



**Local Jobs
Program**

Local Jobs Plan

**Central West Employment
Region**

New South Wales

May 2022

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The Department of Education, Skills and Employment acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the Wiradjuri people, known as ‘the people of the three rivers’, the Macquarie, Lachlan and Murrumbidgee and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.

The Local Jobs Program

As part of supporting Australia’s economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australian Government’s Local Jobs Program (LJP) brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to accelerate reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways in 51 Employment Regions.

Recognising the importance of local knowledge in getting people back into jobs quickly, the LJP includes the following key elements in each region:

- a local Employment Facilitator
- a Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce
- a Local Jobs Plan
- a Local Recovery Fund to support small scale activities
- access to the National Priority Funding Pool.

The Taskforces, each chaired by the respective region’s Employment Facilitator, develop and update a Local Jobs Plan for their region that identifies key employment and training priorities and provides a framework for driving employment outcomes in the context of the local labour market.

This Local Jobs Plan for the Central West Employment Region identifies the key LJP priorities with a focus on creating employment opportunities, actively upskilling or reskilling local job seekers and meeting local employer demands.

Key employment and training priorities

PRIORITY 1 – MEET LOCAL EMPLOYERS' RECRUITMENT NEEDS

Effectively meet the recruitment needs of employers in the Employment Region (ER), including those industries normally reliant on overseas workers that have been impacted by border closures as a result of COVID-19 and industries affected by labour shortages due to growth and opportunity post COVID-19 travel restrictions.

PRIORITY 2 – LEVERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Effectively meet the recruitment needs and diversity targets of employers delivering major infrastructure and development projects in the ER, including projects fast-tracked by governments as part of economic recovery measures.

PRIORITY 3 – INDIGENOUS JOB SEEKERS

Facilitate pathways for Indigenous job seekers to build required skills and move into available employment opportunities.

PRIORITY 4 – SUPPORT JOBSEEKERS AND OTHER PRIORITY COHORTS

Facilitate pathways for Jobseekers, Mature Aged, People with Disability and those wanting to return to the workforce, to build required skills and move into available employment opportunities.

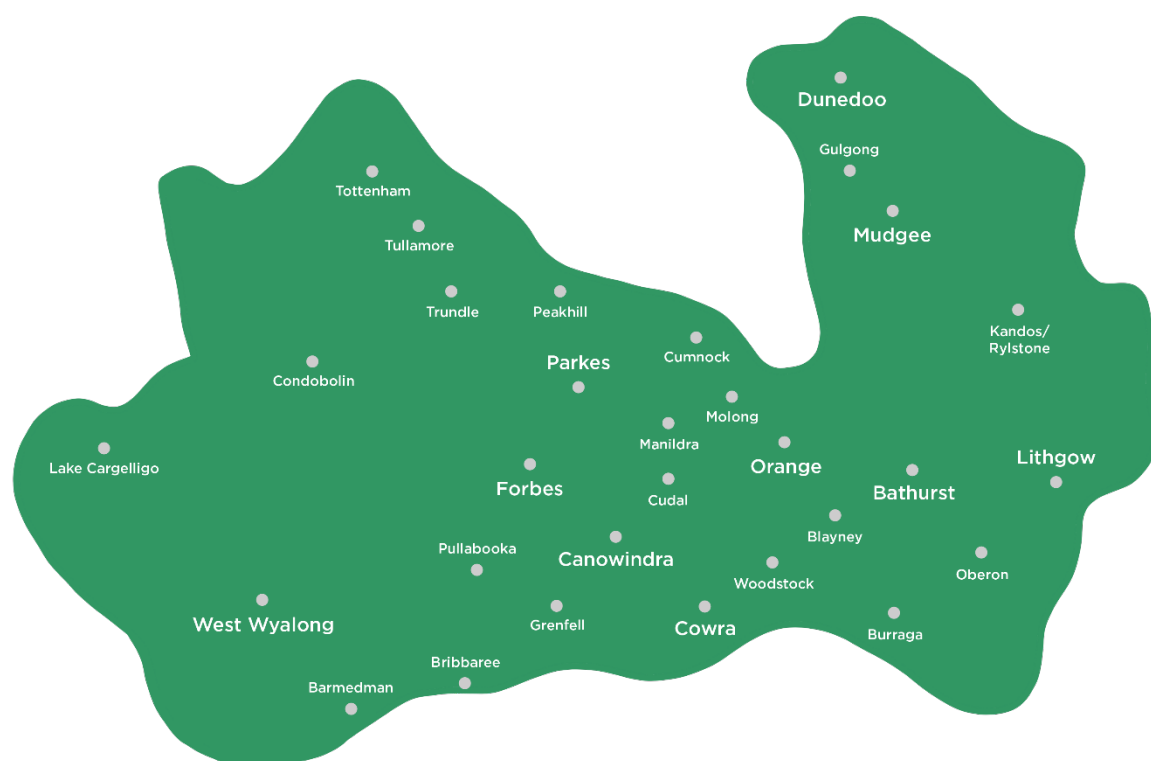
PRIORITY 5 – TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

Support removal of transport and housing related barriers preventing job seekers from accessing employment and training opportunities.

A full description of these key priorities, the strategies to address these and a list of key stakeholders can be found at **Attachment A**.

Employment Region overview

The Central West ER is located in NSW.



The Central West ER is a geographically large regional and rural area. It extends from Condobolin (population 3,486 – Census 2016) and Lake Cargelligo (1,479) in the west, West Wyalong (3,141), Grenfell (2,573), Cowra (10,063) in the south, to Lithgow (5,201) and Oberon (3,256) in the east and Mudgee (10,966) in the north. Other major towns in the region include Orange (38,097), Bathurst (41,300), Parkes (11,408), Forbes (8,432) and Blayney (3,378). The region's natural resources make it a major mining and agricultural area with Orange centrally located on rich soil at the base of Mount Canobolas.

- The highest employing industries are: Health Care and Social Assistance (13.7%), Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (13.6%), Education and Training (8.8%), Accommodation and Food Services (8.5%) and Construction (6.8%).
- The labour market consists of 111,800 employed people and 8,824 people registered as unemployed.
- Unemployment is 2.5%, Youth unemployment 4.9% and the participation rate is a high 67.4%.
- Local Government Areas (LGAs) with the highest unemployment are: Warrumbungle Council 4.8%, Cowra (3.5%), Lachlan (3.2%), and Parkes (3.0%).

According to Data Current as of 21 April 2022 – National Skills Commission Labour Market Data Dashboard - Central West (see **Attachment B**)

Key challenges in the Central West Employment Region

Current challenges faced by job seekers and employers include:

- Shortage of qualified skilled and unskilled workers to fill current job vacancies in industries showing demand including aged and disability care, tourism and hospitality, construction, retail, engineering and seasonal agriculture, exacerbated by a shortage of overseas workers due to border closures in response to COVID-19, and the re-opening after lockdown.
- Difficulties with attracting skilled workers into smaller towns, especially for infrastructure, construction and mining projects. Region Shapers Report (WRI June 2021)¹ estimates 63,593 FTE jobs will be required to deliver the major capital projects planned over the next five years (note this is Central West and Orana). This issue will be exacerbated by a shortfall of dwellings needed to support the growing population. Housing is already a problem.
- Shortage of accommodation in many LGAs due to low housing stock, increase in pandemic driven demand, low interest rates and a competitive housing market, particularly for workers who are required to relocate to take up employment opportunities.
- High levels of Indigenous job seekers reflecting the respective concentration of the cohort within the broader population in the ER. They represent over 24.8% of jobactive services caseload, identified in the Central West – Employment Services Caseload as of May 2022.
- Overrepresentation in jobactive services caseload of other cohorts – People with Disability (27.8%), Mature aged 50+ (30.4%), Youth (16.9%) and Females over 51%.
- Accessibility to transport links within and between LGAs where employment opportunities are clustered. Necessity of having a license and a car.
- Access and availability to education and training due to the shift to online learning and working from home during the pandemic, particularly for those with the most limited means who don't have access to transport or information technology options in smaller, more remote communities.
- Poor awareness and access to delivery mechanisms for the range of available skills training and employment support options available to job seekers and employers in the region.

¹<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-plans/Central-West-and-Orana-Regional-Plan-2036.pdf>

Key Stakeholders and Projects

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Commonwealth Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education, Skills and Employment • National Indigenous Australians Agency • Department of Social Services • Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications • Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources |
| New South Wales Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Regional Office NSW • Regional Leadership Executive • Regional Integrated Transport Group • Training Services NSW (NSW Department of Education) • Transport for NSW • Regional Skills and Workforce Development Committee • Water Infrastructure NSW |
| Local Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central NSW Joint Organisation • Bathurst Council • Bland (West Wyalong) Council • Blayney Council • Cabonne Council • Cowra Council • Forbes Council • Lachlan Council • Lithgow Council • Mid-Western (Mudgee) Council • Oberon Council • Orange Council • Parkes Council • Weddin Council • Warrumbungle Shire |
| Government Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Australia – Central West • Boosting the Local Care Workforce – Federal Government • More Jobs More Care – State Government • Housing support agencies |
| Education Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities, including but not limited to Charles Sturt University • Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) – Public (TAFE) and Private • Secondary Schools – Public and Private |
| Community Services Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathurst Community Services • Condobolin Community Services • Cowra Community Services • Mudgee Community Services • Orange Community Services • Parkes Community Services |
| NSW Business Chambers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business NSW – Western NSW representing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orange ○ Bathurst ○ Lithgow ○ Parkes ○ Cowra |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Career Development Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Training Organisations • Career Link Central West (NCI Partnership) • Youth Connect (Regional VET Pathways Program) • TradeUp (Stronger Country Communities) • Land Works (jobs and skills development through eco work) |
|-----------------------------|--|

| Employment Service Providers | Organisation Delivery Services |
|--|---|
| Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship Careers Australia • MEGT • Sarina Russo • VERTO |
| Career Transition Assistance (CTA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCTEC • VERTO |
| Employability Skills Training (EST) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Employment and Training Solutions • Joblink Plus • My Trade Start (applied to exit the market) • Strategix Training Group (not currently delivering services) • Summit Employment and Training (not currently delivering services) |
| jobactive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERTO • Sureway Employment and Training • Joblink Plus |
| New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central NSW Business HQ |
| ParentsNext | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERTO • Joblink Plus |
| Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE NSW |
| Transition to Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCTEC |
| Foundation Skills for Youth (FSFY) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE NSW • Joblink Plus Ltd • National Retail Association • Navitas English Pty Ltd |

Major Employers

- Mining Industry – Coal, Gold and Renewable Energy Metals (in development)
- Manufacturing Industry
- Agriculture Sector
- Local Government Organisations and projects
- Health Care and Social assistance industries – Government and Private
- Retail, Hospitality and Tourism – Small and large employers
- Educational Institutions – Schools, VET sector educators – Public and Private, Universities – Public and Private
- Group Training Organisations

Key Infrastructure Projects

- Special Activation Project (SAP), Parkes – Inland Rail Project
- Great Western Highway Upgrade, Lithgow based – Transport NSW
- McPhillamy Mine, Blayney – Regis Mining
- Sunrise Energy Metals, Narromine – Clean NeQ
- Housing developments – LGA plans
- Water storage projects <https://infrastructuremagazine.com.au/2021/06/01/10-million-committed-to-three-new-water-projects-in-central-west-nsw/>

Attachment A – Key employment and training priorities: strategies and stakeholders

PRIORITY 1 – MEET LOCAL EMPLOYERS' RECRUITMENT NEEDS

Effectively meet the recruitment needs of employers in the Employment Region (ER), including those industries normally reliant on overseas workers that have been impacted by border closures as a result of COVID-19 and industries affected by labour shortages due to growth and opportunity post COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Strategies

- 1.1 Facilitate engagement and connection between stakeholders, including but not limited to, Employment Service Providers (ESPs), Industry Representatives, Training Providers, Business owners, Training Services NSW across the ER to support effective solutions to labour shortages.
- 1.2 Identify industries and roles experiencing skills shortages/recruitment difficulties and the core entry level skills required for those roles.
- 1.3 Collaborate with RTOs and Government Partnerships to develop:
 - Targeted pre-employment training and work placements to support sustainable employment.
 - Promote Apprenticeships and Traineeships as a key employment strategy to Grow Your Own skilled workforce.
 - Collaborate with ESPs to develop work ready skills for those unemployed for 12 months or more.
- 1.4 Promote initiatives to support job seekers to relocate to take up employment opportunities.

Stakeholders

- ESPs
- Health Care and Social Assistance Sector
- Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sector
- Agriculture Sector
- Mining Sector
- Training Services NSW
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Network

PRIORITY 2 – LEVERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Effectively meet the recruitment needs and diversity targets of employers delivering major infrastructure and development projects in the ER, including projects fast-tracked by governments as part of economic recovery measures.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Support Organisations and Departments leading current and pending infrastructure and development projects to assist with recruitment needs, required skills and timelines.
- 2.2 Facilitate engagement and connection between stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- Collaborate with RTOs and Government Partnerships to develop:
 - Targeted pre-employment training and work placements to support sustainable employment.
 - Promote Apprenticeships and Traineeships as a key employment strategy to Grow Your Own.
 - Collaborate with ESPs to develop work ready skills for those unemployed for 12 months or more.
 - Identify and leverage Government initiatives to support business growth.

2.3 Promote initiatives to support job seekers to relocate to take up employment opportunities.

Stakeholders

- Local Government and Infrastructure sector
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Networks
- Jobseekers and priority cohorts
- Transport and Housing experts and groups

PRIORITY 3 - INDIGENOUS JOB SEEKERS

Facilitate pathways for Indigenous job seekers to build required skills and move into available employment opportunities.

Strategies

- 3.1 Collaborate with the Indigenous Community to support sustainable employment strategies to suit Indigenous jobseekers, including connection to mob and country.
- 3.2 Facilitate and support promotional campaigns targeting local employers to highlight the benefits of workforce diversity and the range of available resources to support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous job seekers.
- 3.3 Collaborate with RTOs and Government Partnerships to develop:
 - 3 Targeted pre-employment training and work placements to support sustainable employment.
 - Promote Apprenticeships and Traineeships as a key employment strategy to Grow Your Own.

Stakeholders

- Indigenous community and leaders
- ESPs
- Health Care and Social Assistance Sector
- Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sector
- Agriculture Sector
- Mining Sector
- Training Services NSW
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Network

PRIORITY 4 – SUPPORT JOB SEEKERS AND OTHER PRIORITY COHORTS

Facilitate pathways for Jobseekers, Mature Aged, People with Disability and those wanting to return to the workforce, to build required skills and move into available employment opportunities.

Strategies

- 4.1 Facilitate engagement and connection between stakeholders, including but not limited to, ESPs, Industry Representatives, Training Providers, Business owners, Training Services NSW across the ER to support labour shortages.
- 4.2 Identify industries and roles experiencing skills shortages/recruitment difficulties and the core entry level skills required for those roles.
- 4.3 Collaborate with RTOs and Government Partnerships to develop:
- 4 Targeted pre-employment training and work placements to support sustainable employment.
- 5 Promote Apprenticeships and Traineeships as a key employment strategy to Grow Your Own.
- 6 Collaborate with ESPs to develop work ready skills for those unemployed for 12 months or more.
- 4.4 Promote initiatives to support job seekers to relocate to take up employment opportunities.

Stakeholders

- ESPs
- Health Care and Social Assistance Sector
- Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Sector
- Agriculture Sector
- Mining Sector
- Training Services NSW
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Network

PRIORITY 5 – TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

Support removal of transport and housing related barriers preventing job seekers from accessing employment and training opportunities.

Strategies

- 5.1 Facilitate and support utilisation of available funding and resources to support job seekers to gain drivers licenses in response to employment opportunities.
- 5.2 Encourage and facilitate usage of funding opportunities to support transport and housing initiatives.
- 5.3 Work with employers and stakeholders to incorporate transport support options when designing targeted employment programs.
- 5.4 Identify and share best practice solutions that solve transport and housing issues.
- 5.5 Working with existing housing networks to provide intel and promote opportunities.

Stakeholders

- LGA Representatives - Housing
- ESPs
- Driver Training Schools
- Funding bodies to support housing and transport initiatives
- Local Recovery Fund

Labour Market Data Dashboard

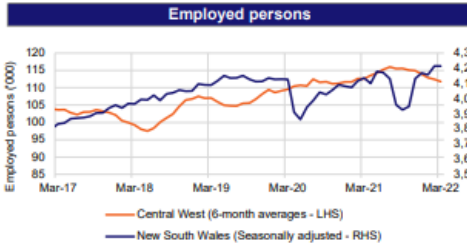
Data current as at 21 April 2022

Refer to source notes for data reference periods

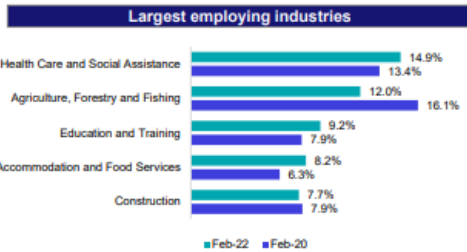
This Labour Market Data Dashboard provides key indicators for the labour market by Employment Region and is updated monthly.

| | Labour market summary table | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| | Employment | | | Unemployment | | | Unemployment rate | | Participation rate | | Youth unemployment rate | |
| | Mar-22 ('000) | Mar-20 ('000) | Change (%) | Mar-22 ('000) | Mar-20 ('000) | Change (%) | Mar-22 (%) | Mar-20 (%) | Mar-22 (%) | Mar-20 (%) | Mar-22 (%) | Mar-20 (%) |
| Central West | 111.8 | 109.5 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 4.4 | -34.8 | 2.5 | 3.8 | 67.4 | 66.6 | 4.9 | 9.8 |
| New South Wales | 4,214.9 | 4,127.5 | 2.1 | 172.4 | 214.9 | -19.8 | 3.9 | 4.9 | 65.5 | 65.4 | 9.9 | 10.5 |
| Australia | 13,389.9 | 12,995.5 | 3.0 | 551.3 | 723.2 | -23.8 | 4.0 | 5.3 | 66.4 | 65.9 | 8.3 | 11.6 |

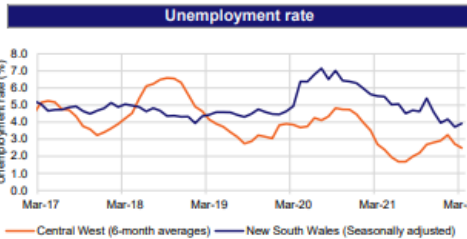
Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Mar-22. Employment Region data are 6-month averages of original estimates, except for the youth unemployment rate, which is a 12-month average of original estimates. State youth unemployment rates are 12-month averages of original estimates. Remaining data are seasonally adjusted.



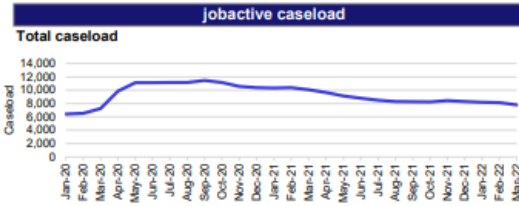
Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Mar-22



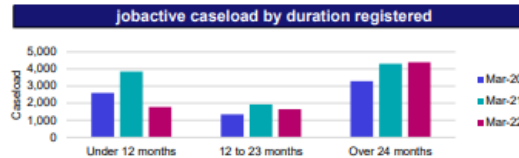
Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Detailed, four quarter averages, Feb-22 quarter



Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Mar-22



| | Central West | New South Wales |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Caseload - Feb 2020 | 6,538 | 169,325 |
| Caseload - Mar 2022 | 7,824 | 251,206 |
| Change from Feb 2020 to Mar 2022 | 1,286 (↑ 20%) | 81,881 (↑ 48%) |



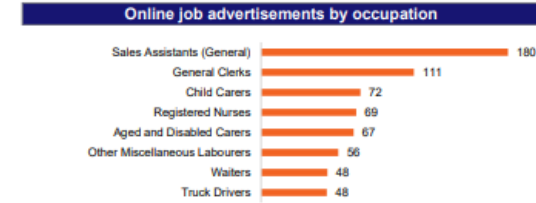
Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment, caseload data, Mar-22

| Local Government Area (LGA) | Dec-21 (%) | Dec-20 (%) |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Warrumbungle Shire | 4.8 | 3.0 |
| Cowra | 3.5 | 6.0 |
| Lachlan | 3.2 | 6.1 |
| Parkes | 3.0 | 5.5 |
| Lithgow | 2.8 | 5.6 |

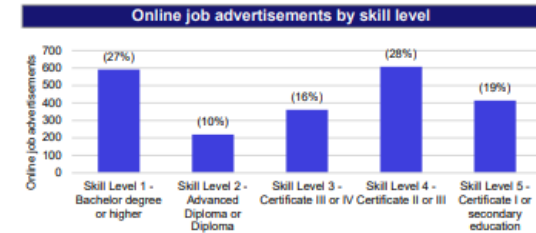
For more insights, access SALM data via lmp.gov.au. Source: National Skills Commission, Small Area Labour Markets, four quarter averages, Dec-21 quarter



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, Mar-22



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, 3 month average of original data, Mar-22



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, Mar-22

Note: Data are not readily available for all sources by Employment Region. ABS Labour Force Survey data are based on the Central West SA4. The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) uses a unique geographical approach. For this region, the IVI Blue Mountains, Bathurst & Central West NSW region has been used. jobactive caseload reports at the Employment Region level and includes participants receiving both digital and provider servicing (it excludes other programs, such as ParentsNext or Transition to Work (TTW)). For caseload data, the Employment Region is based on (1) the location of the provider for jobactive provider serviced participants; (2) where the participant resides for Online Employment Services (OES) participants; (3) the NEST Employment Regions of Adelaide South or Mid North Coast for NEST participants. jobactive caseload by duration registered is based on the participant's time registered in employment services. Caseload data are based on current methodology which has been retrospectively applied to historical jobactive caseload dates. As such, the data may not align with earlier figures. For any enquiries related to the data in this dashboard, please contact EmploymentPathwaysAnalysis@skillscommission.gov.au.