

Local Jobs Plan

Employment Region Darling Downs | QLD | December 2025

Workforce Australia Local Jobs (Local Jobs) is a program that creates partnerships between business and communities to meet local workforce needs, thereby improving employment outcomes.

Local Jobs operates in all 51 Employment Regions in Australia.

Local Jobs Overview

Local Jobs Plan

Each Employment Region has a Local Jobs Plan which outlines the labour market challenges in the region and the strategies to address these challenges.

Job Coordinators

Each Employment Region has a dedicated Job Coordinator who leverages existing resources, supports local labour markets through structural adjustments and retrenchments, and creates opportunities for collaboration between business and communities.

Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce

Each Employment Region has its own taskforce that meets regularly with the Job Coordinator to develop an understanding of challenges in the region and implement solutions. The taskforce is comprised of representatives from the region.

Local Jobs, Local People Grant

The Local Jobs, Local People grant funds activities that help people into ongoing employment or training. Activities must support local labour market needs.



Explore labour market insights for [Darling Downs](#) Employment Region

Local labour market challenges

- The Darling Downs region is geographically one of Australia's largest Employment Regions, encompassing a variety of regional and rural communities each facing different labour market challenges. Urban Toowoomba in particular, contrasts sharply with rural areas in this regard.
- The region is experiencing high levels of unmet demand for suitably skilled workers in key sectors including health care and social assistance, transport and warehousing, agriculture, manufacturing and hospitality. In addition, there is a high demand for construction workforce that is underpinning major infrastructure including renewable energy projects and hospital upgrades.
- There are significant issues with disengagement, below average workforce participation, and labour market challenges for several cohorts in the region including First Nations people, mature aged, and young people.
- As a major refugee and humanitarian settlement area, the Toowoomba region has a significant Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) population who require specialised, tailored assistance to facilitate a smooth transition into Australian society and the local workforce.
- In the region's rural towns, workforce participation is hampered by below-average school completion rates and limited training options to support language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills, with inadequate access to childcare further restricting participation.

Local priorities

Priority 1 – Shortage of suitably skilled workforce in key industry sectors

What are our challenges?

There are high levels of unmet demand for both entry-level and skilled workers across key regional industry sectors, including health care and social assistance, transport and warehousing, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and hospitality.

How are we responding?

- We are delivering targeted pre-employment pathways and industry-aligned skillset programs that respond directly to identified skill shortages and provide clear employment outcomes, particularly for vulnerable and over-represented cohorts on employment services caseloads.
- We are supporting employers to strengthen recruitment and retention strategies, improve awareness of available workforce pools and connect with relevant programs, services and funding across all levels of government.
- We are strengthening collaboration between employment services providers and local industry, training and community stakeholders – including through our monthly Local Jobs network meetings – to ensure Workforce Australia Participants can access a broad range of opportunities.
- We are working with stakeholders to increase the engagement and retention of trainees and apprentices, with a particular focus on trades experiencing current and projected skills shortages.
- We are engaging with existing and emerging renewable energy industries to better understand their workforce requirements and support their connection with employment services providers and other regional stakeholders.

Priority 2 – First Nations people

What are our challenges?

First Nations people are significantly over-represented on the region's Workforce Australia caseload, with a range of social and labour-market challenges affecting participation in employment, training and community life. Among these is limited access to essential identification and government services. Opportunities exist to enhance inclusion within the local labour market and support more equitable access to skilling and employment pathways.

How are we responding?

- We are working collaboratively with community, Indigenous organisations and local industry to identify suitable, sustainable employment opportunities for First Nations participants, and to build awareness of programs and services that support First Nations job seekers.
- We have created an Indigenous Workforce Action Group in collaboration with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Queensland Government Department of Trade, Employment and Training to collaborate, design and support delivery of projects that improve employment outcomes for First Nations people.
- We are working with industry and relevant stakeholders to develop and implement strategies and programs that build businesses' cultural competence and support the recruitment and retention of First Nations people by creating culturally safe workplaces.
- We are delivering ID Connect events in partnership with government agencies, improving access to essential identification and connections to government services in rural and regional communities.

Priority 3 – Mature age Australians

What are our challenges?

Mature age workers (45 years and over) make up a significant proportion of Workforce Australia participants in the Darling Downs Employment Region, and they are more likely to remain unemployed longer. In addition, supporting mature age Australians who are not currently participating in the labour force to re-enter work will help strengthen the region's below-average workforce participation.

How are we responding?

- We are working with stakeholders to facilitate pathways for mature age Australians to participate in skilling, re-skilling and upskilling opportunities that support labour mobility and provide clearer options to re-enter the workforce.
- We are engaging with business and industry to identify roles that may be suitable for retired, semi-retired, underemployed, volunteer and mature age Australians not currently participating in the workforce, and to encourage flexible recruitment approaches such as job carving.

Priority 4 – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) people

What are our challenges?

CaLD communities face additional challenges to securing employment, including lower levels of language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills. The Toowoomba region is a major humanitarian settlement area, where the predominant cohort of new arrivals are Yazidi refugees who may require additional assistance due to limited or interrupted education, experiences of trauma and the need to adapt to Australian workplace expectations. The region also receives significant numbers of skilled migrants whose qualifications and experience are not being fully utilised to meet local workforce needs.

How are we responding?

- We have established the Diverse Workforce Roundtable, bringing together settlement and multicultural services, employment and training providers, community leaders, and all levels of government to identify gaps, share best practice and strengthen employment and skilling pathways for migrant and refugee communities.
- We are supporting businesses to strengthen their capability to recruit and retain CaLD workers by promoting the benefits of a diverse workforce, strengthening cultural understanding, and building awareness of programs and supports that can assist with inclusive employment practices.
- We are working with stakeholders to develop dedicated employment supports that better connect skilled migrants and their dependants to suitable jobs, ensuring their skills and experience are more effectively utilised in the regional workforce.

Priority 5 – People with a disability

What are our challenges?

People with disabilities make a valuable contribution to the workforce. However, many continue to face significant challenges in securing employment, including discriminatory recruitment practices, inflexible working arrangements and limited access to transport. A substantial proportion of local Workforce Australia participants identify as having a disability, and many require additional support to secure sustainable employment. Supporting greater inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market will deliver economic and social benefits through a more diverse workforce and higher levels of participation.

How are we responding?

- We have established a Disability Employment Taskforce to investigate and develop place-based initiatives that address labour market challenges facing people with disabilities.
- We are facilitating collaboration between businesses, training providers and other stakeholders, including Workforce Australia and Inclusive Employment Australia providers, as well as relevant government programs and supports, to improve training and employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
- We are engaging with local businesses to identify and expand suitable employment opportunities, promote inclusive workplace practices and encourage flexible work arrangements and appropriate workplace adjustments.

Want to know more?

- Contact: David New, Darling Downs Employment Region Job Coordinator: david.new@ddlocaljobs.com.au
- Visit [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)