



# **Local Jobs Plan**

## **North Coast**

### **NSW**

**March 2022**

# Contents

The Local Jobs Program .....	3
Key employment and training priorities .....	4
Employment Region overview .....	5
Key challenges in NSW North Coast Employment Region .....	6
Local stakeholders and opportunities.....	7
Major employers in the region .....	7
Major Infrastructure and Development Projects in the region .....	7
Key Stakeholders.....	8
Attachment A – Key employment and training priorities: strategies and stakeholders .....	9
Priority 1 – Displaced Workers.....	9
Priority 2 – Aged Care .....	10
Priority 3 – Indigenous and Youth.....	10
Priority 4 – Hospitality and Tourism .....	11
Priority 5 – North Coast Flood Recovery.....	11
Attachment B – Labour Market Data Dashboard (April 2022) .....	13

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands within our region where our first nations peoples have lived, worked, and enjoyed for over 60,000 years. We acknowledge the Bundjalung, Yaegl, and Gumbayngirr nations and wish to pay our respects to our culturally knowledge holders and elders both 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 NSW North Coast 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 – DISPLACED WORKERS**

Create opportunities for displaced workers with transferable skills to transition into areas of employment growth or self-employment.

## **PRIORITY 2 – AGED CARE**

Develop sector specific solutions to effectively meet the recruitment needs of the health care industry, maximising the benefits of existing Australian and NSW Government programs and tailoring these services to the sector needs.

## **PRIORITY 3 – INDIGENOUS AND YOUTH**

Cultivate and support First Nation led projects in order to reduce the labour market disadvantage of Indigenous Australians, particularly creative arts, and cultural experience; as well as create pathways for youth into growth industries.

## **PRIORITY 4 – HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM**

Encourage industry specific solutions with a collaborative approach to all stakeholders and to provide employers with an opportunity to develop, support, nurture and grow a skilled local workforce to meet vacancy demands.

## **PRIORITY 5 – NORTH COAST FLOOD RECOVERY**

Develop opportunities and specific solutions for displaced workers of flood impacted industries across the region, with reskilling and upskilling pathways identified to encourage the transition of workers into areas of employment growth and self-employment.

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

**Figure 1 North Coast Employment Region**



The North Coast Employment Region (ER) stretches from Woolli and Nymboida in the south to the Queensland border excluding Tweed Heads and Kingscliff - Fingal Head. It is a popular tourist and retirement area as well as having a considerable variety of agriculture. Prior to the pandemic the inland parts of the region had relatively high unemployment rates. A full list of suburbs and postcode mappings can be found on [Department of Education, Skills and Employment website](#).

## Industry profile

Retail and Community Services are major employers in the region, with tourism providing seasonal employment opportunities in coastal centres and the north of the region.

At the 2016 Census a little over a quarter of Tweed Local Government Area's (LGAs) employed residents worked in the Queensland Gold Coast ER. There

was also considerable work travel between some of the NSW LGAs within the North Coast ER. (e.g., nearly a fifth of Ballina's employed residents worked in Lismore, with a further 8 percent working in Byron. Around 13 percent of Kyogle's employed residents worked in Richmond Valley, with another 12 percent working in Lismore).

## Educational profile

Educational facilities include:

Southern Cross University - Lismore Campus

TAFE NSW – Grafton, Trenayr, Maclean, Yamba, Casino, Lismore, Wollongbar, Ballina, Murwillumbah and Kingscliff.

Clarence Valley Regional Training Hub (CVRTH). This is one of 26 Regional Training Hubs throughout Australia, designed to better coordinate training and opportunities for medical students, junior doctors and medical trainees in rural and regional areas.

## Transport profile

The area boasts a regional airport at Ballina with direct flights daily to Sydney, Newcastle and Dubbo.

Countrylink run a daily service from Sydney to Brisbane stopping at Grafton and Casino with buses to other regional centres.

Northern Rivers Transport Information covers all regions in the North Coast footprint. Information can be obtained at [Northern Rivers Transport Information - Bus Timetables and more \(goingplaces.org.au\)](https://goingplaces.org.au)

## Key challenges in NSW North Coast Employment Region

The North Coast ER has a history of labour market and social disadvantage, with employment growth averaging just 0.5 per cent over the last five years, well below both the state and national averages (of 1.6 per cent and 1.3 per cent, respectively), which has impacted negatively on both the number and types of job opportunities available.

The unemployment rate in the North Coast ER has increased from a rate of 3.3 per cent in March 2020 to 5.5 per cent in February 2022 (NSW 4.2 per cent, Aust 4.2 per cent). Youth unemployment has improved from 10.7 per cent in March 2020 to 6.6 per cent in February 2022. The employment participation rate is 61 per cent with 188,900 people currently employed. This is an increase of 6.6 per cent since March 2020.

Current data for the North Coast ER is shown in **Attachment B**.

Current and ongoing employment opportunities are concentrated in Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction, Retail Trade, Education and Training, Accommodation and Food Services. Strong demand in the Aged Care sector is attributed to the concentration of many Residential Aged Care and Community facilities in the ER as well as a high proportion of the population who are 65 years old and over compared to the working age population.

Key labour market challenges in the North Coast ER include:

- February/March 2022 Major Flood Event. This has had a major impact right across the North Coast, with many businesses and homes having substantial damage with a recovery period that will extend into the years ahead.
- All seven Local Government Areas of the Clarence Valley, Lismore, Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Richmond Valley and the Tweed Shire have been declared a natural disaster by the NSW Government with the full suite of services and support enabled with this declaration.
- Growing shortage and unmet demand for skilled and entry level workers in the Aged Care sector.
- Significant shortage in the Tourism and Hospitality Industries across a wide range of skill levels.
- Heightened risk of further entrenchment in labour market disadvantage for the existing high-risk groups such as Indigenous Australians and young people within the ER.
- Significant pandemic and economic impacts on business in tourism, creative arts, business enabling services and agricultural sectors due to border closures and regional lockdown restrictions.

# Local stakeholders and opportunities

## Major employers in the region

- Major employers in the region include the North Coast Area Health District (NSW Health) located throughout the region, The Southern Cross University (located outside Lismore) and the local governments within the ER.
- The aged care providers in the region that have the largest number of funded residential beds are Uniting Care; The Trustees for the Roman Catholic Church; Frank Whiddon Masonic Homes and RSL LifeCare.
- Tourist resorts in or close to the Employment Region include Peppers Salt Resort & Spa Kingscliff; the Mantra on Salt Beach at Kingscliff, Crystalbrook Bryon at Byron, Elements of Byron and Angourie Resort.
- The headquarters of the Norco Cooperative is in Lismore where it has two milk bottling factories and an ice cream factory.
- Construction companies within the region include Bennett Constructions which is based in Ballina and is part of the Lipman Group.
- The Northern Co-operative Meat Company Ltd (NCMC) is Australia's largest meat processing co-operative established in 1933. The estimated workforce with NCMC includes over 1000 highly trained and skilled employees, working across five core business divisions.

## Major Infrastructure and Development Projects in the region

- In June 2020, the final plans for the \$673.2 million Tweed Valley Hospital were approved by the NSW Government. The new hospital remains on track to open to patients in 2023. The project will create opportunities for up to 650 jobs during the peak of construction in early 2022.
- On 22 May 2020, the Australian Government announced a new \$500 million Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI Program). This program will support local councils to deliver priority local road and community infrastructure projects across Australia. The funding allocations include \$2.1m for Clarence Valley, \$1.8m for Tweed, \$1.2m for Lismore, \$1.0m each for Kyogle and Richmond Valley, \$0.88m for Ballina and \$0.73m for Byron.
- In March 2019 it was announced that the Australian Government would contribute \$15 million towards Norco's \$30 million extension of its Ice-Cream facility in Lismore. Norco plans to substantially increase production capacity and improve efficiencies at their factory to ensure the job security of its more than 200 existing employees at that site and to expand its workplace for a further anticipated 400 positions, including employing more apprentices. The upgrades to the facility commenced in November 2021 and are expected to add around 20 million additional litres of ice cream annually meeting the growing demand for its Hinterland brand. The upgrades are due for completion by the end of 2024.
- Tweed Valley Rail Trail Project. Stage 1: Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek. Contract has been awarded to Hazell Bros of Queensland for \$11.8 million. Construction works are due to commence from December 2021 and the Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek section of the Rail Trail to be completed by December 2022. The number of employment opportunities and specific roles are still yet to be determined.

- Clarence Valley Council has announced that Grafton's \$6.5 million Waterfront Project has now been awarded and timeline is scheduled to start late 2021 with a completion date of September 2022.
- The Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct will catalyse opportunities to create new jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, and renewable energy sectors. The precinct will assist with business diversification by identifying value-adding opportunities for existing industries and local producers. The timeline for this project is yet to be confirmed. It is anticipated that this precinct and employment opportunities will start to materialise at the end of 2022.

## Key Stakeholders

- There are three Australian Government Employment Service Providers in the region, delivering jobactive services: TURSA Employment and Training, ETC (Enterprise and Training Company) and NORTEC Employment and Training Ltd.
- Other employment services in the region include the following programs: ParentsNext (Verto, Octec and Wesley), Transition to Work (ETC), NEIS (New Business Assistance with NEIS) (NORTEC and ETC) and Career Transition Assistance (ETC).
- Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers.
- Business NSW – Northern Rivers.
- National Recovery Resilience Agency
- Australian Government Business Recovery Network
- Local regional Business Chambers.
- Local Councils: Tweed Shire Council, Byron Shire Council, Ballina Shire Council, Lismore City Council, Richmond Valley Council, Kyogle Council and Clarence Valley Council.
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils: Baryulgil Square Local Aboriginal Land Council, Birrigan Gargle Local Aboriginal Land Council, Bogal Local Aboriginal Land Council, Casino-Boolangle Local Aboriginal Land Council, Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council, Gugin Gudduba Local Aboriginal Land Council, Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council, Jana Ngalle Local Aboriginal Land Council, Jubullun Local Aboriginal Land Council, Muli Muli Local Aboriginal land Council, Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Council, Tweed/Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council and Yaegl Local Aboriginal Land Council.



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

### **Priority 1 – Displaced Workers**

**Create opportunities for displaced workers with transferable skills to transition into areas of employment growth or self-employment.**

#### **Strategies**

1. Establish immediate-, medium- and long-term workforce demand for largest employing and growing industries to inform an upskilling and reskilling approach for the region.
2. Coordinate the range of training options (full qualification, short course, skill sets) directly linked to current workforce demand in the region to provide recently displaced job seekers with a single, streamlined pathway to upskilling and reskilling information.
3. Develop sector /employer specific workforce planning and recruitment solutions enabling simpler access to the available pool of quality candidates and cultivating collaboration across the employment services, employers, and training / skills sectors.
4. Support local tourism solutions leveraging North Coast tourists' destinations to help rebuild and reopen businesses impacted by the pandemic, creating more employment opportunities for recently displaced workers.
5. Foster and support individual start-ups in niche and personalised travel experiences through entrepreneurship mentoring and up-skilling opportunities.

#### **Stakeholders**

- Health Care sector representatives
- Employer representatives
- Local SME businesses
- Destination North Coast
- Education providers and Registered Training Organisations
- RDA Northern Rivers
- Local Councils
- Employment Services Providers
- Hospitality sector representatives

## **Priority 2 – Aged Care**

**Develop sector specific solutions to effectively meet the recruitment needs of the health care industry, maximising the benefits of existing Australian and NSW Government programs and tailoring these services to the sector needs.**

### **Strategies**

1. Identify sectors and industries with high recruitment needs to inform the scope and the requirements of sector specific solutions.
2. Codesign and deliver industry specific, employer focused, solutions, with relevant industries to enable easy linkages between local job seekers and employers. The solutions may include:
  - a. online, industry EOI register (not role specific), which enables employer self-service to access staff on demand.
  - b. online connectivity centre solution can be used for large recruitment intakes which allows pre-screening of candidates, including the general public for specific roles, and apprenticeships and traineeships within a variety of sectors.
  - c. sector or employer specific online information sessions for job seeker caseloads in the region.
  - d. employer or sector specific virtual jobs fairs.

### **Stakeholders**

- RDA Northern Rivers
- Employers with high recruitment needs
- Apprenticeships and traineeship providers
- Employment services providers
- Local government
- Destination North Coast
- Relevant industry representatives

## **Priority 3 – Indigenous and Youth**

**Cultivate and support First Nation led projects in order to reduce the labour market disadvantage of Indigenous Australians, particularly creative arts and cultural experience; as well as create pathways for youth into growth industries.**

### **Strategies**

1. Develop a consolidated picture of locally available youth services, programs and initiatives to effectively inform the streamlined design of potential education, training and employment pathways that will address local needs.
2. Through the services of the Entrepreneurship Facilitators and the NEIS program assist with cultivating self-employment opportunities in emerging local growth industries including wellbeing, fitness, digital solutions and creative arts.
3. Negotiate flexible models to acquire job-oriented skills and qualifications – which facilitate a shift from training and work as separate activities, to a more integrated simultaneous progression.
4. Identify opportunities and create skills development pathways aligned with growth economies to support youth entrepreneurship.
5. Develop and implement targeted skills and work experience approaches for groups that are under-represented in North Coast regional economic participation, including Aboriginal people.

### **Stakeholders**

- Local Councils
- Youth Services and Youth Organisations
- Education providers and Registered Training Organisations
- Employment Services Providers
- Potential sponsor organisations

### **Priority 4 – Hospitality and Tourism**

**Encourage industry specific solutions with a collaborative approach to all stakeholders and to provide employers with an opportunity to develop, support, nurture and grow a skilled local workforce to meet vacancy demands.**

### **Strategies**

1. Co-design with employer groups and industry on specific pre-employment and pre-vocational training.
2. Encourage industry EOI register engagement which enables jobseeker interaction with employers.
3. Consideration for Hospitality and Tourism Jobs Fair.
4. Review the current profile of the workforce that is traditionally a 22yr old female and open the reskilling opportunities for the 50+ jobseeker pending support and engagement from employer networks.

### **Stakeholders**

- NSW North Coast Taskforce
- Destination North Coast
- RDA Northern Rivers
- Skills Broker – Training Services NSW
- Employers
- Employment Service Providers
- Business NSW Northern Rivers

### **Priority 5 – North Coast Flood Recovery**

**Develop opportunities and specific solutions for displaced workers of flood impacted industries across the region, with reskilling and upskilling pathways identified to encourage the transition of workers into areas of employment growth and self-employment.**

### **Context:**

On 28 February 2022 the NSW North Coast was devastated by the worst floods on record. The most impacted towns across the region are Murwillumbah, Lismore, Ballina, Coraki, Woodburn, and Broadwater. Lismore alone, has up to 18,000 workers displaced from the 3100+ businesses effected

in this event. It is also estimated that more than 2000 residential homes have been destroyed with the need to source housing solutions in a region already experiencing a housing and accommodation crisis. Major damage to local council road networks has been identified with a collective repair bill estimated at \$700 million across the seven LGA's. There is a critical need to reinstate public infrastructure including the essential services of electricity, sewerage, and water with minimal disruption. Commercial businesses and major local employers suffered significant and structural damage to machinery, buildings including loss of stock and future revenue.

### **Strategies**

1. Establish immediate-, medium- and long-term workforce demand for largest employing and growing industries to inform an upskilling and reskilling approach for the region.
2. Coordinate the range of training options (full qualification, short course, skill sets) directly linked to current workforce demand in the region to provide recently displaced flood impacted workers with a single, streamlined pathway to upskilling and reskilling information.
3. Prepare for sector /employer recruitment solutions enabling simpler access to the available pool of displaced workers and cultivating collaboration across the employment services, employers, and training / skills sectors.
4. Foster and support individual start-ups in through entrepreneurship mentoring and upskilling opportunities.
5. Develop an understanding of employers impacted by the floods and the skills, qualifications and experience of any workers that will be displaced, whether in the immediate-, medium- and long-term.
6. Participate in committees and networks established by the National Recovery Resilience Agency and other stakeholders supporting the North Coast flood recovery to ensure a coordinated approach for local employers and the community.
7. Understand and leverage the range of funding, local initiatives and local recovery projects to maximise opportunities for displaced workers and local job seekers.

### **Stakeholders**

- Health Care sector representatives
- Employer representatives
- Local SME businesses
- Destination North Coast
- Education providers and Registered Training Organisations
- RDA Northern Rivers
- Business NSW
- Local Councils
- Employment Services Providers
- Hospitality sector representatives
- Entrepreneurship Facilitators
- Community Colleges (RTO)
- National Recovery Resilience Agency
- Australian Government Business Recovery Network

# Attachment B – Labour Market Data Dashboard (April 2022)



**North Coast  
Employment Region  
New South Wales**

## Labour Market Data Dashboard

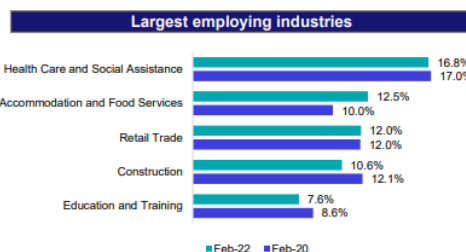
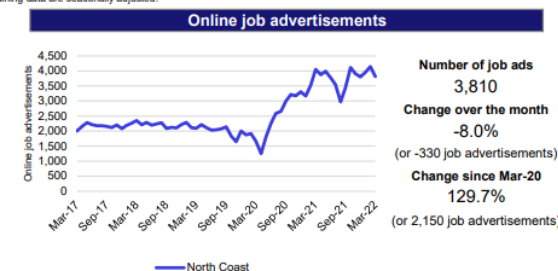
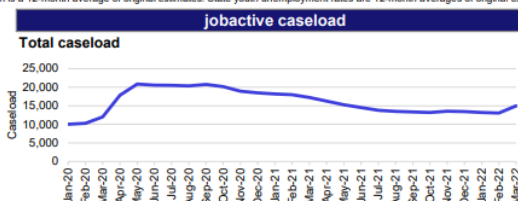
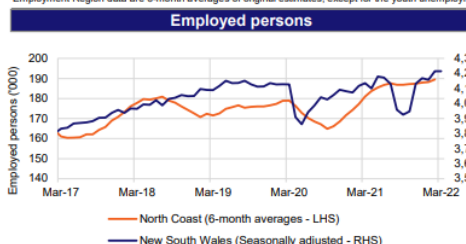
Data current as at 21 April 2022

Refer to source notes for data reference periods

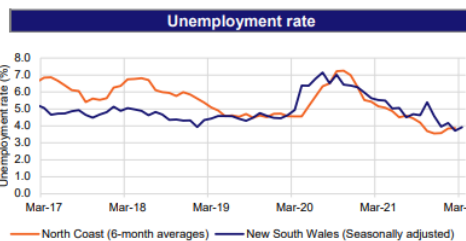
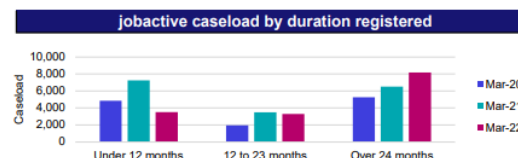
This Labour Market Data Dashboard provides key indicators for the labour market by Employment Region and is updated monthly.

	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 (%)
North Coast	189.5*	179.0	5.9*	7.6*	8.6	-10.9*	3.9*	4.6	60.0*	57.4	6.4*	10.7
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. \*Feb 22 data has been used, as flooding affected Labour Force Survey data collection in this Region and Mar-22 data are not available. 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.

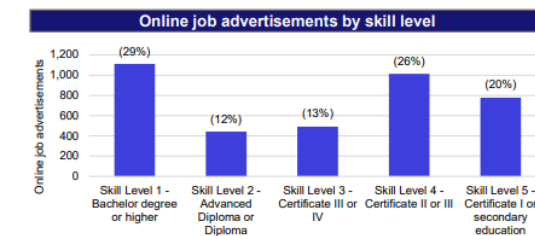


	North Coast	New South Wales
Caseload - Feb 2020	10,274	169,325
Caseload - Mar 2022	14,981	251,206
Change from Feb 2020 to Mar 2022	4,707	81,881
	46%	48%



Local Government Area (LGA)	Dec-21	Dec-20
Kyogle	5.9	6.2
Richmond Valley	5.5	6.0
Lismore	5.1	5.5
Byron	4.7	6.2
Tweed	4.0	4.8

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



Note: Data are not readily available for all sources by Employment Region. ABS Labour Force Survey data are based on the combined SA4s of Richmond - Tweed; and Coffs Harbour - Grafton. While this is the best fit available, it is only a fair proxy for the Employment Region so caution should be used interpreting results. The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) uses a unique geographical approach. For this region, the IVI NSW North Coast 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](mailto:EmploymentPathwaysAnalysis@skillscommission.gov.au).