

Local Jobs Plan

Townsville (includes Mt Isa) Employment Region | Qld | Sept 2024

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 [Townsville \(includes Mt Isa\) Employment Region](#)

Local labour market challenges in the region

- Industries already facing workforce shortages will face further competition for workers given a significant pipeline of future construction and defence projects.
- Given demand for skilled workers, opportunities for entry-level individuals to participate may become limited, exacerbating shortages longer term.
- First Nations peoples make up a significant portion of the Townsville Employment Region and are highly represented in Workforce Australia caseloads. Lower levels of foundation skills and qualifications often limit engagement with education and training at the required level for available jobs, hindering workforce participation and career growth. Addressing these challenges is vital for improving employment outcomes and support for First Nations peoples workforce development.
- Limited childcare access, with long waitlists in smaller communities creates significant challenges for parents and carers trying to enter or re-enter the workforce.
- Lack of public transport is affecting outlying areas of the region with taxis the only option in Mount Isa, Charters Towers, Ingham and Burdekin. Reliance on private vehicles creates a challenge for individuals without a driver's license or regular vehicle access.
- Support for learner drivers, including those over the age of 25, is limited. Long waitlists and a shortage of mentor drivers make it difficult for individuals to obtain the 100 hours required to gain a licence.
- Training access is limited, particularly in smaller communities with few Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) offering training courses with high costs for face-to-face sessions. Minimum participant requirements further restrict training opportunities.
- Youth unemployment and disengagement from education, work, or training is high. The youth unemployment rate is 8.5% and youth make up 22.65% of the Workforce Australia caseload in the Townsville region. Continued high disengagement could hinder economic growth and lead to long-term unemployment.
- Limited literacy, language and poor digital skills hinder job searches. Criminal records, low education and minimal experience reduce competitiveness, while health issues, mental health challenges, domestic violence, unstable housing and unreliable transport further impact employment prospects.

Local jobs and skills priorities and strategies in the region

Priority 1 – Maximise the benefits of existing Australian Government, Queensland Government, local government and community driven employment and skills initiatives and funding to address current labour shortages and skills gaps

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Securing funding and programs to meet local labour market needs is challenging given limited appropriate options. There is also limited organisational capacity and access to some areas within the region to enable program delivery which can be challenging. Partnering with industry to tailor training programs and enhance collaboration between government and industry can address skills gaps and labour shortages more effectively.

How are we responding?

- The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce (Taskforce) will provide input and advice to assist in identifying the range of training options and programs that are linked to current workforce demand to provide individuals with streamlined pathways to upskilling and reskilling information.
- We will encourage and link individuals to recognise career paths and other development opportunities through open discussions, online webinars and industry showcase events, utilising the Taskforce and other key stakeholders.
- We are coordinating and communicating local funded programs and initiatives through weekly jobs, events and initiatives broadcasts and support referrals to activities.

Priority 2 – Creating pathways into major and growth industries within the employment region

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Limited lead time for projects and scarce training options in growth sectors like hydrogen and renewables create challenges. Rural and remote areas face constraints due to low numbers of RTOs. Opportunities include developing targeted training programs, expanding access through innovative methods and partnering with industry to increase affordable training options.

How are we responding?

- We are working with businesses and industry groups to identify areas of growth and demand and allow the Taskforce to identify project opportunities and drive solutions to support entry level individuals to participate on major projects.
- We are supporting closer linkages between Workforce Australia Employment Services Providers (providers) and industry to ensure providers understand business workforce needs and can better prepare individuals for future employment. We are supporting this through targeted events, Workforce Australia network meetings and other collaborative opportunities.
- We are working with industry and local businesses to identify appropriate project opportunities that address current skills gaps and future workforce needs.
- We will work with skilled, semi-skilled and retrenched workers to provide upskilling and re-skilling pathways into new and emerging industries.

Priority 3 – Generating opportunities for First Nations peoples skills development

What are our challenges and opportunities?

High unemployment among First Nations people creates both challenges and opportunities. Unique challenges in transitioning from education to employment can affect aspirations, confidence and mental health. Collaborating with traditional owner groups, Elders and First Nations peoples organisations is crucial for culturally relevant programs. Enhancing connections between businesses and First Nations peoples communities through cultural competency training promotes inclusive work environments, improves job readiness and supports economic participation and progress for First Nations people.

How are we responding?

- We will use the expertise of the Taskforce and connections with traditional owner groups, local Elders and First Nations peoples organisations, to develop and implement targeted appropriate skills and work experience approaches for First Nations people leading to secure and culturally appropriate employment outcomes.
- The Taskforce will promote cultural competency training to local businesses and support them in accessing this training.
- We will connect First Nations youth with employment and education pathways to support their long-term success.
- The Taskforce will assist First Nations businesses access resources and support for their growth and development.
- We will develop a comprehensive database of local First Nations owned and operated businesses, support organisations and other key stakeholders.

Priority 4 – Identifying pathways for young people to develop skills and be supported to access labour market opportunities, particularly through apprenticeships and traineeships

What are our challenges and opportunities?

High youth unemployment can hinder economic growth, leading to increased crime and prolonged unemployment. Limited youth and entry-level opportunities, especially those needing supervision, poses a risk. Collaborating with local businesses on apprenticeships, developing targeted pre-employment courses and engaging community support services can help address these challenges.

How are we responding?

- We are leveraging government programs, forming industry partnerships and using educational institutions and technology platforms to enhance pathways and connection to skills development and employment opportunities.
- We are identifying and working with appropriate organisations to design projects to engage young people into trade pathways leading to apprenticeships, particularly within high demand and growth industries.
- We are developing a comprehensive database of locally available youth services, programs and enterprises that help simplify the design of potential education, training and employment pathways aimed to address local needs.
- The Taskforce will negotiate and promote flexible employment models to local business and industry representatives.

Priority 5 – Brokering employment and skills development and upskilling opportunities for individuals through collaboration with local community support services, businesses, training organisations and other key stakeholders

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Individuals face challenges entering or re-entering the workforce, including outdated skills, declining physical abilities, low confidence, inflexible options and practical issues like housing crisis and rising costs. Mental health issues, substance dependency, licensing obstacles and domestic violence further complicate their prospects. Collaborating with businesses, training organisations and community services can offer tailored training, flexible work arrangements and local support connections.

How are we responding?

- The Taskforce will work with organisations to assist in developing flexible employment and training opportunities to accommodate individual needs at a local level and provide connection to enhance current funded and potential activities where appropriate.
- We will identify and promote activities that are place-based and locally led, tailored to each specific location within the region.
- Local Jobs partner with Taskforce members and appropriate organisations to deliver local employment and skilling events including, but not limited to, jobs expos, industry showcases and industry tours.
- We are collaborating with specialist services including those supporting First Nations people, veterans, youth, ex-offenders and culturally and linguistically diverse persons, to identify and support skilling and reskilling needs of their clients.

Want to know more?

- Contact: Steph Nicolaou, Townsville (including Mt Isa) Employment Facilitator: stephnicolaou@localjobsfnq.com.au
- Visit: [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)