

BRISBANE 2032
TOURISM, HOSPITALITY
AND EVENTS
WORKFORCE ROADMAP
2026-2035

August 2026



QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL



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Executive Summary

Brisbane 2032 will create a sustained and uneven workforce surge across Queensland's visitor economy. Demand will commence well before the Games as venue construction, hotel openings, test events, expanded aviation and regional competition activity increase. The principal risk is not simply the number of people needed in 2032; it is whether Queensland starts early enough to develop experienced managers, chefs, production services specialists (including technical and staging), maritime personnel, supervisors and trainers. Key workforce policy, funding and implementation decisions should be made in 2026 and early 2027 so that long-lead pipelines are not delayed.

This Roadmap provides an evidence-based workforce sequence from 2026 to 2035. It integrates skills development, school-to-work pathways, staff attraction, recruitment, workforce mobility, migration, volunteering, regional planning and legacy. It includes a staged school engagement model, a statewide and national workforce attraction campaign, use of the Queensland state-led DAMA, Pacific workforce engagement, targeted international recruitment, and a proposed seasonal marine workforce mechanism subject to Commonwealth and AMSA requirements.

Planning estimate

Queensland should plan for approximately 75,000-140,000 additional tourism, hospitality and events workers, supported by 40,000-70,000 volunteers and a separate temporary surge workforce. These are scenario ranges for pipeline planning, not a final Games headcount.

Priority	Why it matters	Timing
Build critical skills first	Managers, executive chefs, production services specialists (including technical and staging) and senior maritime roles take three to ten years to develop.	Commence 2026 and early 2027
Expand operational pipelines	Supervisors, cooks, guides, event coordinators and specialist operators require one to three years of training and workplace consolidation; senior supervisor and coordinator roles may require longer development.	2027-2030
Scale high-volume recruitment	Housekeepers, food and beverage attendants, kitchenhands, guest service and visitor information roles can be trained closer to the event, including attraction and retention, affordable housing and cost-of-living pressures must be addressed early.	2030-2032
Use migration as a targeted supplement	Migration should fill verified shortages and seasonal peaks, not replace domestic training or undermine local pathways.	Policy design 2026-2028; activation 2028-2032
Secure the legacy	Associated tourism and hospitality workers, volunteers, international students, trainers, systems and workforce data should transition into Queensland's visitor economy and major-events pipeline.	2032-2035

Table 1: Planning Priorities

1. Purpose and Scope

The Roadmap identifies the workforce actions required to support tourism, hospitality, travel, events, visitor servicing and marine tourism through the preparation, delivery and legacy phases of Brisbane 2032. It is designed for the Queensland Government, the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee, Games delivery partners, industry, regional tourism organisations, training providers, unions, workforce intermediaries and local government.

It prioritises occupations with long development lead times, the regions likely to experience the greatest pressure, and the workforce systems that must be established before demand peaks. The Roadmap recognises that workforce requirements differ across traditional hotels, holiday parks, integrated resorts, attractions, marine tourism operators and events businesses. It also addresses migration and proposes a controlled seasonal workforce mechanism for the marine sector, subject to Commonwealth visa settings and Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requirements.

This draft will be updated following the release of the Brisbane 2032 competition schedule, expected in late 2026, and again once all competition venues have been confirmed. These updates will allow workforce demand, regional priorities and implementation timelines to be refined as operational requirements become clearer.

1.1 Evidence base

The Roadmap draws on Queensland workforce and accommodation data, QTIC industry consultations, the Queensland Government 2032 Delivery Plan, in addition to domestic and international evidence from Commonwealth Games in Melbourne 2006, and Gold Coast 2018, as well Olympic Games held in Sydney 2000, London 2012, Tokyo 2020, Rio 2016 and Paris 2024.

International evidence consistently shows that mega-event impacts occur across pre-Games, Games-time and post-Games phases, and that workforce benefits are not automatic: they depend on early training, inclusive recruitment, transparent targets and strong post-event transition arrangements.[1]-[10]

The August 2026 industry review also incorporates stakeholder advice on production services, marine operations, outdoor and adventure tourism, accommodation and resort operations, international students, housing, leadership, technology and volunteer workforce risks.[21]-[26]

Industry Endorsement

This Roadmap has been reviewed and endorsed by the QTIC Industry Skills and Jobs Advisor (ISJA) Industry Reference Groups. The endorsement reflects industry support for the Roadmap's strategic direction, priority workforce actions and focus on building a skilled, sustainable and responsive tourism, hospitality and events workforce in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond.

2. Workforce Demand and Evidence

2.1 Why demand will rise

- Venue construction, upgrades and overlay activity will increase demand for project managers, trades, safety personnel, logistics, catering and accommodation before 2032.
- New and expanded hotels, athlete villages, venues and tourism infrastructure will create permanent operating roles before Games-time.
- Test events and a larger major-events calendar will progressively increase demand for event operations, technical production, security, transport and visitor servicing.
- Games-time visitation will create a concentrated peak across accommodation, food services, attractions, transport, retail and customer experience.
- Post-Games destination exposure and venue use can sustain demand beyond 2032, particularly when tourism, business events and regional dispersal are actively leveraged.

2.2 Evidence from previous Games

Melbourne 2006 recorded around \$2.9 billion in Games-associated expenditure and an estimated 13,600 full-time-equivalent jobs, with impacts spread across pre-Games, Games and post-Games phases.[1] Gold Coast 2018 delivered a reported \$2.5 billion economic boost to Queensland and relied on a workforce that grew from a small bid team to tens of thousands of workers and almost 15,000 volunteers.[2] Economic modelling for Gold Coast 2018 also found that benefits were spread over nine years, reinforcing the need to plan workforce demand as a multi-year program rather than a two-week event.[3]

The international evidence also provides cautions. London achieved significant training and volunteer participation, but later research found that high-skilled roles often flowed to experienced external workers while local residents were concentrated in lower-level jobs where training and employer commitments arrived too late.[5][6] Tokyo identified the risk created by large-scale, temporary labour demand in an already tight labour market and proposed a coordinated national procurement system rather than leaving employers to compete independently.[8] Paris 2024 demonstrates the value of integrating employment, inclusion, procurement and small business objectives into the Games delivery model.[7]

2.3 Queensland baseline and planning scenarios

Queensland enters the preparation period with an established visitor economy but persistent shortages in chefs and cooks, accommodation operations, supervisors, managers, regional tourism, production services (including technical and staging) and maritime occupations. Workforce pressures affect traditional hotels as well as holiday parks, integrated resorts and other tourism operators with different operating and staffing models. The challenge is amplified by declining commencements in relevant VET Training and Higher Education related courses, small and medium business dominance, limited and unaffordable regional housing, rising living costs, competition with construction and resources, and an accommodation pipeline that is not keeping pace with projected demand.[21][24][25]

Scenario	Additional workers	Assumption profile	Planning use
Low	Approximately 75,000	Lower visitation, stronger productivity and greater absorption by the existing workforce.	Minimum pipeline
Moderate	Approximately 106,000	Moderate demand uplift, accommodation growth and staffing response.	Primary planning
High	Up to approximately 140,000	Higher visitation, stronger regional dispersal, limited spare capacity and slower productivity gains.	Contingency and surge

Table 2: Scenarios

Workforce area	Indicative additional demand ¹
Food and beverage	20,000-35,000
Accommodation and hotels	15,000-25,000
Events, venue operations and production services	8,000-15,000
Tourism and visitor services	5,000-10,000
Transport operations	5,000-8,000
Retail and entertainment	5,000-10,000

¹ Indicative demand includes FTE, casuals, temporary, students and seasonal workers.

Workforce area	Indicative additional demand ¹
Security and crowd operations	8,000-15,000
Temporary event workforce	10,000-20,000
Volunteers	40,000-70,000

Table 3: Workforce Projections

These categories overlap and should not be added mechanically. The figures are intended to size training and recruitment pipelines. Accommodation growth is a major driver: an indicative 40,062 additional rooms at 0.60 direct jobs per room equates to approximately 24,036 direct accommodation jobs. The 2026 Queensland Hotels Outlook also warns that the current delivery pipeline is unlikely to meet projected room requirements, creating both capacity and workforce risks.[11]

The current events, venue operations and production services range should be treated as conservative until detailed venue operating models and competition schedules are available. Whole-of-state demand will include technical and staging specialists as well as non-technical venue-specific roles, and the annual forecast review should test whether this range requires upward adjustment.[21]

Calculation method for occupation estimates

The occupation and workforce-area estimates are derived from a transparent scenario formula rather than a single published Games headcount. The calculation uses the latest available employment baseline, projected visitor and venue demand, the occupational composition of each sector, the proportion of additional demand expected to convert into additional labour, regional shortage pressure, peak-event requirements and an allowance for productivity improvements.

Formula: Estimated additional workers by occupation = Existing sector employment × Projected demand uplift × Occupational share × Staffing elasticity × Regional/shortage adjustment × Peak or surge factor × Productivity factor.

- **Existing sector employment:** the current Queensland workforce in the relevant sector, informed by Australian Bureau of Statistics employment data and Tourism Research Australia tourism employment data.
- **Projected demand uplift:** the expected increase in visitor activity, accommodation rooms, venue operations, events, transport use or marine activity associated with the preparation, delivery and legacy phases.
- **Occupational share:** the proportion of the sector workforce represented by the occupation or occupation group, informed by ABS occupation-by-industry data and Jobs and Skills Australia occupation profiles.
- **Staffing elasticity:** the proportion of demand growth that is expected to require additional workers after allowing for increased hours, rostering changes and use of the existing workforce.
- **Regional/shortage adjustment:** an uplift applied where smaller labour pools, housing constraints, existing vacancies, licensing requirements or competition from other industries increase recruitment difficulty.
- **Peak or surge factor:** an additional allowance for test events, Games-time rosters, extended operating hours, leave coverage and temporary event requirements.
- **Productivity factor:** a downward adjustment for labour savings from technology, self-service, digital systems and operational improvement.

Worked example – accommodation: 40,062 additional rooms × 0.60 indicative direct jobs per room = approximately 24,036 direct accommodation jobs. This result is then distributed across occupation groups such as managers, reception and guest services, housekeeping, food and beverage,

maintenance and supervisory roles using their occupational shares. Low, central and high estimates are produced by varying the demand uplift, staffing elasticity, regional adjustment and productivity assumptions. The ranges are planning estimates and should not be added mechanically because some workers and functions overlap across accommodation, hospitality, events and visitor services.[11][13][18][19][20]

Occupation-level estimates should be refreshed annually and again when the Brisbane 2032 competition schedule and all venues are confirmed. Each update should use the latest ABS, Tourism Research Australia and Jobs and Skills Australia data, together with verified employer vacancies, training commencements and completions, accommodation supply, venue operating plans and regional workforce evidence.

3. Workforce Planning Phases and Lead Times

Workforce planning should follow the time required to become competent, not the date on which vacancies are advertised. Qualification duration is only one component. Workplace consolidation, licensing, sea service, leadership experience, security clearances and familiarity with complex event environments can add several years.

Phase	Period	Primary objective	Key actions
Phase 1 - Foundation	2026-2027	Establish governance, data and long-lead pipelines.	Confirm demand model; declare and fund priority pathways; establish employer compacts; commence leadership, culinary, technical production and maritime cohorts; design migration safeguards.
Phase 2 - Pipeline expansion	2027-2029	Increase commencements and employer participation.	Expand apprenticeships and traineeships; improve regional delivery; increase school, international student and career-changer pathways; establish cross-employer placements and sea-time arrangements.
Phase 3 - Workforce acceleration	2029-2030	Build supervisors and operational capability.	Progress workers into supervisory roles; run test-event placements; activate targeted migration where verified shortages remain; establish regional mobility and worker accommodation arrangements.
Phase 4 - Operational readiness	2030-2031	Validate numbers, skills and deployment systems.	Conduct workforce stress tests; recruit high-volume roles; train volunteers; align rostering, transport, accommodation and credentialling; confirm contingency labour pools.
Phase 5 - Games delivery	2032	Deploy, support and retain the workforce.	Operate central workforce coordination; monitor fatigue, safety and turnover; protect business-as-usual tourism operations; collect worker skills and transition data.
Phase 6 - Legacy transition	2033-2035	Retain capability and convert temporary participation into ongoing value.	Match workers and volunteers to jobs and training; maintain the major-events workforce register; evaluate outcomes; embed successful training and migration models.

Table 4: Phases and Key Actions

3.1 Occupation lead-time framework

Occupation group	Indicative lead time	Development requirement
Executive chef / senior chef	6-10 years	Cookery apprenticeship, progressive kitchen leadership and high-volume operational experience.
Hotel / accommodation manager	5-8 years	Qualification plus substantial rooms, food and beverage and people leadership experience.
Event / venue manager	5-8 years	Event qualification and repeated delivery of complex, high-attendance events.
Production services manager / technical director / staging lead	6-10 years	Extensive production services experience across complex live events, including audio, lighting, vision, staging and safety.
Lighting, audio and vision specialists	2-4 years	VET or industry training plus supervised production experience.
Chef / pastrycook	3-4 years	Apprenticeship and workplace consolidation.
Restaurant / catering manager	4-6 years	Hospitality management pathway and operational leadership.
Master <45m near coastal / MED1	4-6 years	Progressive maritime qualifications, sea service and AMSA assessment.
Master <100m / senior marine engineer	5-7+ years	Diploma-level pathway, extensive sea service and AMSA competency.
Guides, operational coordinators and drivers	1-3 years	Qualification or accreditation plus workplace experience.
Frontline hospitality and visitor service	Under 1 year	Short courses, structured induction, product knowledge and workplace training.
Outdoor / adventure / nature-based supervisor or senior coordinator	3-5 years	Activity-specific competency plus substantial operational experience, supervision and coordination capability.[23]

Table 5: Lead-time Framework

4. Recruitment and Workforce Supply

No single source can meet the projected demand. Queensland requires a coordinated supply portfolio that increases participation, improves retention and reduces leakage between training and employment.

Supply source	Role in the roadmap	Required settings
Existing workforce	Largest immediate source of capability and future supervisors and managers.	Retention, fair and transparent pay, stable rosters, career pathways, housing and transport support.
Apprenticeships and traineeships	Core pathway for chefs, hospitality supervisors and maritime occupations.	Employer incentives, quality training, workplace assessment, completion support and regional access.
Schools, SBATs and VET in Schools	Build awareness and entry pathways.	Industry experiences, school-based apprenticeships, realistic career information and direct employer links.
Higher education	Develop management, events, business, technology and planning capability.	Internships, capstone projects, work-integrated learning and regional placements.
International students	Important local pipeline with Queensland education and work experience.	Improve employment matching, work-integrated learning and graduate retention, supported by affordable visas, practical post-study pathways, flexible Games-time work settings and safeguards against exploitation.
Career changers and mature-age workers	Source of transferable customer service, logistics, leadership and technical skills, digital and AI experts from other industries.	Recognition of prior learning, accelerated training and flexible work design.
People with disability, First Nations people and other underrepresented cohorts	Essential to an inclusive Games and broader labour supply.	Accessible recruitment, tailored support for business and employees, culturally safe workplaces and measurable progression targets linked to inclusiveness.
Volunteers	Critical for Games-time operations and a major legacy pool.	Role design, screening, training, recognition and transition to employment or ongoing volunteering, coordinated to avoid displacement of essential paid workers or traditional volunteers.
Migration	Targeted supplement for persistent skilled and seasonal gaps.	Verified shortages, employer obligations, worker protections, regional settlement support and skills recognition.

Table 6: Workforce Supply

4.1 Staff Attraction Strategy

Attracting the required workforce will require more than advertising vacancies. Queensland must present tourism, hospitality, events and marine careers as competitive, skilled and sustainable employment, while reducing the practical barriers that prevent people from relocating to or remaining in high-demand regions.

Attraction activity should commence well before the 2032 peak and be coordinated across government, industry, regional tourism organisations, local councils, education providers and Games delivery partners. For regional and resort destinations, staff accommodation and housing affordability

should be treated as workforce infrastructure because they directly affect recruitment and retention.[24][25]

The attraction strategy should combine a strong statewide employer value proposition with targeted regional campaigns. Messaging should promote clear career pathways, transferable skills, recognised qualifications, quality supervision, flexible work options and the opportunity to contribute to Brisbane 2032 and Queensland's long-term visitor economy.

Campaigns should be tailored for school students, apprentices and trainees, university and VET graduates, career changers, mature-age workers, First Nations peoples, people with disability, international students, skilled migrants and experienced workers returning to the industry. Attraction activity should also recognise holiday parks and integrated tourism operators and support supervisor, middle-management and future-leader development, not only frontline recruitment.[25]

Attraction lever	Recommended action	Timing
Employer value proposition	Develop a shared Queensland visitor economy careers brand focused on meaningful work, progression, flexibility, inclusion and the Brisbane 2032 legacy.	2026-2027
Regional attraction packages	Combine employment offers with housing information, transport support, relocation assistance, partner employment links and community settlement support.	2026 onward
Targeted talent campaigns	Use occupation- and region-specific campaigns for chefs, managers, event technicians, guides, marine crew, accommodation workers and supervisors.	2027 onward
Education-to-employment pathways	Provide guaranteed interviews, work experience, school-based apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate pathways and direct links between training and vacancies.	2026 onward
Return and career-change pathways	Create accelerated onboarding and recognition pathways for former industry workers, defence personnel, parents returning to work and workers from adjacent sectors.	2027-2031
Mobility and seasonal matching	Establish a statewide workforce matching platform that connects workers to seasonal and major-event demand across regions and supports repeat employment.	2027-2032
Quality employment standards	Encourage employers participating in Games workforce initiatives to demonstrate fair pay, predictable rostering, safe accommodation, development opportunities and effective supervision.	2026 onward
Games-to-legacy conversion	Capture worker skills and preferences so temporary staff and volunteers can transition into ongoing tourism, hospitality, events and regional employment after 2032.	2031-2035

Table 7: Workforce Attraction

Attraction incentives should be targeted rather than universal. Priority should be given to occupations and locations where verified shortages, training lead times or housing constraints create the greatest delivery risk. Any public support should require participating employers to provide genuine vacancies, lawful and competitive conditions, structured onboarding and evidence of retention outcomes.

Success should be measured through vacancy fill rates, applicant conversion, regional relocation numbers, six- and twelve-month retention, diversity of new entrants, training-to-employment conversion and the proportion of Games-time workers who remain in the Queensland visitor economy after 2032.

4.2 School Student Pipeline and Year-Level Targeting

School engagement should begin early enough to shape subject choices and career awareness, while becoming progressively more practical as students approach employment. The approach should align activity to student readiness rather than delivering the same message to every year level. Brisbane 2032 should be used as a conversation starter from Years 7 to 9, while positioning hospitality and tourism as long-term careers in which Games-time skills and experience can provide a foundation for future progression.[24]

Years 7-8 - *Awareness and aspiration (2026-2032)*: introduce the breadth of tourism, hospitality, events, transport and marine careers through short industry experiences, classroom resources, role-model visits and destination-focused activities. The objective is to challenge outdated perceptions before students make senior subject and pathway decisions.

Years 9-10 - *Exploration and pathway selection (2026-2031)*: prioritise career tasters, worksite visits, school-based industry projects, Gateway to Industry Schools activities, pre-vocational experiences and structured conversations with employers. Students should be supported to select relevant VET, school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, and senior secondary pathways.

Years 11-12 - *Job-ready pathways (2027-2032)*: expand school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, work experience, structured work placements, micro-credentials and direct recruitment into entry-level roles. Priority pathways should include hospitality, cookery, events, visitor services, accommodation, transport and suitable marine support roles. Year 12 recruitment should be timed six to nine months before peak seasonal and Games-related demand.

Post-school and recent school leavers - *Conversion and progression (2027-2033)*: provide supported entry into apprenticeships, traineeships, VET and higher education, followed by mentoring, supervisor development and clear progression into skilled and leadership roles. A school-to-Games talent register should allow consenting students to remain connected to industry opportunities as they progress.

The emphasis should shift over time: *Broad awareness in 2026-2028*; larger pathway and work-placement activity in 2028-2030; and direct recruitment, credential completion and retention support in 2030-2032. Programs should include First Nations students, students with disability, culturally diverse communities and regional schools, with transport and employer-support funding where access is a barrier.

4.3 Statewide and National Workforce Attraction Campaign

Queensland should develop a high-profile workforce attraction campaign in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032, inspired by the reach and storytelling of Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World campaign. Rather than promoting a single role, the campaign would present a portfolio of real paid career and seasonal opportunities across Queensland's visitor economy, major events and marine tourism sectors.

The campaign should be launched in stages. From 2027-2028 it should build awareness and collect expressions of interest. From 2029-2030 it should promote training, relocation and regional experience pathways. From 2031 through Games-time it should convert registered candidates into verified vacancies, seasonal placements, volunteer pathways and longer-term careers. Post-Games messaging should focus on retaining workers in Queensland and transferring capability into tourism, major events and regional industries.

A single digital platform should support the campaign by matching candidates to employers, locations, training and credential requirements. Content should feature authentic workers and regional destinations, transparent pay and conditions, housing and transport information, career progression, and realistic descriptions of seasonal work. Campaign success should be measured by registrations,

completed training, placements, regional mobility, six- and twelve-month retention, and conversion to ongoing employment.

The campaign should operate at four levels: Queensland-wide attraction and mobility; national recruitment of experienced workers and career changers; Pacific workforce engagement through approved labour mobility settings; and targeted international engagement for verified specialist shortages. International promotion must be linked to lawful visa pathways, ethical recruitment, worker protections, accommodation and settlement support, and should not advertise jobs that cannot provide adequate hours, conditions or supervision.

5. Migration and Seasonal Workforce Measures

Migration should be used as a targeted, complementary workforce measure. It should not substitute for domestic training, apprenticeships, school pathways or improvements to job quality. It should be activated where shortages are verified, lead times are too long for domestic supply alone, or regional and seasonal demand cannot be met through workforce mobility. The migration strategy should combine the Queensland state-led DAMA, existing skilled and regional pathways, Pacific labour mobility arrangements and tightly targeted international recruitment.

5.1 Recommended migration approach

- Use the Queensland state-led Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) as a central regional workforce mechanism. The occupation list and concessions should respond to verified shortages across tourism, hospitality, events, transport and marine operations, including occupations that may not be adequately covered by national skilled lists.
- Link DAMA access to regional workforce plans, employer commitments, minimum employment standards, settlement support, housing information, domestic training investment and transparent pathways to longer-term residence where appropriate.
- Use permanent and employer-sponsored skilled pathways for occupations requiring long-term retention, including senior chefs, hotel and accommodation managers, technical production specialists, maritime engineers, vessel masters and experienced supervisors.
- Use Pacific Australia Labour Mobility and other approved Pacific workforce arrangements for suitable seasonal and longer-duration roles, supported by ethical recruitment, culturally appropriate induction, pastoral care, safe accommodation, transport, guaranteed hours and opportunities to build transferable skills.
- Use the statewide and national workforce attraction campaign to build a separate Pacific and international engagement stream, connecting approved candidates with verified employers, training, regional information and lawful visa pathways before travel.
- Improve pathways for international graduates who complete relevant Queensland qualifications and can demonstrate employer demand, workplace competence and compliance with any licensing requirements.
- International students can provide valuable workforce continuity, particularly for seasonal accommodation and hospitality businesses. Attraction and retention measures should recognise the stability created by longer study periods and should examine practical, affordable post-study pathways for graduates who have completed relevant Queensland qualifications, demonstrated workplace competence and have verified employer demand.[24]
- Create a Games workforce mobility protocol so eligible visa holders and approved Pacific workers can move between participating employers and regions where lawful and operationally necessary, without weakening worker protections.
- Require annual evidence that migration is addressing genuine shortages, is not displacing local workers, and is accompanied by domestic training, school engagement and workforce retention commitments.

5.2 Proposed seasonal marine workforce permit

The marine tourism and Olympic sailing program may require a temporary seasonal mechanism because demand will be concentrated, highly specialised and geographically dispersed. A proposed seasonal marine workforce permit should be investigated with the Australian Government and considered alongside the state-led DAMA and approved Pacific workforce pathways. Any mechanism must recognise that immigration permission does not itself authorise a person to perform regulated domestic commercial vessel duties in Australia.

Marine recruitment should commence with an occupation and credential audit, followed by early AMSA recognition and certification advice. Overseas certificates may require assessment, recognition, additional training, medicals, sea service evidence, examinations or the issue of an Australian certificate of competency. Employers and candidates should allow sufficient lead time for AMSA and other regulatory approvals before deployment. Seasonal permits should therefore be designed around verified vessel roles, approved employers and locations, minimum employment standards, return or transition arrangements, and a clear process for confirming AMSA eligibility.

Industry advice indicates that increasing marine transport capacity for government requirements and Brisbane 2032 operations may require larger-capacity vessels, increased service frequencies and/or extended operating hours. This would increase demand for appropriately qualified and experienced Masters <45m Near Coastal, Marine Engine Driver Grade 1 and Grade 2, suitably trained deck crew and other marine operations personnel. Qualifications alone are insufficient: sea service, practical experience, local operational knowledge and vessel-specific competencies take time to build. Attraction, training, sea-time and retention pipelines should therefore commence well in advance of Brisbane 2032.[22]

Design feature	Recommended requirement
Eligible occupations	Masters, marine engine drivers, marine engineers, deck crew, marina and fleet operations, vessel maintenance and other roles demonstrated as critical to the sailing and marine tourism program.
Demand test	Employer and regional evidence of vacancies, unsuccessful recruitment and domestic training commitments.
Duration	Time-limited and aligned to test events, peak visitor periods and Games operations; no automatic ongoing pathway unless eligibility for another visa is met.
Approved employers	Participation limited to accredited employers meeting workplace, safety, accommodation and welfare standards.
Worker protections	Award-compliant pay, transparent deductions, suitable accommodation, transport, insurance, pastoral support and access to independent complaints channels.
Mobility	Capacity to move between approved marine employers and locations where operational demand changes.
Training contribution	Employers contribute to domestic traineeships, sea-time placements and supervisor development.
AMSA requirements	All vessel roles remain subject to applicable AMSA certificates of competency, medical, sea service, English, safety and recognition requirements. A visa or seasonal permit does not authorise a person to perform a regulated maritime role.
Recognition and lead times	Overseas qualifications should be assessed early. Where an Australian certificate of competency or recognition process is required, applications, evidence checks, medicals and assessments must be completed before deployment.

Design feature	Recommended requirement
Governance	Joint oversight by Commonwealth migration agencies, AMSA, Queensland Government, Games delivery partners and industry.

Table 8: Marine Tourism Temporary Migration Permits

Critical dependency

AMSA approval and certification timeframes must be built into recruitment planning. Marine workers cannot be treated as a general seasonal labour pool. Eligibility to enter Australia and competency to work on Australian domestic commercial vessels are separate requirements.

6. Regional Workforce Priorities

Region	Pressure profile	Priority response
Brisbane	Primary Games hub; largest concentration of venues, hotels, restaurants, transport, employee housing and technical event activity.	Build hotel, culinary, venue, production, transport and visitor service pipelines; coordinate workforce transport and accommodation.
Gold Coast	Major competition and accommodation destination with high resort, holiday park, attraction and hospitality demand, alongside housing and cost-of-living pressures.	Integrate resort, hotel, holiday park and attraction workforce plans; strengthen supervisor and middle-management development; retain seasonal and international student workforce; address affordable staff accommodation; enable mobility with Brisbane.
Sunshine Coast	Competition venues and accommodation growth in a smaller labour market.	Expand local training and school pathways; plan affordable staff accommodation and transport support; develop shared workforce pools for events and peak periods.
Whitsundays	Olympic sailing, marine tourism and peak international visitor demand, employee housing and transportation demands.	Declare and fund maritime traineeships; coordinate sea time and employers; plan for larger vessels, increased service frequency and extended operating hours; expand hospitality, accommodation and staff housing pathways.
Townsville	Sailing and North Queensland gateway functions; competition with Defence, construction and resources, in addition to employee housing and transportation demands.	Link marine training and placements across Townsville and Whitsundays; address housing and inter-industry competition.
Cairns	High pre- and post-Games tourism dispersal, reef and aviation demand, in addition to employee housing and transportation demands.	Expand guiding, marine, accommodation, culinary, multilingual and aviation customer service capability; attract and retain international students and graduates; support peak workforce mobility, housing and regional settlement.
Rockhampton / Capricorn	Rowing and canoe sprint plus regional visitor uplift, in addition to employee housing and transportation demands.	Develop event operations, transport, accommodation and visitor servicing capacity tied to local venues and tourism businesses.
Toowoomba and other host regions	Venue-specific peaks and regional dispersal.	Use place-based plans, shared recruitment and temporary mobility arrangements rather than assuming workforce supply from Southeast Queensland.

Table 9: Regional Workforce Priorities

7. Strategic Workforce Risks

Risk	Potential consequence	Mitigation
Late workforce planning	Long-lead roles cannot be developed in time; reliance on expensive external labour.	Lock in 2026-2027 decisions for training, licensing and employer participation.
Delivery displaces legacy	Contractors prioritise experienced external workers and local workers receive only short-term lower-level jobs.	Set local training, progression and procurement targets with reporting and enforcement.
Business-as-usual displacement	Games employers draw workers from existing tourism businesses, reducing service capacity elsewhere.	Coordinate recruitment, shared pools, productivity support and temporary migration; monitor vacancy movement.
Training capacity and quality shortfalls	Insufficient trainers, regional delivery or workplace placements; poor completions.	Fund trainer development, blended delivery, employer consortia and quality assurance.
Housing and transport constraints	Workers cannot take or retain regional and shift-based roles due to housing availability, affordability, cost-of-living and transport barriers.	Integrate affordable staff accommodation, transport and regional settlement into workforce and project planning.
Temporary work and post-Games cliff	Workers face unemployment after 2032 and capability is lost.	Require transition plans, skills passports and links to tourism, major events and infrastructure pipelines.
Migration over-reliance or exploitation	Domestic pathways weaken and migrant workers face poor conditions.	Verified shortage tests, employer accreditation, worker protections and training obligations.
Marine certification delays	International or interstate recruits cannot legally perform required vessel roles.	Start AMSA assessment and recognition early; maintain a credentialed reserve list.
Volunteer substitution and paid-workforce displacement	Volunteers are used in roles that should be paid, cannot progress to employment, or existing tourism, hospitality and events workers leave essential paid roles to volunteer during peak demand.	Set clear role boundaries; coordinate volunteer recruitment and rostering with industry demand; protect essential paid workforce supply; provide quality training and transition pathways.[23]
Fragmented governance and data	Duplicated programs, inconsistent forecasts and no accountability.	Single cross-government workforce governance body and common dashboard.
Fatigue, safety and psychosocial risk	High turnover, incidents and reduced visitor experience.	Fatigue standards, supervisor capability, safe staffing ratios, worker welfare and real-time monitoring.
Economic or demand shock	Visitor volumes, venue scope or construction timing changes.	Maintain low, central and high scenarios and annual reset points.

Table 10: Workforce Risks

8. Legacy Goals and Recommendations

The workforce legacy should be defined as lasting improvements in workforce capability, access, productivity, job quality and industry resilience - not simply the number of temporary jobs created. The following goals should be adopted and publicly reported.

Legacy goal	2032 outcome	2035 outcome
1. Skilled workforce supply	Critical occupations meet the central demand scenario with high-scenario contingencies.	Queensland retains a deeper leadership, culinary, technical production and maritime skills base.
2. Local and regional participation	Host regions have measurable training, employment and progression outcomes.	Regional pipelines continue to supply tourism and major events.
3. Inclusive pathways	Underrepresented groups participate across frontline, technical and leadership roles.	Improved retention and progression, not only entry-level participation.
4. Quality jobs and retention	Games workforce standards support safety, fair pay, stable rosters and worker wellbeing.	Improved 12- and 24-month retention across visitor economy roles.
5. Training system capability	Training providers and employers can deliver at scale with sufficient trainers and placements.	Capacity is retained for future growth, disasters and major events.
6. Major-events workforce system	A verified workforce and volunteer register supports Games delivery.	A permanent Queensland major-events workforce platform remains operational.
7. Responsible migration	Migration fills verified shortages with worker protections and domestic training commitments.	Skilled migrants and international graduates are retained in priority regions where appropriate.
8. Marine workforce legacy	Olympic sailing is delivered with a qualified, safe and credentialled workforce.	Maritime traineeships, sea-time partnerships and AMSA-ready pathways support the marine tourism sector.
9. Small business capability	SMEs access training, procurement and workforce planning support.	Improved management, supervisor capability, digital and AI productivity capability and resilience across the visitor economy.
10. Evidence and accountability	Annual public dashboard tracks supply, demand, inclusion and legacy.	Independent evaluation confirms outcomes and identifies enduring reforms.

Table 11: Legacy Goals and Outcomes

8.1 Priority recommendations

1. Establish a Brisbane 2032 Visitor Economy Workforce Taskforce in 2026 with government, Games delivery, industry, training, unions, regional and community representation.
2. Publish a single annual workforce demand and supply dashboard by occupation, region and phase, using low, central and high scenarios.
3. Immediately expand long-lead pathways for chefs, managers, production services (including technical and staging), maritime occupations and senior outdoor/adventure supervisors and coordinators, including trainer, workplace and leadership capacity.
4. Embed workforce and legacy requirements into Games procurement, venue contracts, hotel development support and regional delivery agreements.
5. Create regional workforce compacts covering employers, training providers, affordable staff accommodation, housing, transport and settlement support.
6. Design a targeted migration plan and investigate a controlled seasonal marine workforce permit, subject to Commonwealth agreement and AMSA requirements.
7. Build a Queensland major-events workforce and volunteer platform with verified skills, credentials, availability and post-event transition functions, with volunteer recruitment and management coordinated to minimise displacement of essential paid tourism, hospitality and events workers.[23]
8. Require every major workforce program to report employment, retention, progression, inclusion and post-Games outcomes - not only enrolments or participation.
9. Fund small and medium businesses to undertake workforce planning, supervisor and middle-management development, retention initiatives and digital/AI productivity improvements so the Games do not destabilise existing operations.[25]
10. Complete an independent legacy evaluation in 2035 and retain successful programs as part of Queensland's long-term visitor economy workforce system.
11. Position the proposed Queensland state-led DAMA, should it proceed, as a potential component of the Brisbane 2032 migration strategy, supported by regional occupation evidence, employer safeguards, settlement support and domestic training obligations. Strengthen international student employment and graduate retention pathways, including practical post-study options for graduates with relevant Queensland qualifications, verified employer demand and demonstrated workplace competence. [24]
12. Establish a staged school workforce pipeline targeting Years 7-8 for awareness, Years 9-10 for exploration and pathway selection, and Years 11-12 for work-based learning, credentials and direct recruitment.
13. Launch a statewide and national visitor economy workforce campaign, with dedicated Pacific and targeted international streams, supported by a single digital attraction, training and job-matching platform.

9. Governance and Measures

Measure	2026 baseline action	2032 / 2035 direction
Priority occupation supply	Establish employment, vacancy, training and credential baseline.	Supply meets central scenario; contingency plans cover high scenario.
Apprenticeship and traineeship pipeline	Baseline commencements, completions and employer participation by region.	Sustained growth, higher completions and strong employment conversion.
Recruitment time and vacancies	Establish common vacancy and time-to-fill measures.	Persistent vacancies and recruitment times reduce.
Retention and job quality	Establish 12- and 24-month retention, turnover, roster and wellbeing indicators.	Improved retention and reduced churn across frontline and supervisory roles.
Regional readiness	Map housing, transport, training and settlement constraints.	Each host region has tested workforce and mobility arrangements.
Inclusion and progression	Baseline participation and occupational level by cohort.	Growth in participation, completion, progression and leadership representation.
Migration safeguards	Establish employer accreditation and reporting framework.	No systemic underpayment or exploitation; migration accompanied by domestic training.
Marine readiness	Create credential and sea-time pipeline dashboard.	Qualified workforce and reserve pool confirmed well before Games-time.
Legacy conversion	Define post-Games transition pathways.	Games workers and volunteers move into ongoing work, training or further events.
SME participation	Baseline access to workforce and procurement support.	Higher SME participation, capability and post-Games market access.
Leadership and supervisor pipeline	Baseline supervisory and middle-management supply by sector and region.	Increased progression into supervisor, coordinator and management roles before 2032.
Volunteer workforce impact	Establish baseline for employee participation in Games volunteering and critical-role exposure.	Volunteer mobilisation does not materially reduce essential paid industry workforce; strong transition to paid employment and training.
International student and graduate retention	Baseline employment and retention of relevant international students and graduates.	Improved retention of proven workers in relevant occupations, subject to migration settings and employer demand.
Staff accommodation and housing	Baseline housing availability, affordability and employer constraints in priority regions.	Reduced housing-related recruitment losses; regional staff accommodation measures operating before peak demand.

Table 12: Governance and Measures

10. Conclusion

Brisbane 2032 can strengthen Queensland's visitor economy workforce, but only if workforce development begins before demand becomes urgent. The most important decisions are required in 2026 and early 2027: governance, forecasting, training capacity, long-lead occupation pipelines, regional compacts, employer commitments and migration safeguards. Delaying these actions will increase costs, intensify competition for workers and reduce the likelihood that Queenslanders and host communities receive a lasting employment legacy.

The roadmap should therefore be adopted as a cross-government and industry program, reviewed annually, and linked directly to venue, accommodation, tourism, transport, procurement and regional delivery planning. Success should be measured not only by whether the Games are staffed, but by whether Queensland retains a safer, more skilled, inclusive and resilient workforce after 2032.

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