside of office hours (i.e., over the weekend or later in the day) however, noted that these solutions were not always sufficient.



# Implementation of Pilot 3

Withdrawn participants also noted that time represented a significant barrier to participating in the Pilot, given they were all working at the time of interview.

*"While I'm trying to further my career, I'm trying to support my family, which made it hard to find the time to participate in this program" – Withdrawn participant*

In line with these findings, the EAP noted that the Pilot had too many touchpoints throughout the Pilot and perhaps if these were reduced, more participants could have more meaningfully engaged in the Pilot.

Consistent with Pilot 2, several Assessing Authorities highlighted that there was a lack of awareness of the Pilot across the broader sector, which may have contributed to lower than anticipated participation.

Despite barriers to participation in the Pilot, leading to low overall uptake, nonetheless the Pilot afforded the Department a clearer understanding of migrants' skills and challenges in the labour market.

## Are employability assessments for migrants completed in a timely manner (in-line with the Pilot guidelines)?

On average, the EAP held coaching session with participants within 7.5 weeks of receiving referrals from Assessing Authorities, with 69% of applicants reaching this stage within 10 weeks of referral. While this does not meet the Department's Employability Assessments completed KPI – that 80% applicants receive a coaching session within 10 weeks of their referral – it is likely a reflection of the difficulty noted by the EAP in scheduling these sessions with participants. As earlier noted, participants were often employed in some capacity and finding a suitable time to meet at times, was challenging.

## What levers did Assessing Authorities apply to provide assessments?

Most Assessing Authorities simply diverted existing resources to identify potential applicants and sent invitations via email. In addition, some Assessing Authorities also promoted the Pilot on social media, newsletters and through information webinars.

## Are the Pilots implemented in a culturally appropriate manner?

Pilot 3 had participants from 36 different countries, with the largest share of participants originating from India (28%), followed by Nepal (10%) and Pakistan (4%). While diversity in the uptake is expected in initiatives targeted migrants, this uptake suggests that the Pilot was implemented in a culturally appropriate manner in order to support participation across a wide range nationalities.

In parallel, the Department published translated materials (i.e., factsheets) to support uptake, in addition to designing infographic-based material to better support participation. Assessing Authorities and withdrawn participants generally agreed that the Pilot was delivered in a manner that supported uptake across a broad array of nationalities.

## Is the Pilots funding appropriate to enable stakeholders to effectively achieve the desired outcome of the program?

Overall, there was not a consensus surrounding whether the funding associated with Pilot 3 was sufficient, and largely depended on the level of demand (including eligible and ineligible applicants) for the Pilot. Some Assessing Authorities indicated that the funding was sufficient given they were mainly responsible for facilitating referrals to the EAP, meanwhile others reported given the significant amount of resources required to identify potential applicants and respond to enquiries, the funding was not sufficient to cover the effort invested.

The EAP noted that the assessment fee was sufficient to cover the cost of delivering employability assessments, however highlighted that the funding was not sufficient to cover the initial stakeholder consultation process. The administrative follow-up with participants as sessions were regularly rescheduled and the overtime required to deliver sessions outside of business hours.

## How did DEWR inform the development of the Pilots based on previous learnings with other similar programs?

Consistent with Pilot 1 and 2, DEWR undertook extensive consultations both internally within the Department and externally with industry stakeholders to inform the design of the Pilot. This consultation process also involved workshoping and testing policy changes aimed at increasing participant uptake in Pilot 2 and 3. Please refer to page [27](#) for further information surrounding the input into the design and development of the Pilots.





# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

The following draws upon Assessing Authority interviews, withdrawn participant interviews, program data, publicly available data, 6-month and 12-month survey data.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3



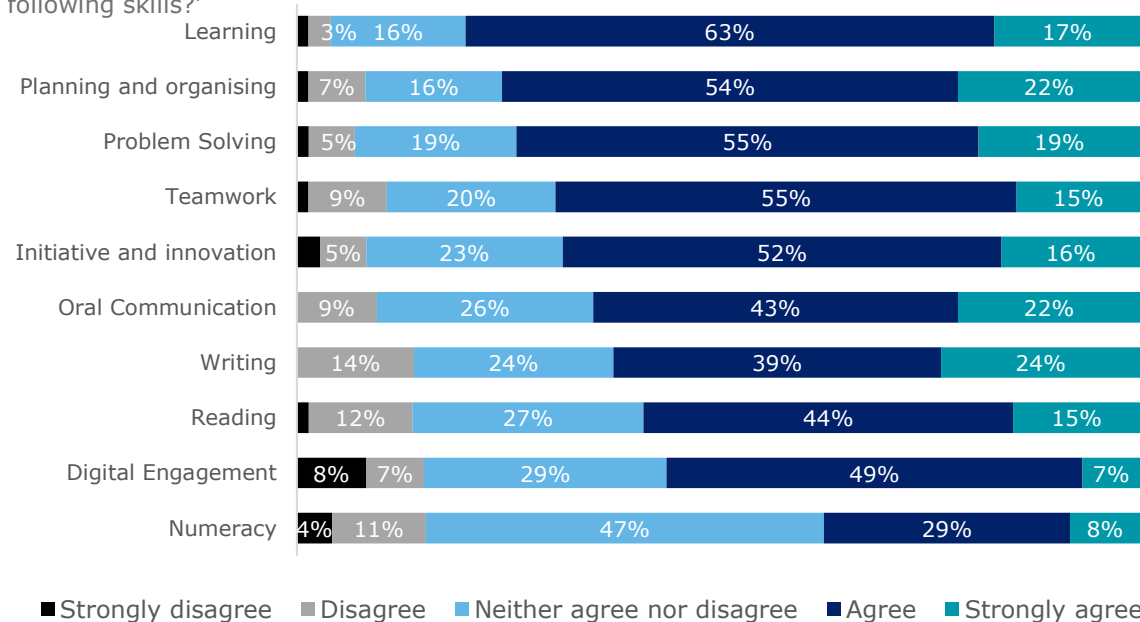
## To what extent are the Pilots achieving the intended short, medium and long-term outcomes?

### Short-term

#### Applicants develop improved employability skills

Most survey respondents reported improvements across all ten employability skills (Chart C.2). The top three employability skills respondents reported an improvement in was learning (80%), planning and organising (76%), and problem solving (74%). This suggests that participants did experience an improvement in their employability skills (as well as a better understanding of these skills) as a result of participation in the Pilot.

**Chart C.2:** 'After participating in the employability skills assessment, I have improved on the following skills?'

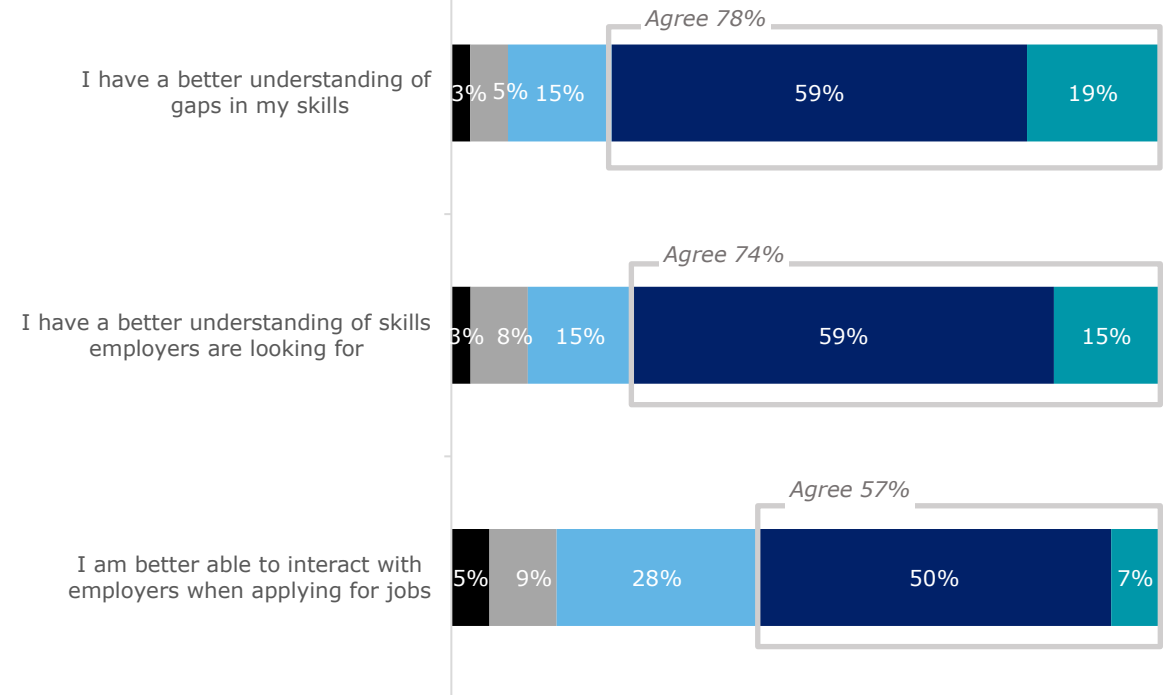


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=75), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.  
 Note: The 10 skills identified represent the 10 core competencies or soft skills identified by JSA, for further information refer to the [Australian Skills Classification](#).  
 © 2024 Deloitte Access Economics. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

#### Applicants gain improved understanding of employability gaps

The majority of survey respondents (78%) agreed that after participating in the Pilot, they have a better understanding of the gaps in their skills, signalling that participants generally felt that the employability skills assessment was effective in identifying gaps in their skills (Chart C.3). A further 74% reported a better understanding of the skills employers were looking for and 57% agree they were able to better interact with employers when applying for jobs. Further emphasising that the Pilot was effective to supporting participants to develop a better understanding of employability skills.

**Chart C.3:** Extent to which respondents agree with the following statements



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=75), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

## Assessing Authorities gain an improved understanding of applicants' skills and challenges

In consultations, Assessing Authorities were able to easily identify common gaps in migrants' skills, typically noting the below:

- **English language skills.** Despite having undertaken a skills assessment successfully, Assessing Authorities indicated that often spoken English language skills are not as strong as written skills.
- **Understanding what it means to work in Australia** and in particular, not understanding the subtleties of their industry. For example, some other countries may use different types of technology to Australia or adopt different frameworks.
- **Lacking confidence to apply for local jobs** in Australia or attend interviews, particularly if spoken English is not strong.

When asked about the types of challenges migrants' face in the Australian labour market, in interviews Assessing Authorities commonly identified the following:

- Many **employers possess an unconscious bias** towards hiring migrants, which many Assessing Authorities noted better educating the industry about hiring migrants represents a key strategic priority for their organisation.
- Often **jobs require relevant local work experience** as a pre-requisite, which is very challenging to secure as a migrant given the bias faced in the labour market.
- **Navigating the system** is difficult particularly given English is often a second language, as each state or territory often requires different certifications or registrations to work in a given occupation.

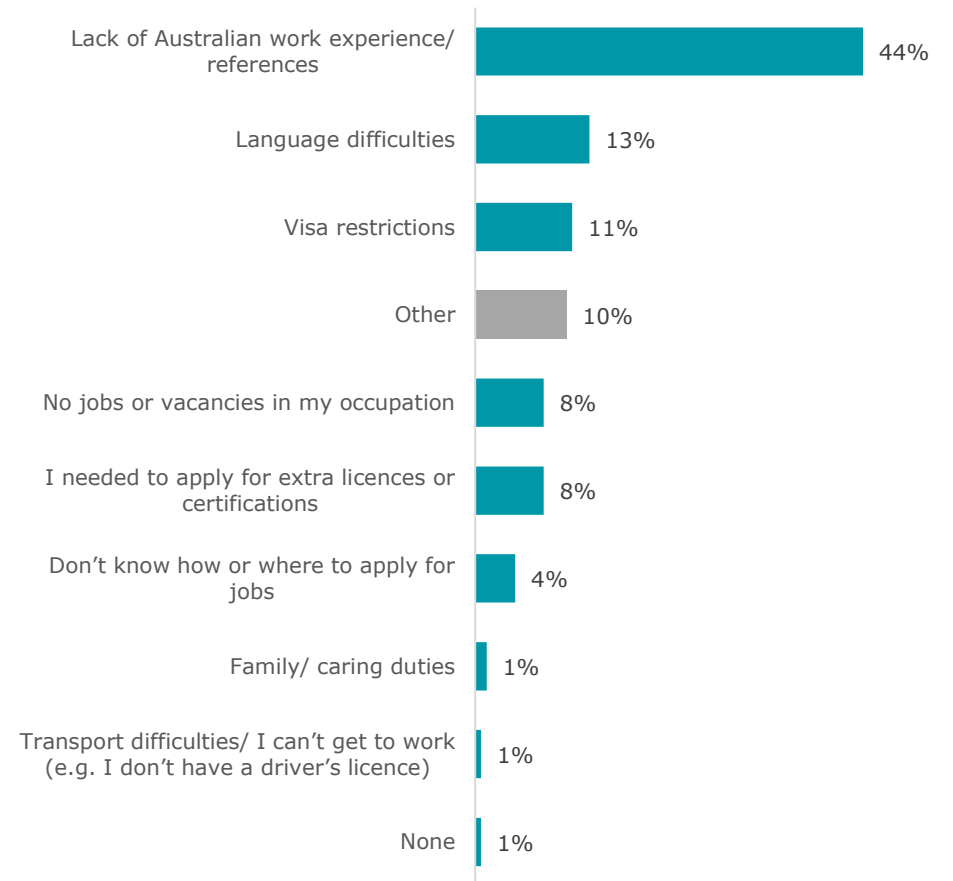
Consistent with the above, the top barrier to employment identified by survey respondents was a lack of local work experience/ references (44%), followed by language difficulties (13%) and visa restrictions (11%) (Chart C.4).

Similarly, withdrawn participants consistently noted lack of local networks and work experience as key barriers to securing a job in line with their skills.

*"A key barrier for me has been not knowing anyone who can refer me to a job or vouch for my previous experience" – Withdrawn participant*

While it is unclear the extent to which the Pilot enhanced this understanding, Assessing Authorities nonetheless demonstrated strong awareness of applicants' skills and challenges in the labour market. In parallel, the Pilot has also enhanced the Department's understanding obstacles faced by migrants in the Australian labour market.

**Chart C.4:** 'Based on your experiences in Australia, what are some of the challenges you've faced to getting a job aligned to your qualifications or skills?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=73), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents can select more than one option.



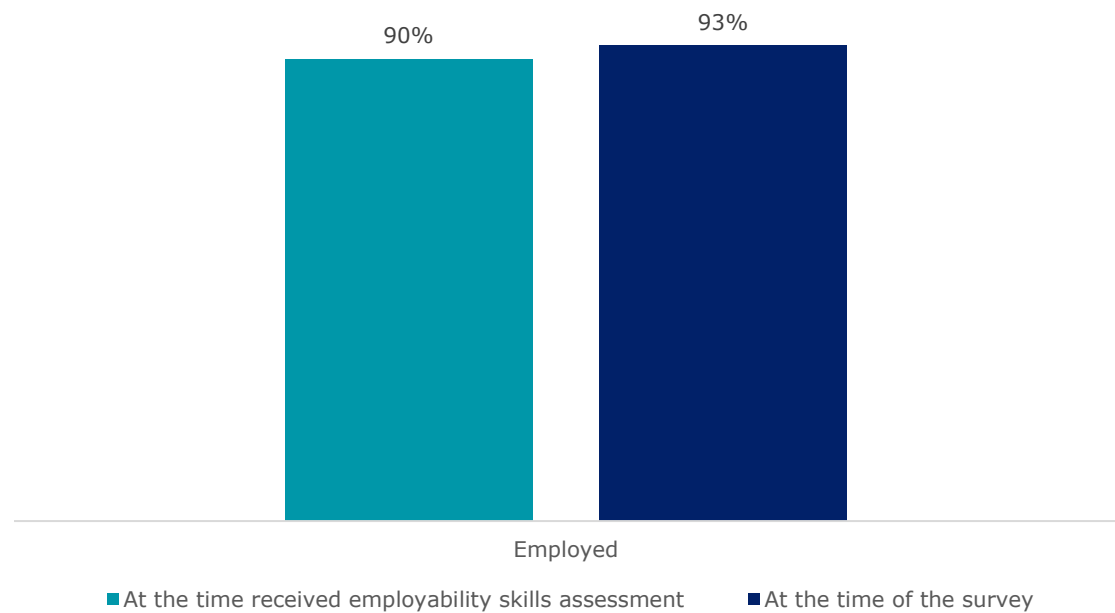
# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

## Medium-term

### Applicants more quickly secure employment

At the time of the survey, more respondents were employed (93%) relative to the time they received their employability skills assessment (90%) (Chart C.5), with 4% of respondents transitioning from employment to unemployment after receiving an employability skills assessment. With the remainder either unemployed or not in the labour force. Given a small increment in the share of employed respondents, in tandem to the fact that some improvement in employment circumstances is expected to occur naturally over time, it is likely that the Pilot was not effective in supporting applicants to secure employment more quickly.

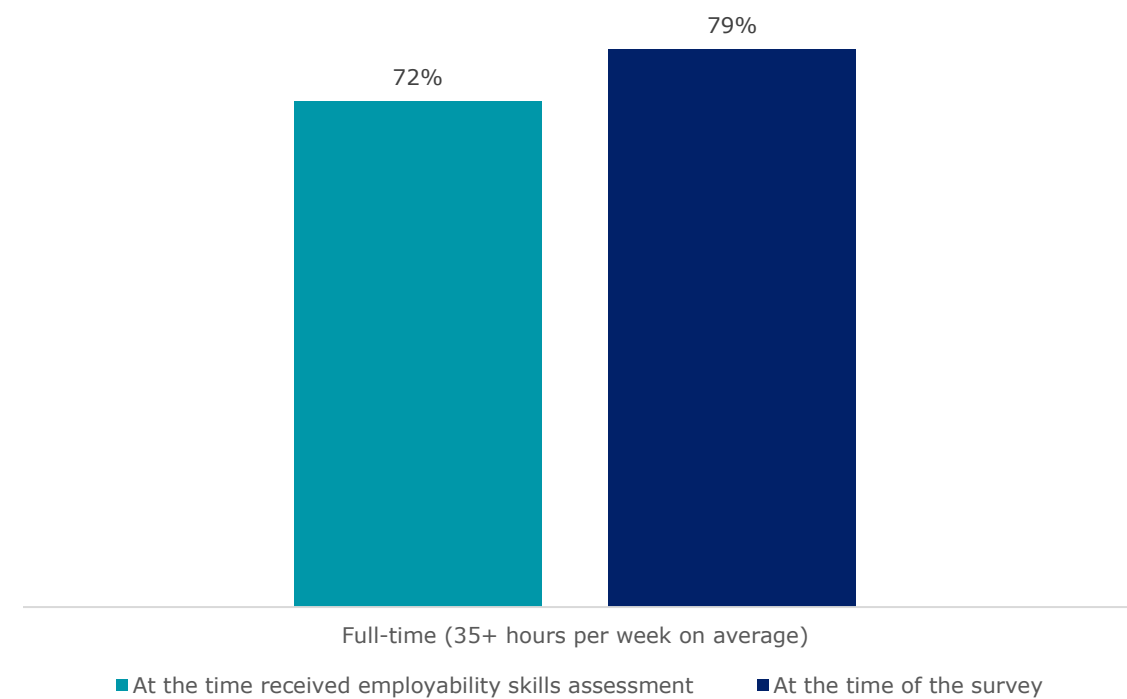
**Chart C.5:** Survey respondents' employment status (12-month survey)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=82), excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say'.

Among respondents who were employed at the time of the survey, 79% were now employed in full-time roles relative to 72% at the time they received their employability assessment (Chart C.6). Consistent with earlier analysis, despite the share employed on a full-time basis growing, given the limited effectiveness of the Pilot and the fact that some improvement in employment circumstances over time is expected. On balance, it is likely that the Pilot was not effective in supporting transitions to more secure work.

**Chart C.6:** Employed survey respondents' status in employment (12-month survey)



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=77), excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say'.

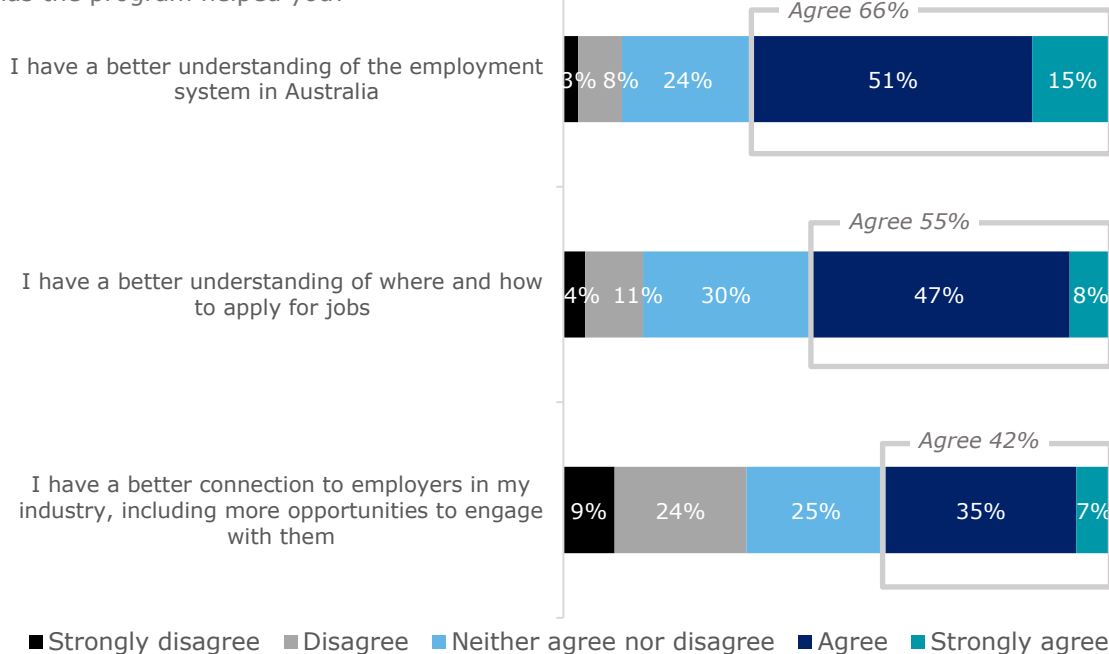
# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

## Applicants have a better understanding of the employment system in Australia

More than two thirds (66%) of survey respondents agreed that following participation in the Pilot, they have a better understanding of the employment system in Australia (Chart C.7). More than half (55%) agreed that they have a better understanding of where and how to apply for jobs and a further 42% reported having a better connection to employers in their industry. This suggests that the Pilot was successful in enhancing participants understanding of the employment system in Australia.

Generally, participants who completed more stages of the employability skills assessment process (i.e., coaching or received referrals to training) displayed higher agreement with the below statements.

**Chart C.7:** 'Based on your experience in the employability assessment process so far, how has the program helped you?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=76), excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say'. © 2024 Deloitte Access Economics. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

## Applicants transition into employment aligned with their education/ training

Prior to participation in the Pilot, all participants were working below their skill level (as this was a core component of the eligibility criteria). Participants often reported finding themselves employed in roles that are not aligned to their skill level due to the challenges associated with securing a job in the industry for which they are qualified. The data reveals that a significant share of these participants are currently employed in industries unrelated to their qualifications, including occupations in retail, childcare, support work, cleaning, and driving. A small share of participants noted that while they were working within their nominated industry, at the time of application, their roles were either below their skill capacity or did not fully harness their qualifications. For example, one participant reported performing manual data entry tasks despite being qualified as a software engineer.

At the time of the survey, 60% were employed in the same job as when they completed their employability skills assessment. The remaining 40% were employed in a different job (Chart C.8).

**Chart C.8:** 'Are you in the same job as when you completed your employability skills assessment?'

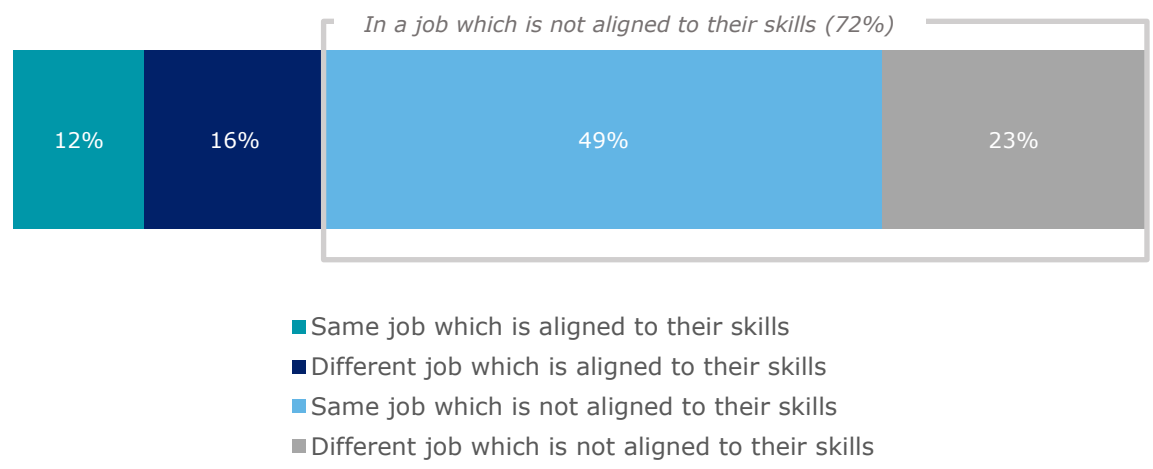


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=70)

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

Consistent with the finding that few respondents were in a different role to when they completed their employability skill assessment, 72% survey respondents were employed in a job that was not aligned with their skills (Chart C.9). The remaining 28% were in a job aligned to the skills assessment, 12% had already secured a job in line with their skills and 16% had recently secured a job aligned to their qualifications. Signalling that the Pilot was not effective in supporting applicants to secure employment commensurate with their skills.

**Chart C.9:** 'Are you in the same job as when you completed your employability skills assessment?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=69)

## Assessing Authorities gain a better understanding of the skills profile of onshore migrants

While Assessing Authorities were not associated with identifying gaps in migrants' skills in the employability assessment process, the Pilot provided the opportunity to connect with previous successful skill assessment applicants and understand some of

the key barriers they've faced to securing employment. Key barriers include gaps in their skills. This suggests that the Pilot was successful in providing Assessing Authorities an opportunity to develop an enhanced understanding of the skills profile of onshore migrants.

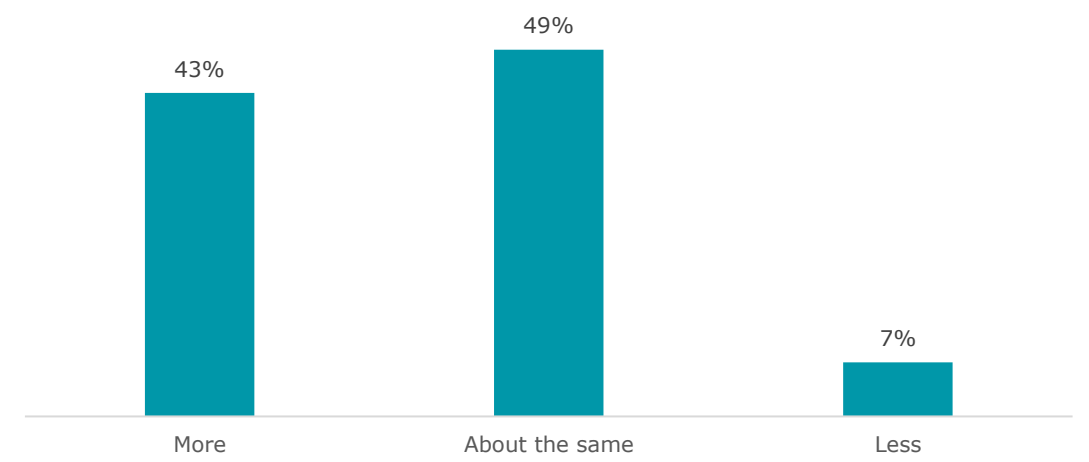
### Long-term

#### Applicants experience improved economic, financial and social wellbeing and inclusion

##### 1 | Economic & financial wellbeing

At the time of the survey, 43% of respondents reported earning more than when they completed their employability skills assessment, meanwhile 49% reported earning about the same and 7% are earning less (Chart C.10). Despite participants earning more after receiving an employability assessment, given the limited effectiveness in enhancing participants employment circumstances, it is likely the Pilot had limited influence over participants financial wellbeing.

**Chart C.10:** 'Do you earn more or less money now than you did at the time you received an employability assessment?'



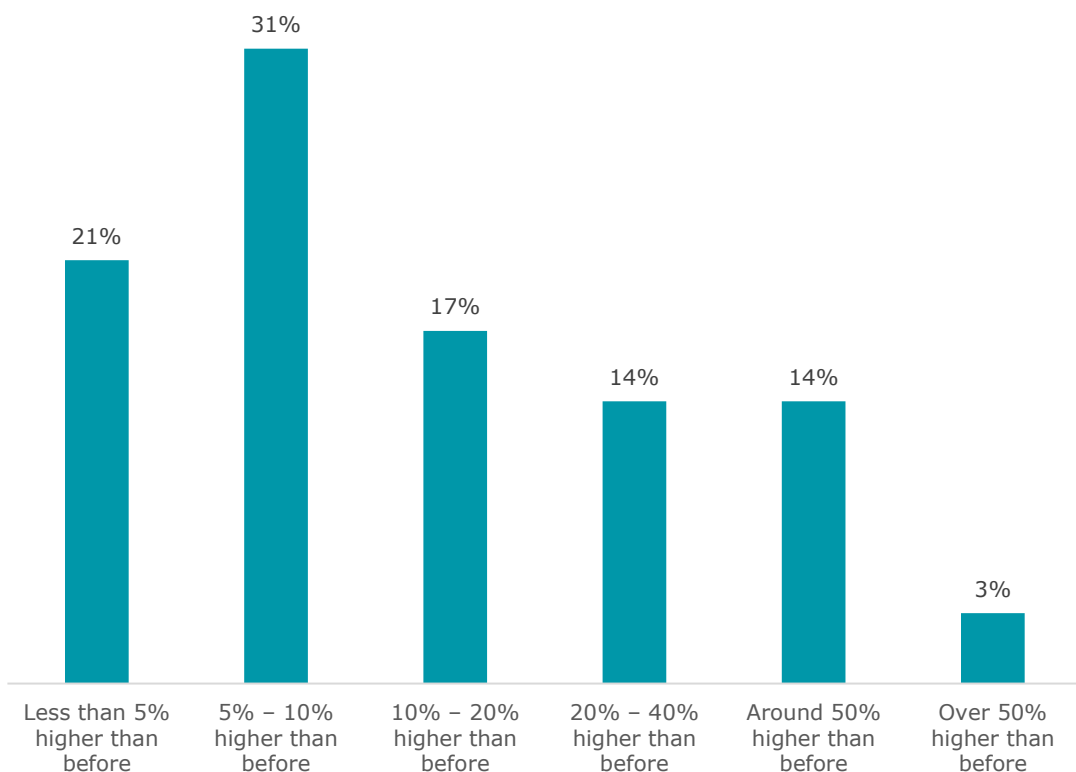
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=69), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

Among survey respondents who reported earning more after receiving an employability skills assessment (43%), around a third (31%) are earning 5-10% more followed by less than 5% more (21%) (Chart C.11).

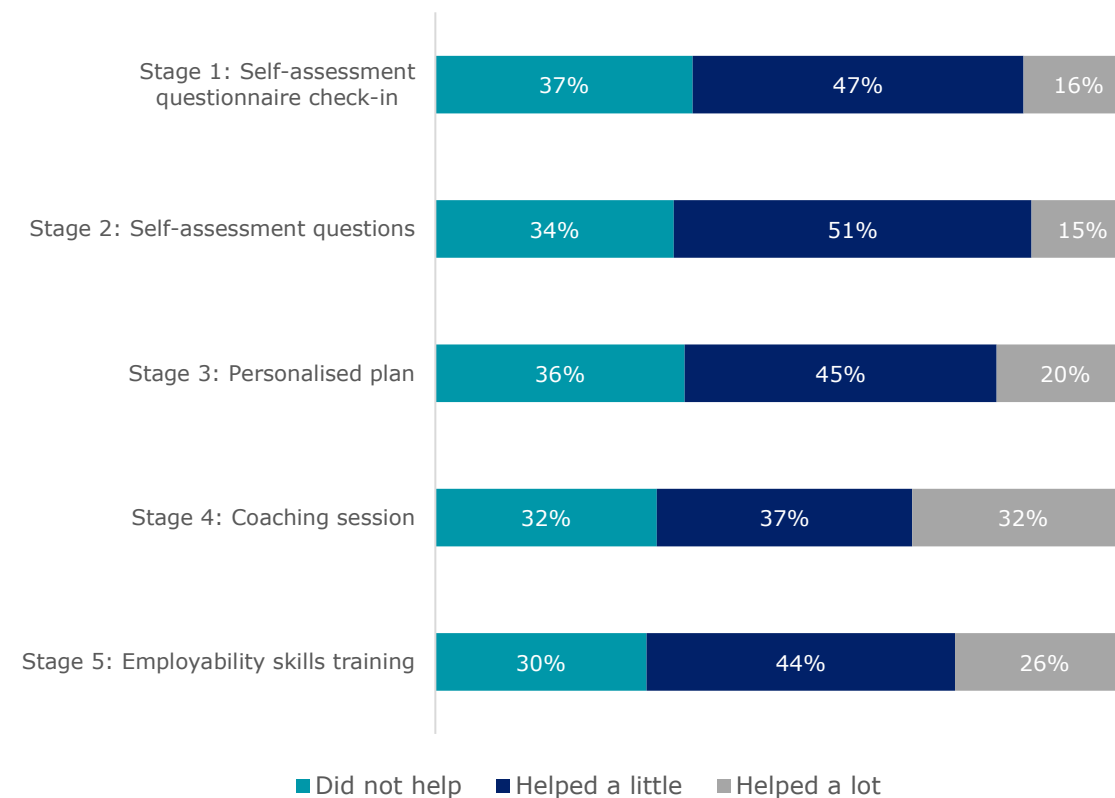
**Chart C.11:** 'As a percentage, how much higher is your average monthly income now than at the time you received your employability assessment?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=30), excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say'.

As survey respondents progressed through the employability skills assessment process, they found the assessment increasingly useful in either getting a job or supporting job applications, with 70% of survey respondents who completed the employability skills training, reporting it helped to get a job or support job applications (Chart C.12).

**Chart C.12:** 'To what extent did completing the following help you to get a job or support your job application?'



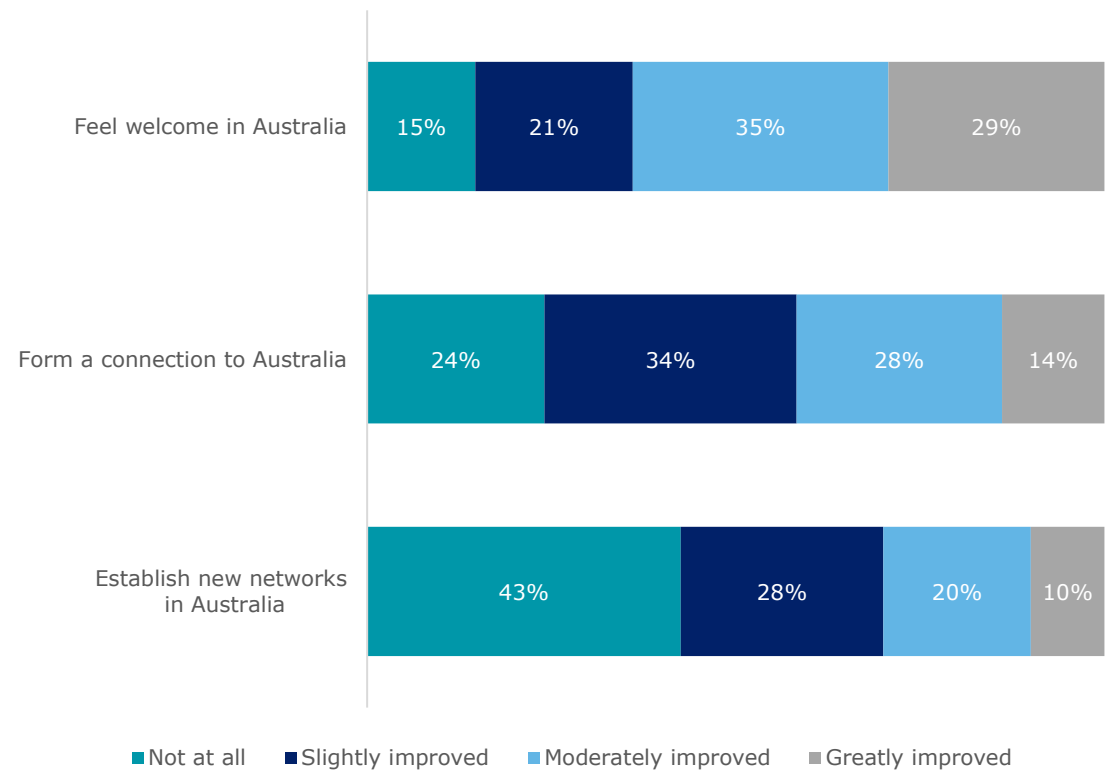
Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=57), excludes respondents who selected 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

## 2 | Social wellbeing & inclusion

A significant majority of respondents reported that participating the employability skills assessment contributed to fostering a sense of belonging in Australia (85%), enhancing their connection to Australia (76%) and forming new networks (58%) (Chart C.13). Therefore, the Pilot appears to have contributed towards improvements in applicants' social wellbeing.

**Chart C.13:** 'To what extent did participating in the employability assessment process contribute to the following?'

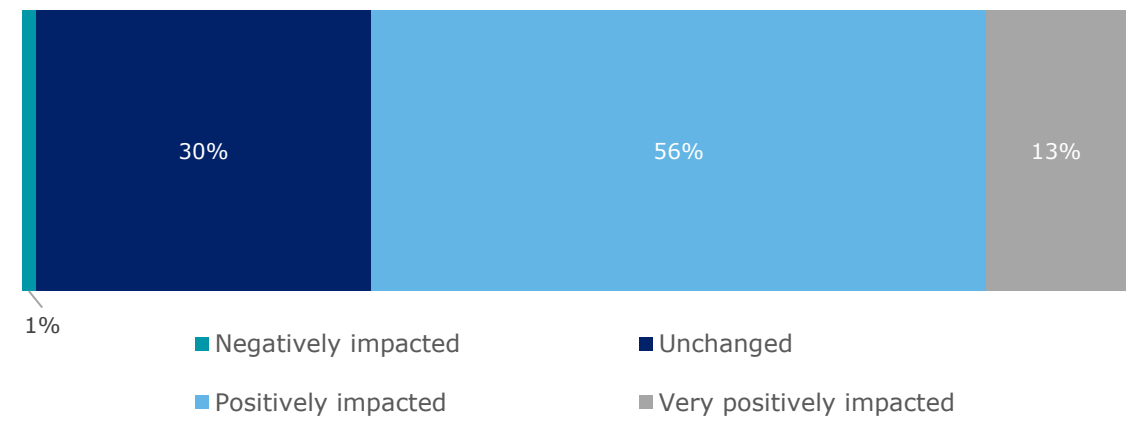


Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=82), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.

Consistent with Chart C.13, the vast majority of respondents (69%) reported that participating in the employability skills assessment process positively influenced how they felt about their place and future in Australia (Chart C.14). This is broadly consistent with withdrawn participant interviews, as these participants often noted that while the training provided was not appropriate to their situation, they welcomed additional support to help secure a job in line with their skills in Australia.

*"The training was really basic and not relevant to a highly skilled engineer, but maybe it would've been good for other occupations" – Participant*

**Chart C.14:** 'To what extent did participating in the skills assessment process change how you feel about your place and future in Australia?'



Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=79), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'. Note: Where categories are not displayed (i.e., 'very negatively impacted') in the chart, the value represents 0%.



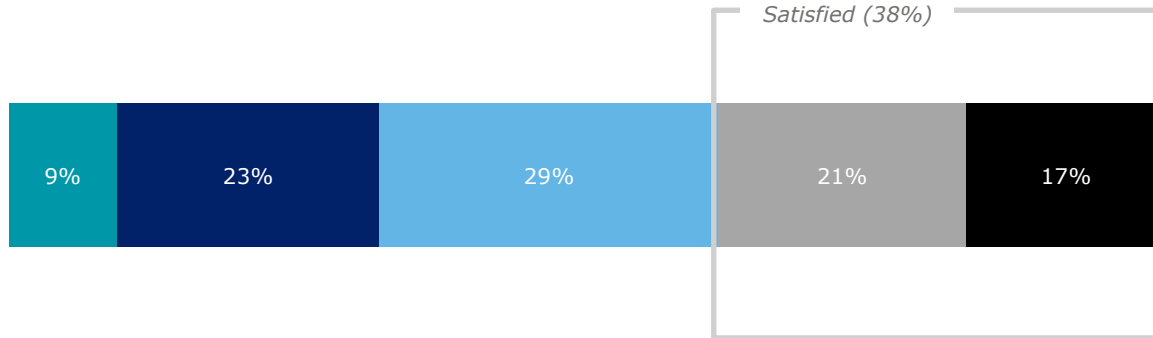
# Effectiveness of Pilot 3



## Applicants experience greater life/ employment satisfaction

More than a third (38% or 29) of survey respondents reported being satisfied with their current job (Chart C.15). In the context, of few respondents currently employed in jobs aligned with their skills assessment, it generally makes sense that a low share would be satisfied.

**Chart C.15:** 'How satisfied are you with your current job?'



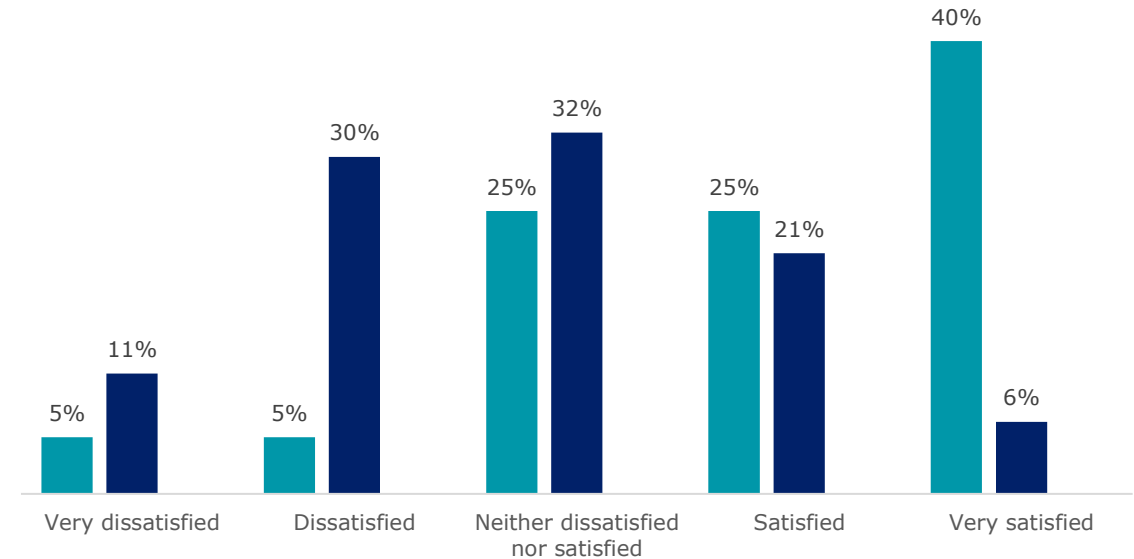
■ Very dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very satisfied

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=75), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.

Respondents who were in a job aligned to their qualifications were much more likely to be satisfied with their current job, with 65% of these respondents reported being satisfied with their current job. Meanwhile, less than a third (27%) of respondents who were in a role not aligned with their skills assessment reported being satisfied with their current job (Chart C.16). This further emphasises the significant role of alignment to skills in job satisfaction.

Given the small share of participants who transitioned into a role aligned with their skills assessment, the Pilot was not effective in supporting greater life and employment satisfaction.

**Chart C.16:** 'How satisfied are you with your current job?' by alignment of their current job to skills assessment



■ Job aligned to skills ■ Job not aligned to skills

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2024) (n=75), excludes respondents who selected 'don't know'.

## Progress the consideration of employment outcomes in the skills assessment process

Many Assessing Authorities highlighted that the Pilot had encouraged them to consider what additional support and services could be provided to applicants post skills assessment to support the development of employability skills and transitions to work. Some of these Assessing Authorities have already introduced new free supports to previous applicants, such as job register to connect employers to jobseekers. Revealing that the Pilot was effective in progressing the consideration of employment outcomes in the skills assessment process.

It should be noted that some Assessing Authorities (notably EA, IPA, CAANZ and CPAA) had already introduced 'professional years' programs which provided some shared services with the Pilot however, were much more extensive in terms of providing networking opportunities and connections to industry.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

## Reduced skill shortages in the labour market

Among Pilot 3 participants who underwent the employability skills assessment, the top five occupations they received a skills assessment for were: Mechanical Engineer (22%), Civil Engineer (16%), Electrical Engineer (12%), Chef (8%) and Electronics Engineer (6%). There exists a strong alignment between the Skills Priority List (SPL) and the occupations of Pilot 3 participants, with the bulk (96%) of participants skilled in occupations experiencing national shortages (Chart C.17). This reflects the design of the eligibility criteria, focused on supporting migrants equipped with skills deemed to be in national shortage.

More than two-thirds (70%) were skilled in occupations that were deemed to experience demand in line with the economy-wide average, with the remainder expected to experience below economy-wide average growth. Importantly too, 89% of participants who received an employability skills assessment were trained in occupations classified at the highest skill level (ANZSCO skill level 1).

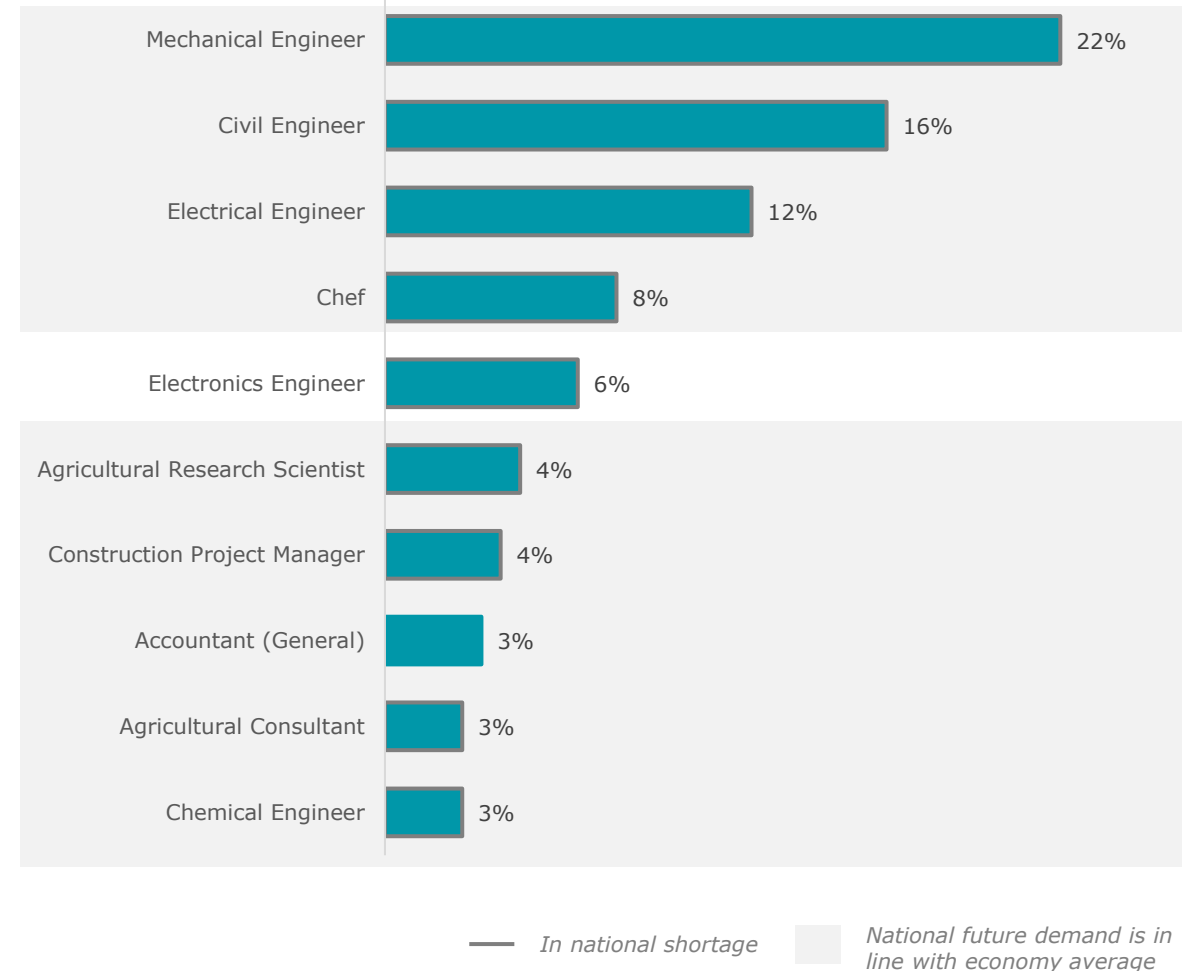
It should be noted that given the low volume of participants in the employability skills assessment process overall (207) (in particular the number who completed the entire process – 48% of the total), alongside earlier findings that receiving an employability skills assessment, had little influence on participants employment outcomes. The impact of the Pilot on alleviating pressure on existing shortages in the Australian economy would be minor. Therefore, the Pilot was not effective in reducing skill shortages in the labour market.

## In what circumstances have the Pilots been more or less effective at achieving their intended outcomes (including investment effectiveness)?

Assessing Authorities agreed that it is prevalent to see migrants working below their skill level across the board including by gender, age, country of origin and visa types.

The EAP noted that participants preferred to participate in self-paced online courses which provided digital badging that could be added to resumes or on LinkedIn. Courses with Assessing Authorities (EA and ACS) were particularly attractive to participants as these courses represented industry best practice.

**Chart C.17:** Occupations Pilot 3 participants received skills assessment outcomes for, by skill shortage and national demand



Source: Deloitte Access Economics, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Jobs and Skills Australia (2024) (n=159)



# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

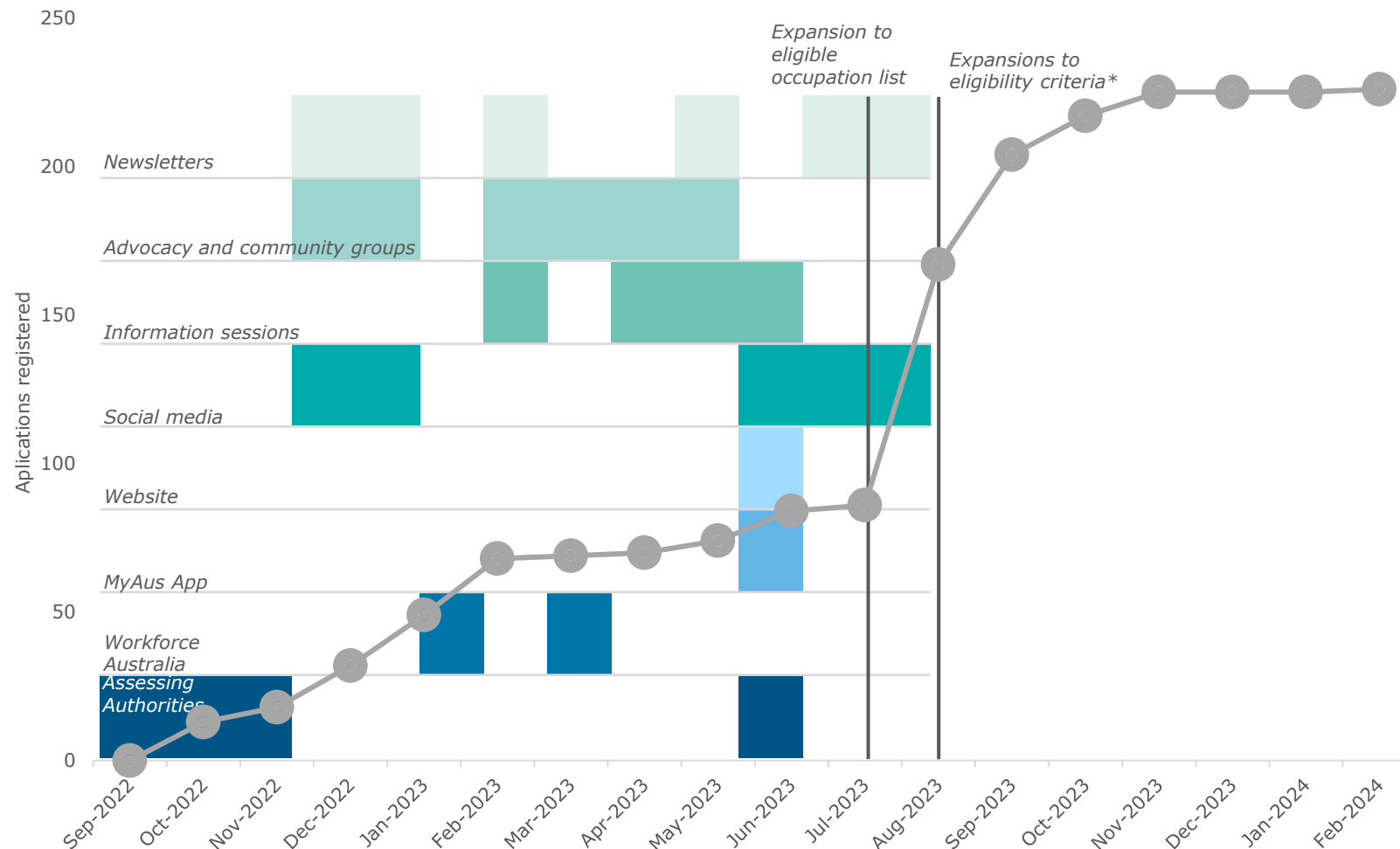
## Have the Pilots met the targets that have been set by DEWR?

Total participation in Pilot 3 was significantly below the Department’s forecast expectations, representing 3% of the targeted population for Pilot 1-3 (7,300).

Similar to Pilot 2, in response to low participation in the Pilot, DEWR undertook various promotion activities to enhance Pilot uptake outlined on page 39. Following the launch of Pilot 3, the Pilot experienced substantial month-to-month increases in registrations, before stabilising in early 2023 (Chart C.18). However, towards the end of 2023, the Pilot experienced a substantial surge in applications. Consistent with Pilot 2, the surge in registrations towards the end of 2023 aligns with the heightened promotional activities undertaken by DEWR, suggesting that these efforts were effective in enhancing Pilot uptake. It should be noted that in parallel, eligibility criteria for the Pilot was expanded in July and August 2023, which appears to have provided a significant contribution towards increasing participation in the Pilot.

According to the survey, respondents typically heard about Pilot through their Assessing Authorities (26%), followed by Government websites (12%), family and friends (10%), social media (7%) and service providers (3%).

Chart C.18: Participant uptake in Pilot 3 and promotional initiatives



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=207)

Note: DEWR’s promotional activities included above are based on a summary provided by the DEWR in November 2023.

\* This includes flexibility to determining whether an applicant is working below their skill level and reducing the minimum working hours from 40 to 30 hours, and including applicants who are currently studying as eligible

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

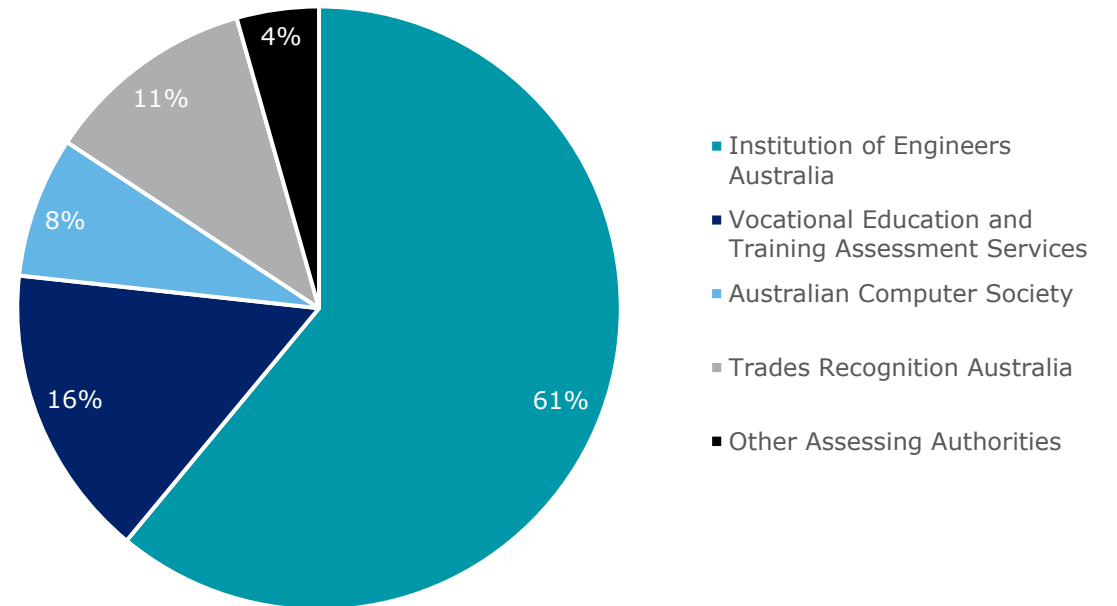
## What are the characteristics of the Pilot participants, and how does this differ across the Pilots?

There exists a large amount of variation in the volume of applications across Assessing Authorities (Chart C.19). Almost all applications (88%) were concentrated across three Assessing Authorities – the Institution of Engineers Australia, Trades Recognition Australia and Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services. This is in line with the eligibility criteria for the Pilot, as these Assessing Authorities are responsible for evaluating 72% of all eligible occupations.

Other Assessing Authorities had very few applicants, including some Assessing Authorities which had no eligible applicants.

The majority of applicants were male (74%), with the remaining 26% of applicants were either female (15%) or gender was unspecified (11%). The higher representation of male applicants is a reflection of the predominately male-dominated Assessing Authorities with the highest caseloads. For example, the engineering industry – responsible for nearly two-thirds of applicants in the Pilot – has one of the lowest female representations, with one in eight (13%) representing female engineers.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the other Assessing Authorities with high caseloads in the Pilot assess many occupations in male-dominated industries such as Trades Recognition Australia and Vocational Education and Training Assessment Services.

**Chart C.19:** Pilot 3 participants by Assessing Authority (% of eligible applications submitted for assessment)

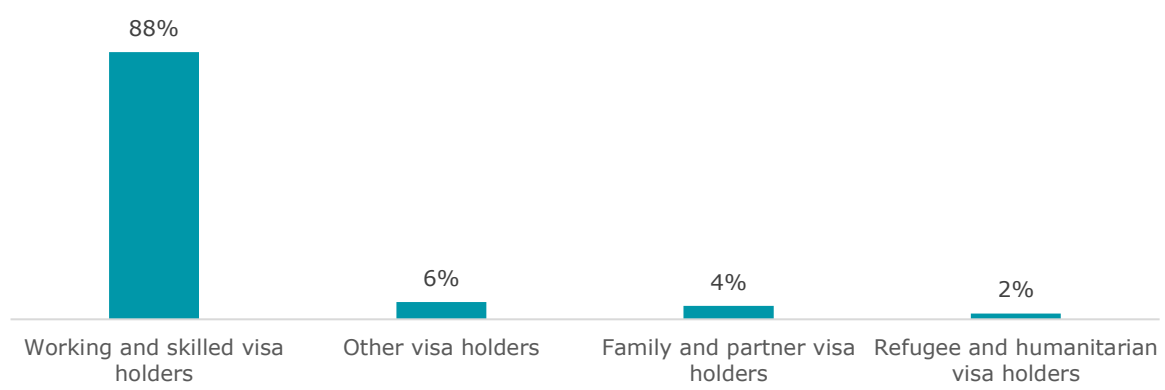


Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=159). Note: Other Assessing Authorities include Institute of Public Accountants, Australian Psychological Society and CPA Australia, Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council, CAANZ, Australian Dental Council, Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership, Australian Community Workers Association, Optometry Council of Australia, Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, Australian Society of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy, Australian Orthotic Prosthetic Association.

# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

The vast majority (88%) of participants were on a working and skilled visa at the time of application. Among those on a working and skilled visa, 40% were on a Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190), 18% on Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189) and 14% on a Skilled Regional visa (subclass 887). The high share of participants holding a working and skilled visa is a reflection of the eligibility criteria, whereby applicants holding a skilled and working visa are more likely to possess given it is a requirement for the skilled migration process. The remaining participants were family and partner visas, refugee and humanitarian visas or other types of visas (Chart C.20).

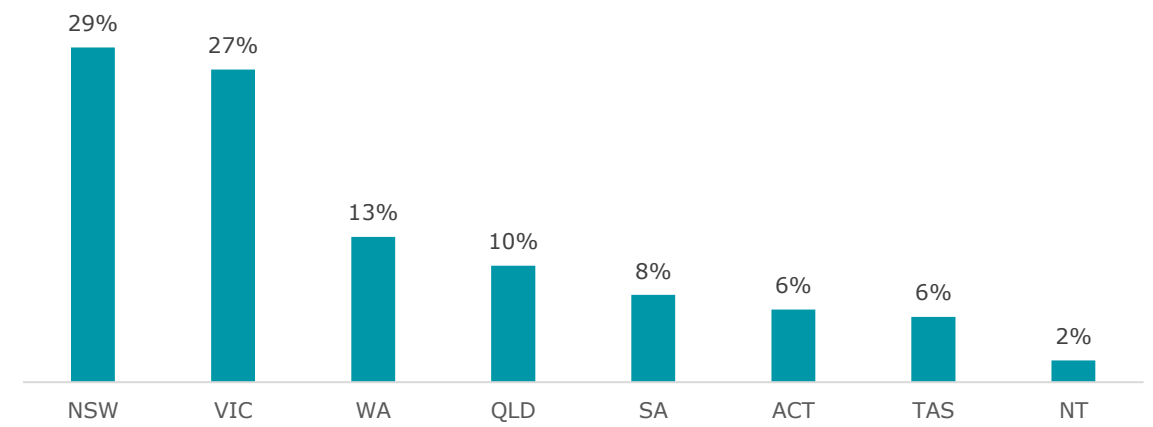
**Chart C.20:** Pilot 3 participants broad visa types



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=159).

The geographic distribution of participants is broadly consistent with the spread of the Australian population, with 56% of participants from New South Wales and Victoria (Chart C.21). This is broadly consistent with settlement patterns of migrants who display a strong preference to settle in metropolitan areas.<sup>4</sup> There exists some over-representation in the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, meanwhile Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales are under-represented. Assessing Authorities anecdotally noted a particularly high representation of participants from the Australian Capital Territory was a reflection of the labour market profile of the region as many roles require Australian citizenship.

**Chart C.21:** Participants location in Australia by State and Territory



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024) (n=159).

Compared to Pilot 1 and 2, there exists key differences in participants characteristics, notably:

- Consistent with Pilot 2, there exists a relatively high concentration across a select number of Assessing Authorities relative to Pilot 1.
- The top occupations assessed are relatively similar across Pilot 1 and 3, and relatedly the Assessing Authorities with the highest caseloads.
- Pilot 3 received a much higher share of applications from working and skilled visa holders relative to Pilot 2, which is largely a reflection in the differences in eligibility criteria between Pilots.
- Pilot 3 received significant a higher share of applications from male migrants relative to Pilot 1 and 3, which is a reflection of the typically male-dominated industries Assessing Authorities who received the highest volume of eligible applicants represent, in particular the Institution of Engineers Australia.



# Effectiveness of Pilot 3

## Have there been any unintended positive or negative outcomes associated with the programs?

As earlier noted, many Assessing Authorities highlighted that the Pilot had encouraged them to consider what additional support and services could be provided to applicants post skills assessment to support the development of employability skills and transitions to work. Some of these Assessing Authorities have already introduced new free supports to previous applicants, such as job register to connect employers to jobseekers.

The EAP noted the value of the Pilot in introducing their organisation and enhancing their skills to enter a new market, highlighting that the Pilot has provided the opportunity to consider what services could be offered to participants post-skills assessments in the future.

## To what extent have changes to the Pilot's design post commencement impacted their effectiveness?

Consistent with Pilot 2, the majority of Assessing Authorities reported that changes to the eligibility criteria were challenging to implement as potential participants were often confused as to why they were now eligible for the Pilot. Assessing Authorities agreed that greater consideration about the target cohort and how to best reach this group at the outset of the Pilot would have been beneficial to enhancing the effectiveness of the Pilot. However, Assessing Authorities agreed that changes to the Pilot after launch were critical, often reporting that they had received very little interest in the Pilot until the very end of 2023 – suggesting that changes to the eligibility criteria and timelines were effective in supporting greater participation in the Pilot.



# Impact of Pilot 3

This section combines 6-month and 12-month survey data with publicly available evidence.



# Impact of Pilot 3

## Did Pilot 3 have a meaningful and/ or additional impact on participating migrants (and other pilot stakeholders)?

### 1 | Impact on economic or financial wellbeing

While the evidence collected suggests the Pilot was effective in improving some participants employability skills and their sense of belonging in Australia, following participation in the Pilot, few respondents have successfully transitioned to a job in line with their skills assessment following participation. These findings alongside interviews with Assessing Authorities and withdrawn participants, reveals that often employability skills are not a barrier to securing employment commensurate with migrant's skills. Instead, the evidence reveals that the barriers to securing employment in line with migrant's skills extend beyond gaps in employability skills and often include a combination of the below:

- **Employers' attitudes and a lack of local work experience.** Employer hiring practices often favour local references and experience and disadvantage those without an Australian network. In fact, the Inquiry into Australia's Skilled Migration Program found that Australian employers prefer to employ an Australian over a skilled migrant wherever possible.<sup>1</sup> Getting a 'foot in the door' can be extremely difficult for migrants who have no local experience and often have no local referees and was consistently identified across Assessing Authorities, survey respondents and withdrawn participants as the top barrier to securing employment commensurate with their skills. Assessing Authorities often highlighted the value of facilitating links between migrants and local professionals cannot be understated to overcome some of these barriers.
- **Understanding what it means to work in Australia in their nominated occupation.** Assessing Authorities, survey respondents and withdrawn participants often noted that not understanding the subtleties of their nominated occupation is also identified as a top barrier to securing employment in line with skills. In fact, some withdrawn participants suggested that providing training about what it means to work in their occupation would've been more beneficial and relevant for the broader audience.
- **System navigation.** Regardless of how well functioning systems and processes may be, the nature of the cohort and the scenario means that the need for system

navigation persists. This is largely due to the cultural and language differences that can make navigating the process of professional registration and job seeking in Australia difficult. In this case, the opacity and complexity of the system and processes often exacerbates this challenge, a finding consistent with the recent Review of Australia's Migration system.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, the evidence does not suggest the Pilot had any meaningful or additional financial or economic impact on participating migrants and as a result, it is difficult to evaluate impact. Despite limited impact of the Pilot, it is important to recognise that stakeholders including Assessing Authorities and withdrawn participants, regularly noted the merit of the objectives of the Pilot and welcomed Government intervention. There is a growing understanding, particularly among Assessing Authorities, that formal recognition of skills (via skill assessments) is far from synonymous with utilisation of those skills and that for a significant share of migrant's additional assistance is required to support their transition to employment.

Some suggested alternative approaches to tackling some of the barriers faced by migrants in securing employment commensurate with their skills assessment included:

- Opportunities to secure local work experience, which may support with meeting licensing and registration requirements depending on the occupation.
- Opportunities to network and connect directly with employers.
- Educating employers to support the removal of biases towards hiring migrants, this may also involve supporting employers to develop a better understanding of migrants work rights and how to navigate sponsoring migrants.
- Training which provides an overview of the Australian context of their nominated occupation.
- Additional technical training which provides badging (i.e., micro-credentials), so that migrants can enter the job market with a new certification.





# Impact of Pilot 3

## Did Pilot 3 have a meaningful and/ or additional impact on participating migrants (and other pilot stakeholders)? (cont.)

It is important to recognise that English language skills (an employability skill) and as a result, lack of confidence to apply for and attend job interviews was often identified as another barrier to securing employment in line with their skills. However, given many Assessing Authorities have either embedded English language requirements into skill assessments or only perform skill assessments in English, suggests that this barrier may be isolated to a smaller cohort of migrants. In addition, there is existing government support available to a broad cohort of migrants to enhance their English language skills – the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

### 2 | Impact on social wellbeing

Outside of improvements to skills, Pilot 3 survey respondents generally attributed receiving an employability skills assessment with enhancing their sense of confidence. Nearly a third of survey respondents (30%), indicating that participating in the employability skills assessment process had enhanced their sense of confidence in the Australian job market. The remaining respondents indicated that the Pilot did not have any impact on their lives or those of their families.

# Appendix D

## Survey sample representativeness & limitations

# Pilot 1 | Survey sample representativeness

## Assessing Authority interviews

Deloitte Access Economics interviewed 15 Assessing Authorities in December 2022 involved in Pilot 1 to understand their perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of the Pilot. One Assessing Authority elected not to participate in the consultation process.

## Survey sample

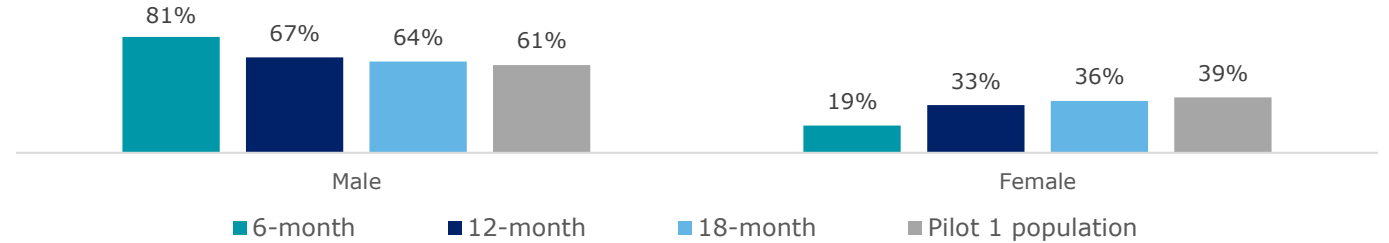
Deloitte Access Economics, in collaboration with Wallis, have designed and fielded surveys to understand SAP participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of Pilot 1 at 6-months, 12-months and 18-months after participation in the program. The 12-month and 18-month surveys were sent to participants who responded to previous surveys (i.e., responded to the 6-month or 12-month survey or both), in addition to participants who did not respond to any surveys.

The total number of responses captured in each survey is summarised below:

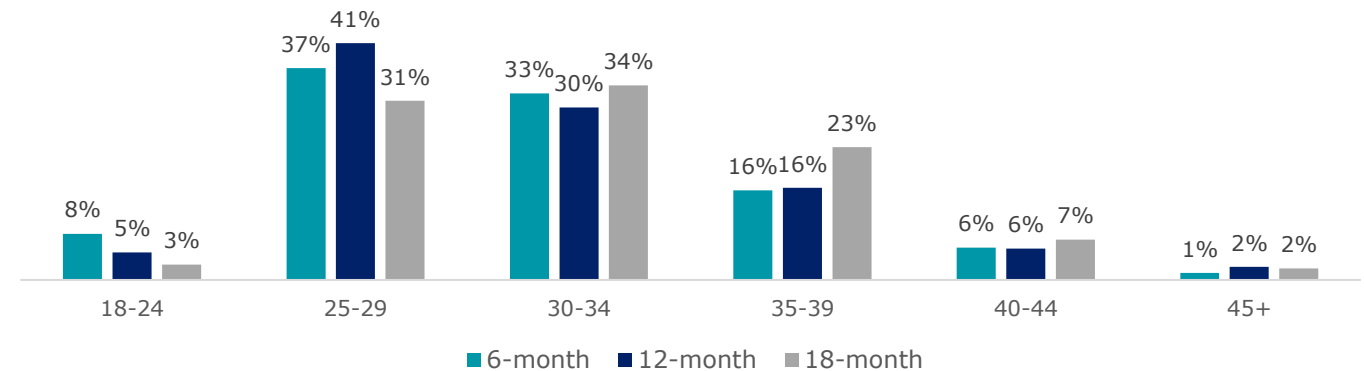
- The 6-month survey collected 564 responses, equivalent to 14% of the Pilot 1 participant population.
- The 12-month survey collected 440 responses comprised of 204 longitudinal and 236 new respondents, equivalent to 11% of the Pilot 1 participant population.
- The 18-month survey collected 301 responses comprised of 97 longitudinal and 204 new respondents, equivalent to 8% of the Pilot 1 participant population.

The following charts provide an overview of the characteristics of the survey samples across the 6, 12 and 18-month surveys. Please note that the analysis only captures respondents who provided consent to link their survey responses to DEWR's existing program data, with the exception of age which is only captured in the survey.

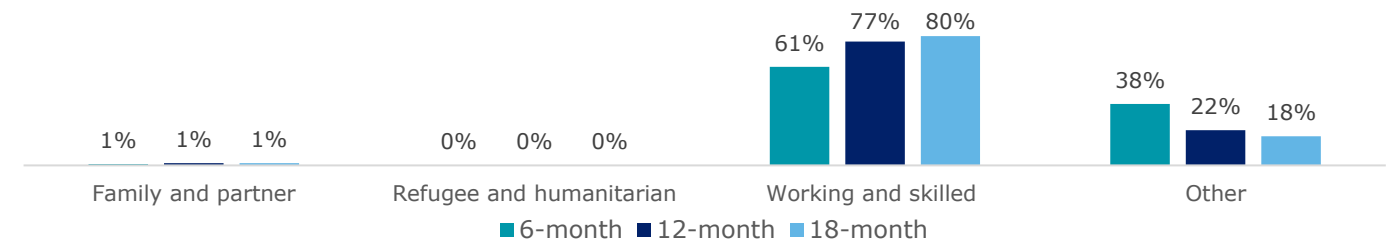
**Chart D.1:** Gender distribution of the 6, 12, 18-month survey sample for Pilot 1



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Wallis. 6-month survey (n=410), 12-month survey (n= 299), 18-month survey (n=192) and Pilot 1 population (n=3,977)



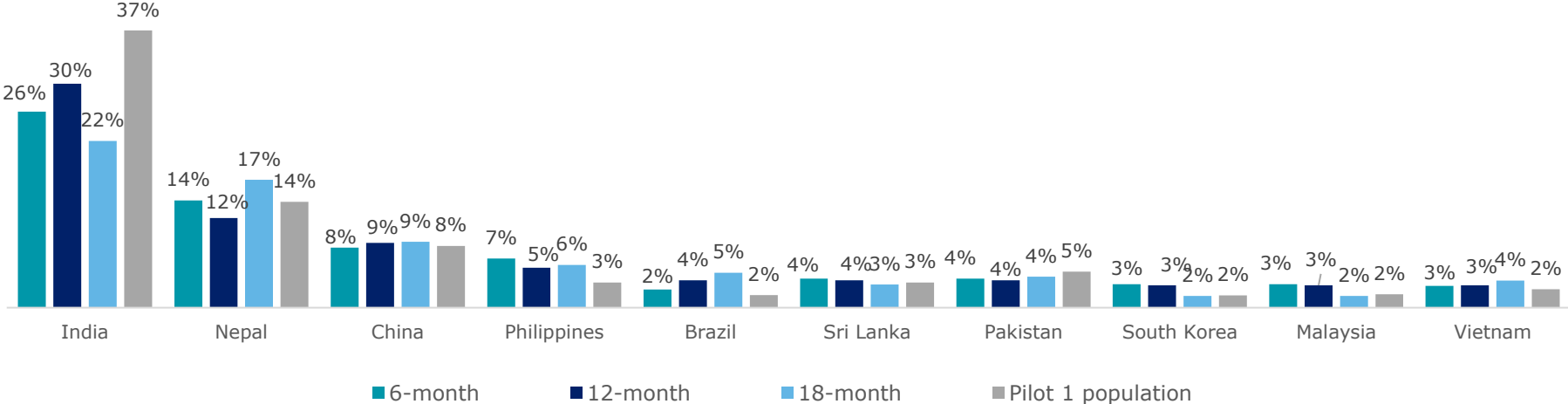
**Chart D.3:** Distribution across broad visa type of the 6, 12, 18-month survey sample for Pilot 1



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Wallis. 6-month survey (n=378), 12-month survey (n=364) and 18-month survey (n=221)

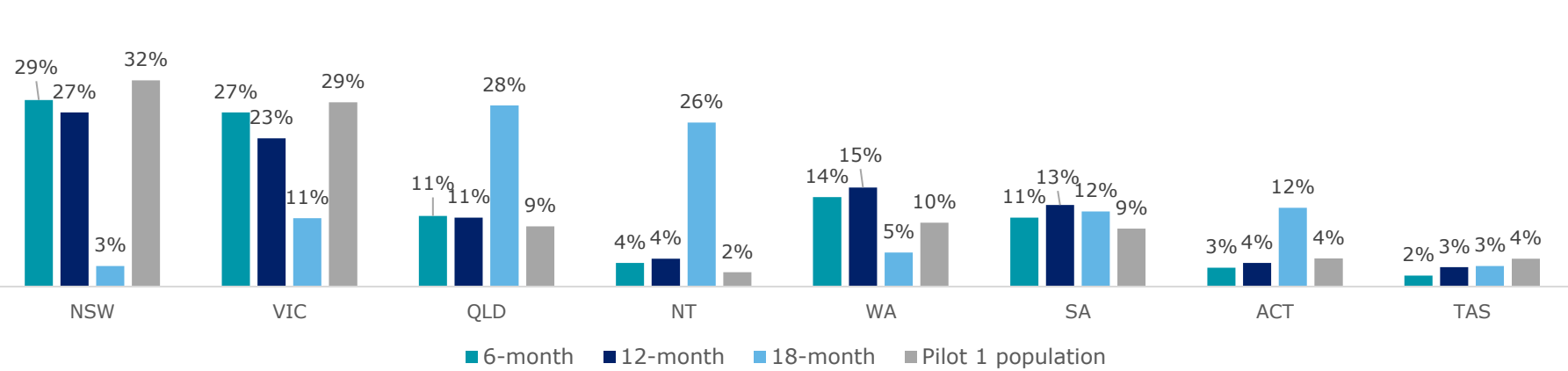
# Pilot 1 | Survey sample representativeness

**Chart D.4:** The top 10 countries of origin of the 6, 12, and 18-month survey sample for Pilot 1



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Wallis. 6-month survey (n=318), 12-month survey (n= 299), 18-month survey (n=149) and Pilot 1 population (n=3,977)

**Chart D.5:** Location in Australia of the 6, 12, and 18-month survey sample for Pilot 1



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Wallis. 6-month survey (n=410), 12-month survey (n= 299), 18-month survey (n=188) and Pilot 1 population (n=3,977)

Some key limitations with the survey sample include:

- An underrepresentation of female respondents in all surveys relative to the Pilot 1 population, and an overrepresentation of male respondents, particularly in the 6-month survey.
- An underrepresentation of respondents from India in all surveys relative to the Pilot 1 population, particularly for the 18-month survey.
- An overrepresentation of 18-month survey respondents in Northern Territory, Queensland and Australian Capital Territory and an underrepresentation of New South Wales in all surveys relative to the Pilot 1 population, particularly for the 18-month survey.
- An overrepresentation of respondents assessed by EA and TRA in the 12 and 18-month survey in relation to the Pilot 1 population. An underrepresentation of CPA in all surveys in relation to the Pilot 1 population.

# Pilot 2 | Survey sample representativeness

## Assessing Authority interviews

Of the 17 Assessing Authorities contracted to deliver Pilot 2, Deloitte Access Economics interviewed 16 in February 2024 to understand their perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of the Pilot. One Assessing Authority elected to provide a written response instead of participating in an interview. Interviews with Assessing Authorities provided a larger sample of experiences in the Pilot (relative to the survey), as it included all Assessing Authorities who received eligible applicants in addition to those who did not.

## Survey sample

Deloitte Access Economics, in collaboration with Wallis, designed and fielded surveys to understand SAP participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of Pilot 2 at 6-months and 12-months after participation in the program. The 12-month survey was sent to participants who responded to previous surveys (i.e., responded to the 6-month), in addition to participants who did not respond to the previous survey. In addition, due to the growth in uptake towards the end of 2023 the 12-month survey was sent to a larger group of participants (186 sample size) relative to the 6-month survey (82 participants). It is worth noting that the 12-month survey will not capture all participants' perspectives 12 months after participation in the Pilot.

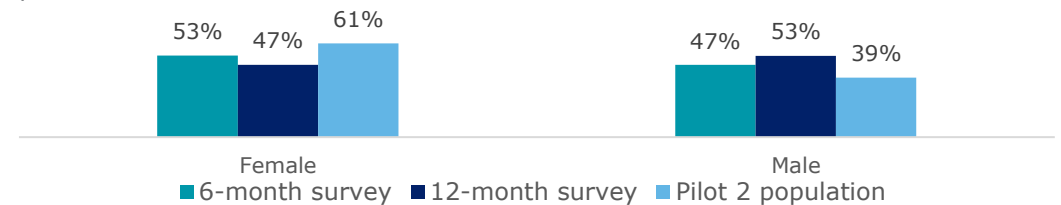
The total number of responses captured in each survey is summarised below:

- The 6-month survey collected 57 responses, equivalent to approximately 19% of the Pilot 2 participant population at the time.
- The 12-month survey data extract collected 80 responses comprised of 22 longitudinal and 58 new respondents, equivalent to approximately 28% of the Pilot 2 participant population.

Despite a low volume of responses collected overall, given the low Pilot 2 population this sample size is sufficiently large to enable robust analysis.

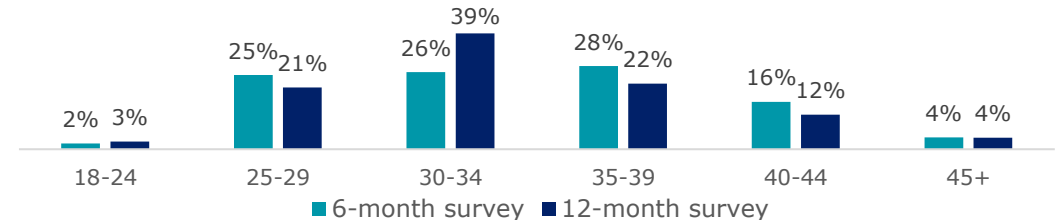
The following provides an overview of the characteristics of the sample relative to the Pilot 2 population. Please note that the analysis only captures respondents who provided consent to link their survey responses to DEWR's existing program data, with the exception of age which is only captured in the survey.

**Chart D.6:** Gender distribution of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 2 population



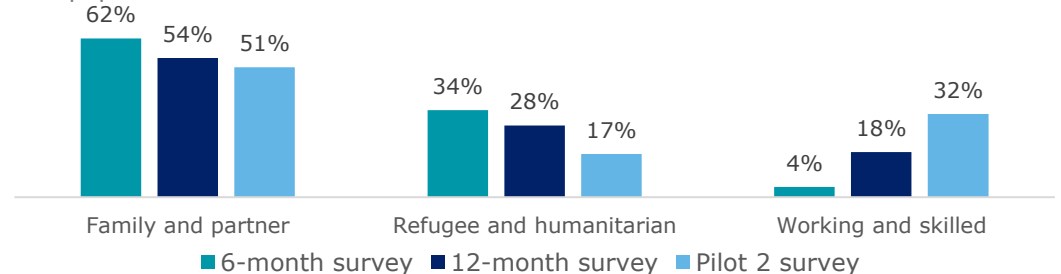
Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=43), 12-month survey (n=68) and population (n=274)

**Chart D.7:** Age distribution of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 2 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=57) and 12-month survey (n=77). No available comparison in DEWR's program data.

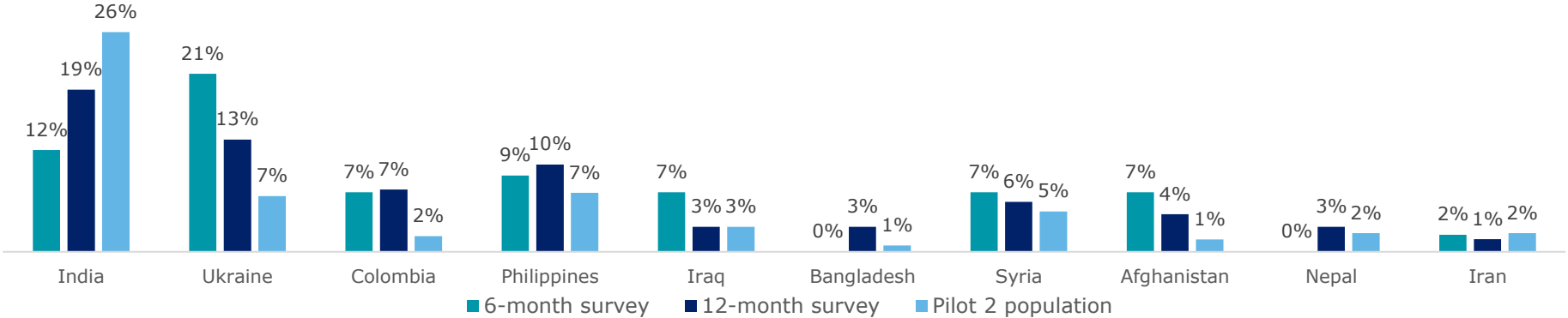
**Chart D.8:** Distribution across broad visa type of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 2 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=43), 12-month survey (n=68) and population (n=274)

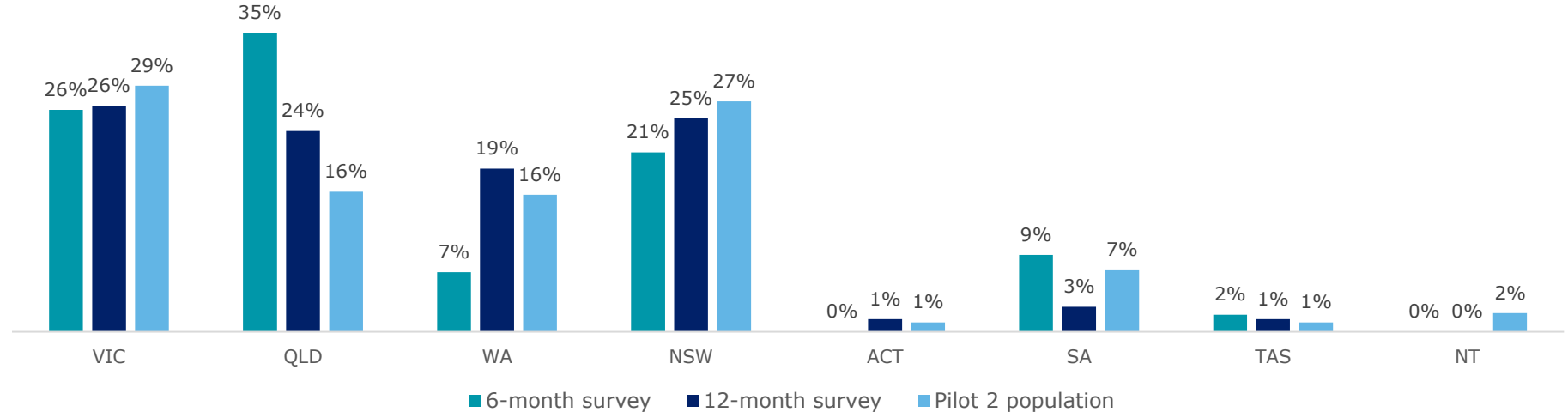
# Pilot 2 | Survey sample representativeness

**Chart D.9:** The top 10 countries of origin of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 2 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workpalce Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=43), 12-month survey (n=68) and population (n=274)

**Chart D.10:** Location in Australia of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 2 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workpalce Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=43), 12-month survey (n=68) and population (n=274)

Some key limitations with the survey sample include:

- An underrepresentation of female respondents in both surveys relative to the Pilot 2 population and an overrepresentation of male respondents.
- An overrepresentation of respondents from Ukraine and an underrepresentation of respondents from India, particularly in the 6-month survey.
- An overrepresentation of respondents from Queensland, particularly in the 6-month survey and underrepresentation of respondents from New South Wales and South Australia, isolated to the 12-month survey only.
- Underrepresentation of respondents holding working and skilled visas and an overrepresentation of respondents holding refugee and humanitarian visas.
- An overrepresentation of respondents assessed by EA and an underrepresentation of respondents assessed by APC in both surveys.

# Pilot 3 | Survey sample representativeness

## Assessing Authority interviews

Of the 16 Assessing Authorities contracted to deliver Pilot 3, Deloitte Access Economics interviewed 15 in February 2024 to understand their perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of the Pilot. One Assessing Authority elected to provide a written response instead of participating in an interview. Consistent with Pilot 2, interviews with Assessing Authorities provided a larger sample of experiences in the Pilot (relative to the survey), as it included all Assessing Authorities who received applicants in addition to those who did not.

## Withdrawn participant interviews

Deloitte Access Economics interviewed 6 participants who decided to withdraw from the Employability Skills Assessment to understand their experience in the Pilot, and ultimately develop a better understanding of the reasons behind withdrawal from the Pilot.

## Survey sample

Consistent with Pilot 1 and 2, Deloitte Access Economics, in collaboration with Wallis, fielded surveys to understand SAP participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of Pilot 3 at 6-months and 12-months after participation in the program. In line with previous surveys, the 12-month survey was sent to participants who responded to previous surveys in addition to participants who did not respond to the previous survey. In addition, due to the growth in uptake towards the end of 2023 the 12-month survey was sent to a larger group of participants (176 sample size) relative to the 6-month survey (81 participants).

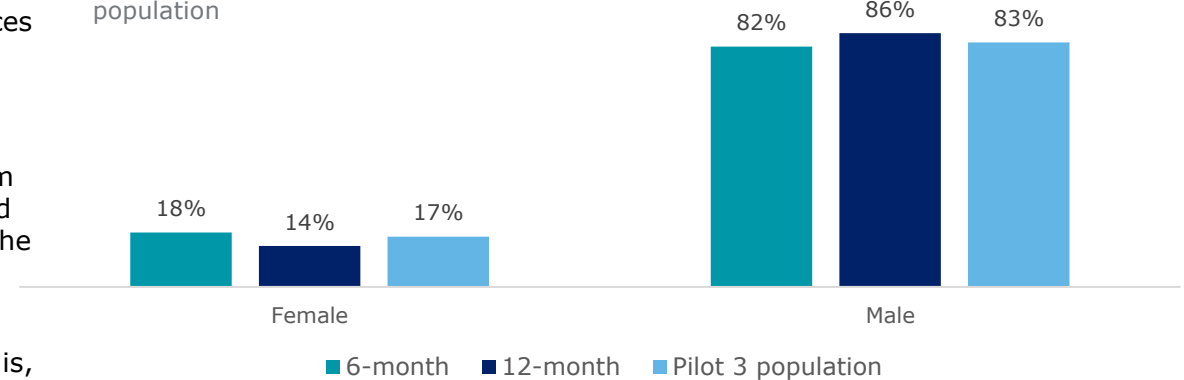
The total number of responses captured in each survey is summarised below:

- The 6-month survey collected 38 responses, equivalent to approximately 23% of the Pilot 2 participant population at the time.
- Meanwhile, the 12-month survey data extract collected 82 responses comprised on 9 longitudinal and 73 new respondents, equivalent to approximately 40% of the Pilot 2 participant population.

Despite a low volume of responses collected overall, given the low Pilot 3 population this sample size is sufficiently large to enable robust analysis. The small size of the preliminary 12-month survey longitudinal sample will influence the longitudinal analysis that can be included in this report.

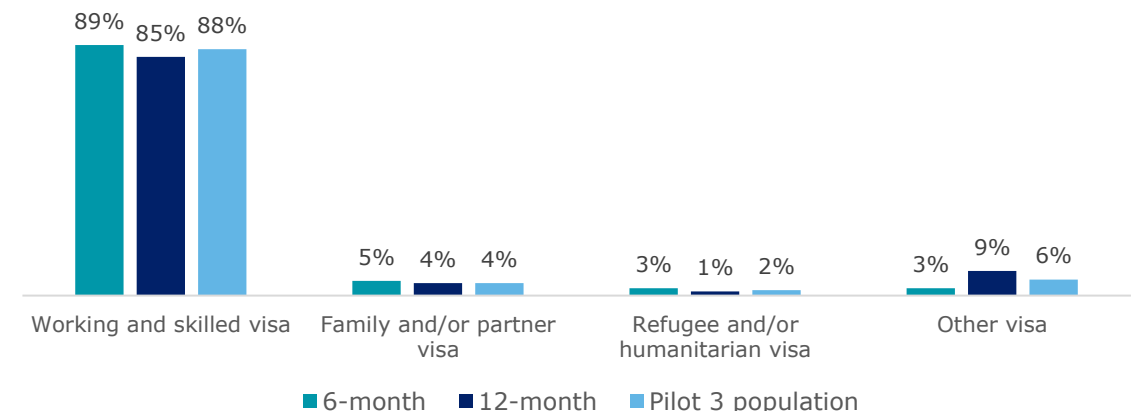
The below provides an overview of the characteristics of the sample relative to the Pilot 3 population. Please note that the analysis only captures respondents who provided consent to link their survey responses to DEWR's existing program data, with the exception of age which is only captured in the survey.

**Chart D.11:** Gender distribution of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 3 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=38), 12-month survey (n=65) and population (n=141)

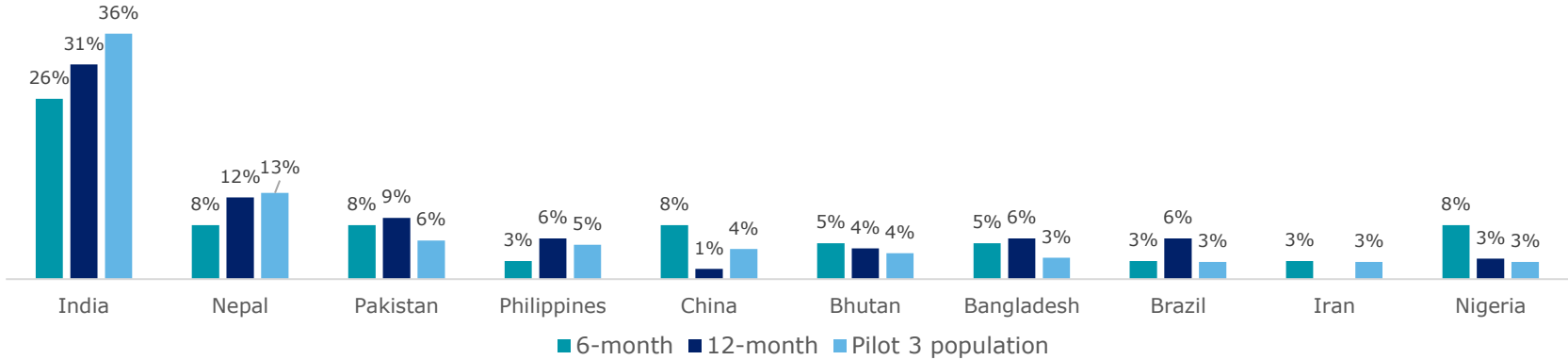
**Chart D.12:** Distribution across broad visa type of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 3 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=38), 12-month survey (n=68) and population (n=159)

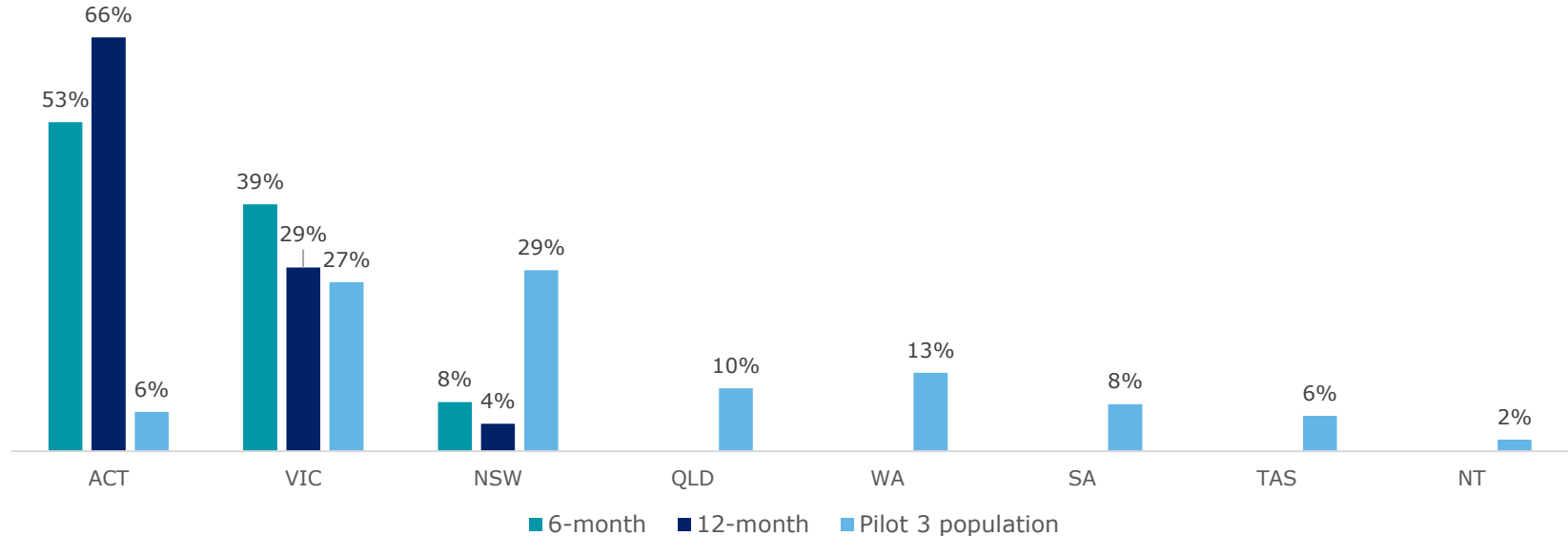
# Pilot 3 | Survey sample representativeness

**Chart D.13:** The top 10 countries of origin of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 3 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workpalce Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=38), 12-month survey (n=67) and population (n=159)

**Chart D.14:** Location in Australia of the 6 and 12-month survey sample and the Pilot 3 population



Source: Deloitte Access Economics and Department of Employment and Workpalce Relations (2024). 6-month survey (n=38), 12-month survey (n=68) and population (n=159)  
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Some key limitations with the survey sample include:

- An overrepresentation of respondents on other types of visa (i.e., bridging) and an underrepresentation of respondents on working and skilled visas in the 12-month survey.
- An overrepresentation of respondents from India and Pakistan in the 12-month survey relative to Pilot 3 population and an underrepresentation of respondents from India in the 6-month survey.
- An overrepresentation of 6 and 12-month survey respondents from VIC and the ACT with an underrepresentation of the remaining six states and territories relative to the Pilot 3 population.
- An overrepresentation of respondents assessed by VETASSESS and underrepresentation of respondents assessed by TRA, EA and CPA in the 6 and 12-month survey respondents relative to the Pilot 3 population.





# Limitations

In interpreting the findings included in this evaluation, there exists a variety of limitations which are important to bear in mind when extrapolating and generalising findings outlined below.

## Randomised control trial

Randomised control trials (RCT) are considered the gold standard for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. RCTs are a type of experimental study, where participants are randomly assigned to an intervention group who receives the treatment and the control group who does not receive any treatment. RCTs offer numerous benefits, including establishing causal relationships, controlling biases, enabling direct comparisons which help to inform evidence-based decision making.<sup>1</sup> Ideally, this evaluation would have undertaken an RCT to determine to effectiveness of each Pilot via comparisons to an untreated group.

However, RCTs are not always feasible or ethical particularly in situations where randomisation is not possible or withholding treatment from a control group is unethical – including this situation. As a result, there is no scope to make comparisons to an untreated cohort and therefore, effectiveness of the intervention is determined by making comparisons before and after the intervention. This introduces some difficulty in evaluating effectiveness of the intervention as some improvement in individuals' employment circumstances is expected to naturally occur over time.

## Survey sample sizes

As noted earlier, the Pilot 2 and 3 survey sample sizes, notably the 6-month sample in addition to the longitudinal sample, are small. Small samples sizes introduce several limitations, notably:

- **Limited generalisability.** With a small sample, it is harder to generalise findings to a larger population as the results may not accurately represent the broader population, leading to potential biases or inaccuracies.
- **Increased variability.** Smaller samples may exhibit higher variability, making it challenging to determine whether observed difference are due to true effects or random chance, leading to less reliable estimates.
- **Difficulty conducting subgroup analysis.** With a small sample, subgroup analysis

becomes difficult as there simply does not exist enough respondents to drill down into certain characteristics.

- **Increased risk of bias.** Small sample sizes may be more susceptible to biases.<sup>2</sup>

## Survey sample bias

Survey sample biases are systematic errors or distortions introduced into survey results due to the characteristics of the sample population. Surveys which inform findings of this evaluation are likely to be subject to non-response bias, where the views of individuals who choose not to participate in the survey differ significantly from those who do participate.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly true, for Pilot 2 with a very low number of respondents who received an 'unsuitable' skills assessment participating in the survey (n=3). It is likely a similar effect was observed in the Pilot 3 survey.

In addition, the survey samples across all three pilots do possess some significant deviations from the population which is likely to have introduced biases to the sample (see pages [72-78](#)).

## Limited length of time since participation in the intervention (notably Pilot 2 and 3)

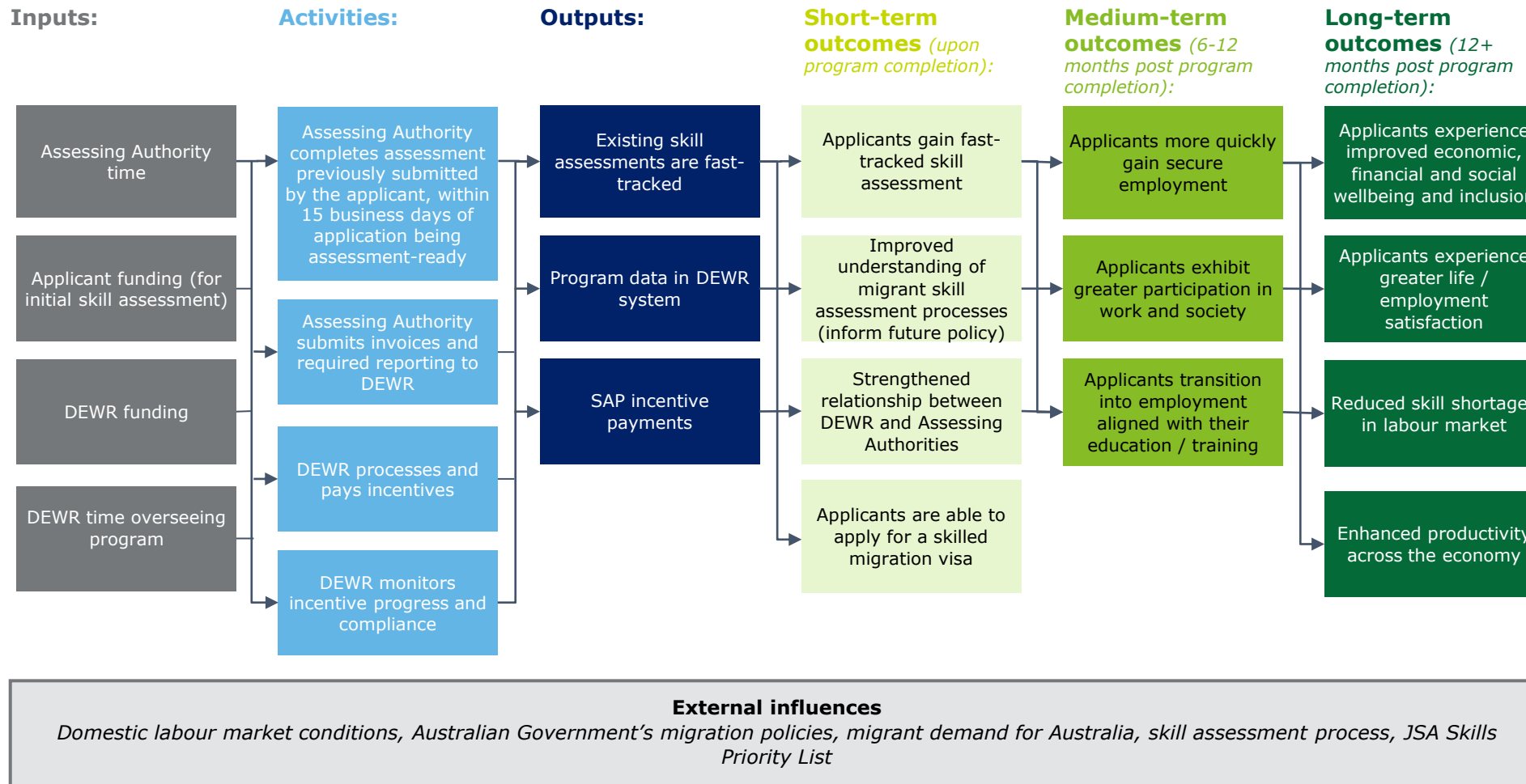
Ideally, evaluations are conducted over a long period of time after an intervention as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of its impact and sustainability while enhancing rigour and validity of the findings.<sup>4</sup> While Pilot 1 participant circumstances are captured 18-months after participation providing a reasonable length of time since the intervention, the outcomes of Pilot 2 and 3 participants are captured closer to participation in the program. In some cases, circumstances are captured less than 6-months since participation given Pilot 2 and 3 were closed in February 2024. Given the design of Pilot 2 and 3, it is anticipated observable effects would take time to produce and therefore, the evaluation may not have captured an exhaustive view of the effects associated with these interventions.

Relatedly, given the limited time since intervention and as a result data collection, it is difficult to comment on some long-term outcomes included in the program logics, particularly for Pilot 2 and 3 such as reduced skill shortages in labour market and enhanced productivity across the economy.

# Appendix E

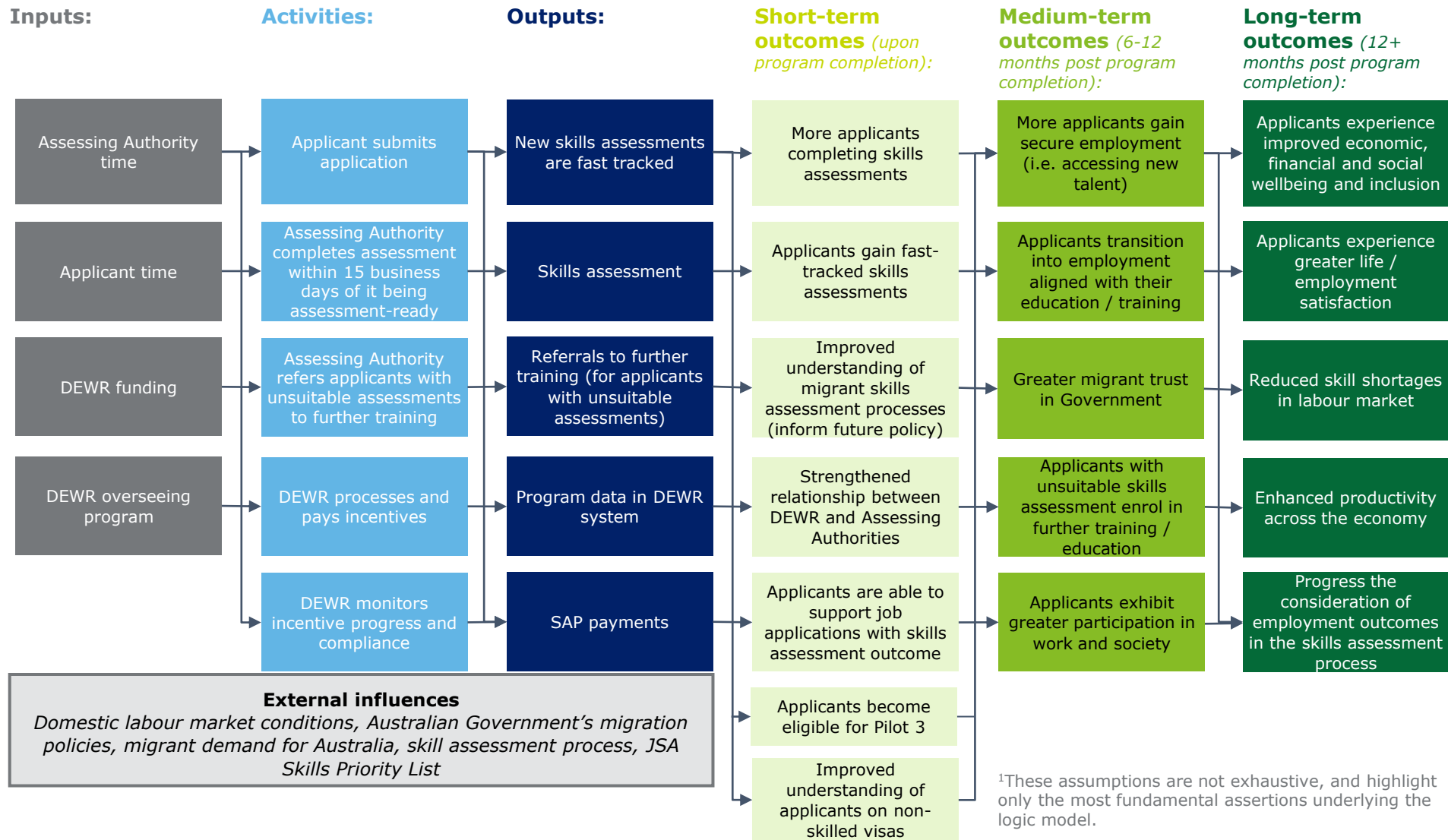
## Program logics

# Pilot 1 program logic

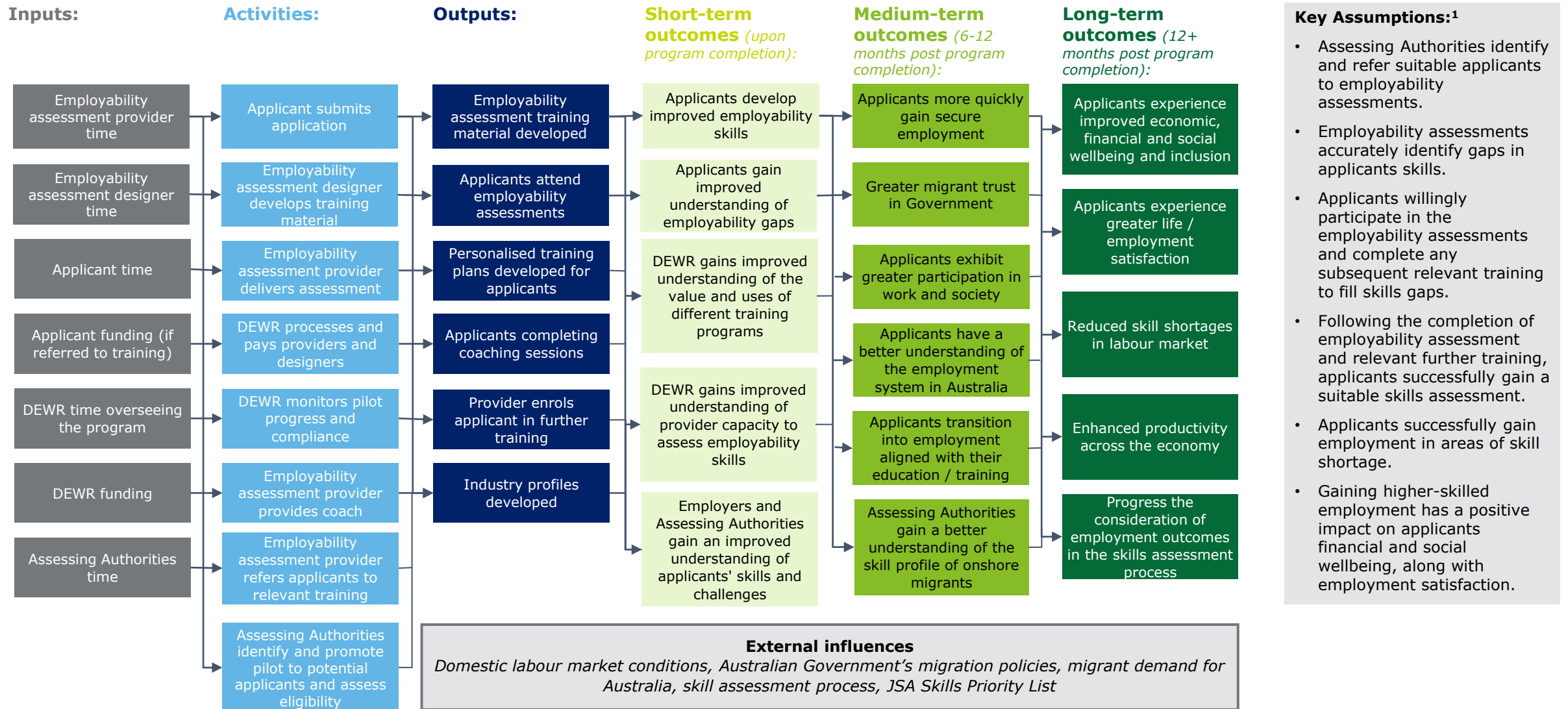


- Key Assumptions:<sup>1</sup>**
- DEWR and Assessing Authorities collaborate effectively in implementing the program.
  - The fast-tracking of applications enables applicants to gain employment meaningfully faster than they would have otherwise.
  - Applicants successfully gain employment in areas of skill shortage.
  - JSA is capable of effectively identifying skills shortages in a timely manner.
  - Gaining higher-skilled employment has a positive impact on applicants financial and social wellbeing, along with employment satisfaction.
  - Applicants apply for and are granted a skilled migration visa, after which they can seek employment.
  - Measurement of processing time only begins when an application is deemed as assessment-ready.

# Pilot 2 program logic



# Pilot 3 program logic



<sup>1</sup>These assumptions are not exhaustive, and highlight only the most fundamental assertions underlying the logic model.

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