

SHK

Industry Skills Australia

**Executive Director – Strategy and
Government Relations**

Candidate briefing

May 2026

WE KNOW WHERE



Table of contents

About the organisation..... 2

History and evolution2

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)..... 3

Sector and industry context 3

Organisational role and mandate 3

Evolution and strategic direction.....4

Context and operating environment 4

Why these roles are being appointed4

Remuneration 5

Contact 5



About the organisation

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) is the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for Australia's transport supply chain sectors. Its remit spans transport and logistics, rail, aviation and maritime, and emerging areas including omnichannel logistics and distribution and space transport and logistics.

ISA operates at the intersection of employers, unions, governments and the vocational education and training (VET) system. ISA's mandate is to translate industry-driven workforce intelligence into practical advice, policy input and workforce development solutions that inform Commonwealth decision-making and public investment in skills.

History and evolution

ISA has operated for more than two decades supporting Australia's transport and supply chain industries. The organisation was previously known as Australian Industry Standards (AIS) and rebranded to Industry Skills Australia (ISA) as it transitioned into the Jobs and Skills Council model. ISA was formally appointed by the Australian Government in June 2023 to establish the Jobs and Skills Council for the nation's transport and logistics (road, rail, aviation and maritime), omnichannel logistics and space transport sectors.

From 2016 to 2022, AIS operated as a Skills Service Organisation (SSO), providing technical and secretariat support to Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) that directed training package development and review. From January 2023, the Australian Government replaced the SSO/IRC model with a national network of 10 industry-owned Jobs and Skills Councils, supported by an investment of \$402 million over four years.

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)

Jobs and Skills Councils bring together employers, unions and governments to set workforce and skills priorities for their sectors and strengthen industry voice in the VET system. Each JSC works with Jobs and Skills Australia, drawing on national workforce analysis and projections.

Within this framework, JSCs have four core functions:

- Industry stewardship – gather industry intelligence and represent industry views to government and VET decision-makers.
- Workforce planning – identify current and emerging skills needs and develop national workforce plans.
- Training product development – develop and improve VET training products to meet industry needs.
- Implementation, promotion and monitoring – support delivery, promote pathways and monitor training outcomes.

Sector and industry context

ISA operates in sectors that are fundamental to Australia's economic resilience, national connectivity and supply chain continuity. Transport and logistics activities underpin the movement of people, goods, food, fuel and critical materials across a geographically large and complex economy, making workforce capability in these sectors strategically important.

Organisational role and mandate

ISA provides advice to government and the national skills system. It turns sector intelligence into workforce planning priorities, training product development and targeted implementation activity across transport supply chain sectors.



The organisation operates within a regulated and contract-based environment, with defined deliverables tied to government priorities. Its effectiveness depends on strong industry relationships, credible insight, disciplined execution and the ability to balance policy engagement with practical, outcome-focused work for industry stakeholders.

Evolution and strategic direction

ISA is entering an important phase of organisational evolution. The operating environment for Jobs and Skills Councils has become more complex, with heightened expectations around performance, governance, delivery discipline and quality of advice.

ISA is strengthening its executive capacity to lift performance and delivery. Priorities include deeper industry connectivity and higher-quality advice to government.

This includes an increased emphasis on industry credibility, operational effectiveness, cross-sector coordination and the ability to translate strategy into measurable outcomes.

Context and operating environment

ISA operates nationally and engages a diverse stakeholder set including employers, industry bodies, unions, education providers and government agencies. Delivering effectively in this environment requires strong sector knowledge, systems thinking and disciplined execution.

The organisation operates within a defined funding horizon common to the JSC model, in a system that has existed in various forms for more than two decades. Performance, delivery and trusted relationships underpin ISA's standing with government and industry.

Why these roles are being appointed

ISA is refreshing its executive leadership structure to support the next phase of organisational performance and impact. This reflects the strategic direction and ambition to strengthen stakeholder confidence and organisational effectiveness.

The five roles will form the executive team reporting to the CEO. The team is expected to bring deep industry experience, strong stakeholder engagement capability and a track record of delivery in a policy-informed environment. The appointments strengthen ISA's capacity to serve industry and advise government.

For **specific role details**, please see the position description included.



Remuneration

The successful candidate will be offered a competitive Total Remuneration Package (TRP) broadly aligned with Victorian public sector executive levels SES 1–2, anticipated to be in the low \$200,000s to early \$300,000s TRP, inclusive of statutory superannuation (currently 12%). The final offer will be determined based on the appointee's skills, experience, and current remuneration, and will be commensurate with senior executive remuneration in comparable, complex and diverse organisations.

Professional development and external engagement opportunities will be agreed in line with organisational policies and, where appropriate, approved by the CEO. Such opportunities are generally supported to enable effective performance in the role.

Contact

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) is partnering with SHK on this key appointment and has appointed SHK **Senior Partner and Sector Lead, Government and Public Policy, Penny Wilson**, to lead this search.



Penny Wilson is a Senior Partner at SHK and Sector Lead for Government and Public Policy, specialising in executive search and advisory. She is recognised for delivering senior executive and board appointments in highly regulated, publicly accountable environments, working with Boards, Chief Executives and Secretaries on complex leadership decisions.

Penny brings deep practical insight, strong cross-sector networks and a contemporary approach to leadership assessment. She began her career in the Commonwealth Public Service and later returned to the Victorian Public Service as an executive, following senior roles in public policy, research, consulting, lobbying and regulation. Her experiences also traverses the tertiary sector, membership and peak bodies and community services, including as a Chief Executive Officer.

Clients value Penny's frank advice, sound judgement and adaptability, particularly where appointment processes intersect with evolving policy agendas and governance expectations. Her advisory work includes succession planning, role design and supporting organisations to strengthen leadership capability in response to current and emerging

challenges.

Penny has a strong interest in women and leadership and in enabling internal candidates to participate fully and equitably in executive selection processes. She has extensive governance experience, including three terms as a Governor-in-Council-appointed Director of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board of Victoria, and is a Williamson Fellow, Leadership Victoria, and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

 +61 434 589 284

 penny.wilson@shk.com.au

Position Title: Executive Director – Strategy and Government Relations

Reports to: CEO

Direct Reports: 4

About Industry Skills Australia

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) is a Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) operating within a government-funded framework to build workforce capability, support increased productivity and the nation's economic growth. ISA is the JSC for the nation's Transport Supply Chain Industries, comprising Aviation, Maritime, Rail, Transport and Logistics sectors, and the emerging sectors of Space Transport and Logistics, and Omnichannel Logistics and Distribution.

ISA plays a critical role in informing Commonwealth decision-making, guiding public investment and ensuring the national vocational education and training (VET) system responds to industry's current and emerging skills needs.

The organisation is industry-owned and industry led, and operates at the intersection of employers, unions, governments and the skills system, translating workforce intelligence into policy, strategy and workforce development solutions.

The Opportunity

This is a senior executive role with responsibility for national policy, strategy and government engagement.

The role contributes directly to national workforce reform, government priorities and system performance, operating in a complex and high-accountability environment.

The Role

The Executive Director – Strategy and Government Relations leads Industry Skills Australia's national strategy, policy influence and government engagement agenda.

The role positions ISA as a trusted advisor to Ministers, departments and national policy makers on workforce capability, productivity and skills reform. The Executive Director ensures that industry intelligence generated through ISA's sector engagement is translated into high-impact policy advice, strategic partnerships and government investment decisions.

Operating at the most senior policy interface of the organisation, this role maintains deep relationships across Commonwealth and State governments and ensures ISA has strong visibility, credibility and influence within national workforce and skills policy debates.

The Executive Director is responsible for shaping ISA's strategic direction, advising the CEO and Board on government positioning, and ensuring the organisation's work contributes directly to national policy outcomes and skills system reform.

Key Accountabilities

Government and Ministerial Engagement

Lead ISA's engagement with Commonwealth Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Ministerial offices and senior departmental officials.

Maintain high-level relationships across government to influence workforce policy, training reform, migration settings and national productivity initiatives.

Represent ISA in ministerial briefings, advisory committees and strategic policy forums.

Provide strategic advice to the CEO and Board on political context, government priorities and emerging policy risks and opportunities.

Develop and implement ISA's government engagement strategy across Commonwealth and State jurisdictions.

Strategic Policy Leadership

Lead the development of ISA's national policy agenda relating to workforce capability, productivity and skills system reform.

Translate industry intelligence, labour market data and sector engagement into high-quality policy submissions, ministerial briefs and strategic advice.

Ensure ISA plays a central role in shaping national workforce policy debates and reform initiatives.

Oversee the development of strategic policy papers and national workforce recommendations presented to government and industry leaders.

Cabinet and Policy Influence

Provide policy input and briefing material that supports ministerial decision-making and Cabinet processes.

Contribute to national policy consultations and advisory groups relating to the skills system, workforce development and industry capability.

Ensure ISA intelligence and recommendations are positioned to influence major government policy decisions.

Maintain awareness of government reform priorities and ensure ISA strategies align with national policy direction.

Executive Strategy Leadership

Provide enterprise-wide strategic leadership ensuring alignment between workforce planning, industry engagement, intelligence and training product development.

Support the CEO in setting ISA's strategic direction and national positioning.

Advise the Board on government relations strategy, policy risks and emerging political developments.

Lead the development of ISA's organisational strategy and ensure alignment with government priorities and industry needs.

Organisational and Executive Leadership

Lead and develop a high-performing strategy and policy team responsible for intelligence, policy analysis and government engagement.

Foster a culture of evidence-based decision making, strategic thinking and policy innovation.

Work collaboratively with other Executive Directors to ensure ISA presents a coordinated and influential voice across sectors.

Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in Public Policy, Public Administration, Economics, Strategy, Political Science, Law or related discipline.
- Postgraduate qualification (e.g. MPP, MPA, MBA or equivalent) highly regarded.
- Experience as Chief of Staff, Senior Adviser or equivalent highly regarded.
- Extensive senior experience in policy, government relations or advisory roles.
- Equivalent executive experience influencing national outcomes will be considered.

Skills & Experience

- Demonstrated senior executive experience operating at the centre of government, within policy, ministerial or complex public sector environments.
- Proven ability to influence Cabinet processes, national policy outcomes and reform agendas.
- Extensive experience providing high-level briefing to CEOs, Ministers, Boards and senior stakeholders.
- Deep understanding of Commonwealth policy processes, budget cycles and political context.
- Established networks across Departments, Ministerial offices and central agencies.
- Strong strategic, analytical and political acumen with ability to navigate complex environments.
- Proven leadership of multidisciplinary teams and policy functions.

Version control

Version	Date	Approver	Edits made:
1.0	30 Mar 2025	CEO	First version.

SHK

WE KNOW WHERE