

# ACCOUNTING SERVICES

THE INDUSTRY & WORKFORCE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2019



## THE INDUSTRY <sup>1</sup>

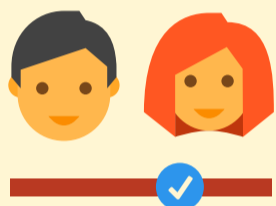
The Legal and Accounting Services industry employs approximately 27,300 Western Australians. The industries provide critical services to individuals and organisations requiring financial and/or legal advisory, support, technical and regulatory services, for everyday matters through to legal and government agency processes.

The Accounting Services sector continues to experience disruption due to technological innovation, regulatory reform and educational requirements. While graduate numbers outstrip demand, the sector is characterised by a highly educated workforce with higher than average incomes.



## KEY WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS <sup>2</sup>

### Gender



61% female

### Age



37% <35 years of age

### Nationality



41% born outside Australia

### Employment



63% employed full time

### Education



56% tertiary qualified  
40% vocational and secondary qualified

### Weekly Income



35% earn <\$1,000  
37% earn \$1,500+

## WORKFORCE PRIORITIES <sup>3</sup>

1

Growth in the accounting sector is dominated by the provision of advisory and business development services, reliant on highly skilled professionals. Individual accountability, financial risk management, data protection and privacy are key focus areas.

2

Increasing reliance on business acumen, analytical skills, ability to interpret data and provide strategic operational insights to improve business performance, particularly to SMEs.

3

Disruption is expected in the accounting industry due to regulatory and legislative changes planned for other financial services sectors, particularly around educational requirements and the provision of financial and product advice.

4

Although employment is expected to grow for accountants in the near future, there are decreased opportunities for accounting graduates, impacted by automation and the offshoring of low level accounting functions.

## OCCUPATIONS & CAREERS



Accountant  
Management Accountant  
Financial Accountant  
Taxation Accountant  
Financial Analyst

Company Secretary  
Business Advisor  
Project Accountant  
External Auditor  
Internal Auditor

Accounting Clerk  
Cost Controller  
Insolvency Accountant  
Forensic Accountant

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## INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS<sup>4</sup>



**REGULATORY DISRUPTION** The Future of Financial Advice (FoFA) reforms and subsequent regulatory imposts, mandating education and licensing requirements for accountants providing advice, has resulted in a significant decrease of accountants applying for a Limited Australian Financial Services Licence (AFSL) and an exit of experienced accounting professionals providing financial product advice associated with self-managed superannuation funds (SMSF) and related advisory services.



**NEW STANDARDS** The Financial Adviser Standards and Ethics Authority (FASEA) has mandated base tertiary requirements for existing and new financial advisers. While the mandate does not refer to accountants directly, under the Limited Australian Financial Services Licence, anyone providing self-managed superannuation funds advice must hold approved degrees and coursework, typically not those held by accountants. This will impact occupations which require provision of financial and product advice.



**INDUSTRY SCRUTINY** Scrutiny of the banking, superannuation and financial services industry is set to shape significant change on the immediate and aligned industry sectors. While regulatory guidelines are yet to be determined by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission affecting anyone providing financial and product advice, already there are signs of increased early retirements by experienced, ageing practitioners set to be affected by these changes.



**TECHNOLOGY** Focus is being placed on system implementation to streamline workflow and processes, and informed decision making based on data analytics to drive productivity and add value in a highly competitive environment. Cloud-based accounting, automation and offshoring are transforming routine operational tasks typical to graduate/entry level roles. Industry is shifting towards provision of adjunct value-add, technology-based service provision.

## TRAINING<sup>4, 5</sup>

Evidence suggests a pending trend toward tertiary qualifications. Wealth management is seeing demand focus on suitable qualified advisors who meet Financial Adviser Standards and Ethics Authority's new educational requirements. All individuals working in this sector will need to understand regulations and manage risk in order to meet the rising standards of the sector. A new business ethics and conduct skill set has been developed to meet the changing needs of industry.

The Business Services Training Package could provide pathways to higher education and the provision of micro-credentialing for graduates with bachelor degrees or higher. A risk management and compliance project is being conducted to ensure current VET qualifications meet industry needs, including the development of a skill set for up-skilling purposes to assist the transition into risk or compliance officer roles.

The Financial Services Training Package contains 11 traineeships ranging from Certificate II to Certificate IV qualifications, including accounting, bookkeeping and accounts administration. The Business Services Training Package includes 21 traineeships with some qualifications in legal business administration and legal services. These provide vocational training through a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Financial incentives exist for eligible employers.