

Local Jobs Plan

North Coast Employment Region | NSW | January 2023

Workforce Australia Local Jobs (Local Jobs) is a program that supports tailored approaches to accelerate reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways in response to current and emerging local workforce needs.

Local Jobs elements

Local Jobs Plan

The Local Jobs Plan sets out the skills and employment challenges and priorities of the region, and associated strategies that will drive the design and implementation of activities to be implemented to address these challenges.

Employment Facilitators

Employment Facilitators and Support Officers support the delivery of the program by bringing together key stakeholders including businesses, employment services providers, higher education and training organisations.

Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce

Each Employment Region has its own Taskforce. Representatives include local stakeholders who have demonstrated experience in upskilling, reskilling, and an ability to represent, connect and collaborate with others in the region to meet labour market needs.

Local Recovery and National Priority Funds

The Local Recovery Fund supports projects that meet the priorities identified in the Local Jobs Plan. The National Priority Fund provides funding for innovative local solutions to address structural barriers to employment.



Explore labour market insights for the [North Coast](#) Employment Region

Local labour market challenges in the region

- The available labour market pool is tight with a low unemployment rate.
- Mature aged individuals and Indigenous Australians experience additional challenges to employment and make up a considerable proportion of participants in Workforce Australia.
- More than half of the individuals on income support have not completed a post-school qualification.
- There are limited local employment opportunities in the more remote areas of the region, with transport challenges and barriers in accessing jobs in neighbouring towns. There is limited availability of public transport together with a limited frequency and timing of these services.
- There are intergenerational employment challenges and high levels of disengagement for some young people in the North Coast. Some businesses have concerns regarding youth employability skills and preparedness for work.
- Difficulties in securing adequately skilled workers in growth and demand sectors with accessible entry level work. For example in aged care, disability, tourism, hospitality, seasonal agricultural work and meat processing.
- Affordable accommodation continues to be a challenge with extremely low vacancy rates. Property rentals and sales prices are at record highs. The floods of 2022 destroyed an estimated 7,600 buildings with over 10,000 being severely damaged in the North Coast.
- Major flooding events in 2022 are still impacting the region with some skilled and non-skilled community members relocating away from their homes, leaving a shortage of available workers.
- The North Coast has an ageing workforce with a median age of employees across all industries at 44 years of age versus NSW at 40. Key industries like health care and social assistance have a median worker age of 48¹. These industries will have an increased outflow of retirees within the next few years and enticing a new generation workforce is proving difficult.
- Following the COVID-19 pandemic there has not been a significant return of international workers to the region, with many local agricultural, tourism and hospitality businesses unable to replace them with local people.

Local jobs and skills priorities and strategies in the region

Priority 1 – Aged care

What are our challenges and opportunities?

The aged care and social services industries in the North Coast are experiencing considerable recruitment difficulties. The age profile of their workforce and increasing demand for services means these difficulties are unlikely to ease without special interventions.

How are we responding?

- Identifying sectors and businesses with high recruitment needs to inform the scope and the requirements of sector-specific solutions.
- Co-designing industry-specific and business-focused solutions with relevant stakeholders, to enable easy linkages between local individuals and businesses.
- Establishing a working group, including businesses and Workforce Australia Employment Services Providers, to discuss current issues, needs of the businesses and Workforce Australia participants and how we can improve the image of the industry to attract more youth into the sector.

¹ National Skills Commission, Industry profile (NSW and North Coast), released November 2022.

Priority 2 – Indigenous Australians and youth

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Indigenous Australians experience particularly high labour market disadvantage. Support needs to be culturally appropriate and enticing, including using creative arts and cultural experiences. More generally, youth within the region have limited labour market experience and often underdeveloped soft skills.

How are we responding?

- Development of a consolidated picture of locally available youth services, programs, and initiatives to effectively streamline the design of potential education, training and employment pathways that will address local needs, especially in growth industries.
- Engagement with Workforce Australia Entrepreneurship Facilitators and the Self Employment Assistance Program to leverage self-employment opportunities in emerging local growth industries including wellbeing, fitness, digital solutions and creative arts.
- The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce is identifying opportunities to create skills development pathways aligned with growth sectors to support youth entrepreneurship.
- Flexible models are being developed on job-oriented skills and qualifications, with a shift from training and work as separate activities to a more integrated simultaneous progression.
- Targeted learning and employment pathways are being developed for groups that are under-represented in North Coast regional economic participation, including First Nations people.

Priority 3 – Hospitality and tourism

What are our challenges and opportunities?

In the past the hospitality and tourism sectors have been highly reliant on workers from outside the region. COVID-19 restrictions followed by post-flood accommodation issues have placed large strain on the industry, including some trimming of services due to lack of staff.

How are we responding?

- Collaborative development of industry-specific solutions including co-design with business groups and industry of targeted pre-employment and pre-vocational training.
- The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce is determining the usefulness and feasibility of facilitating a hospitality and tourism jobs fair.
- Reviewing the workforce profile and devise reskilling opportunities for mature aged individuals through engagement with business networks.

Priority 4 – North Coast flood recovery

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Recovery from the 2022 flood events will involve a substantial level of infrastructure and dwelling construction, with reskilling and upskilling pathways needed to help maximise the extent to which these opportunities are accessed by locals. Trauma from the floods is still impacting many local individuals.

How are we responding?

- Working with local stakeholders to develop immediate, medium- and long-term workforce solutions for the largest employing and growing industries.
- Ensuring that the range of available training options (full qualifications and skill sets) is directly linked to provision of opportunities to flood affected and other local people. This is in collaboration with the Local Skills Broker and other stakeholders
- Cultivating collaboration across employment services providers, businesses, and training and skills organisations to prepare sector and business recruitment solutions. This will enable simpler access to the available pool of individuals looking for work.
- Involvement with committees and networks established by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) and other stakeholders to assist coordinated employment and community flood recovery solutions.
- Leveraging a range of funding and local initiatives to maximise opportunities for individuals looking for work. This includes identifying potential Local Recovery Fund projects.

Want to know more?

- Contact: Peter Skorupanovic, North Coast Employment Facilitator: facilitator@northcoastljp.work
- Visit: [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)