

# Local Jobs Plan

## Central West Employment Region | NSW | January 2026

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.



### Local labour market challenges

- Shortage of qualified skilled and unskilled workers to fill current job vacancies in industries with high workforce demand such as aged and disability care, tourism and hospitality, construction, retail, engineering, and seasonal agriculture. This has been exacerbated by historically low unemployment levels across the region.
- Smaller communities face significant challenges in attracting skilled workers for roles in infrastructure, mining, and community services. There is a lack of skilled professionals in critical areas such as health, engineering and trades, further compounded by a skills mismatch and gap, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, which makes it harder to fill roles in emerging industries like renewable energy. Addressing these barriers is essential to support regional development and meet the workforce demands of major capital projects across areas in the Central West.
- Limited accommodation due to low housing stock and a competitive market, especially for workers relocating for employment.
- Addressing the challenges involved in supporting workers from emissions-intensive industries to transition into new employment opportunities created by the move to a net zero economy, particularly in the Lithgow and Mid-Western Local Government Areas.
- First Nations people often experience significant labour market challenges and are disproportionately represented among long-term participants in Workforce Australia Employment Services.
- Other cohorts, including people with a disability, mature age people and youth are also experiencing labour market challenges, such as limited job opportunities, accessibility barriers, age discrimination, lack of training pathways, high unemployment rates, and transport constraints in regional areas.
- A small regional Workforce Australia Employment Services caseload in Central West shows an overrepresentation of participants requiring foundation skills including literacy, numeracy, digital and employability skills who are also experiencing many non-vocational barriers to work. A large portion of the caseload is also made up of long-term unemployed participants. Long-term unemployment often intensifies existing barriers and creates new ones, making it harder for people to re-enter and stay in the workforce.
- Limited transport and connectivity within and between Local Government Areas restricts access to employment opportunities, making car ownership and a driver's licence essential. There is a large proportion of people in the Central West who do not have a driver's licence.
- Lack of awareness of, and access to programs and services that provide skills development, training and employment support options to people and employers in the region.

### Local priorities

#### Priority 1 – Address skilled labour shortages in key industries

##### What are our challenges?

The Central West region is experiencing a shortage of skilled labour across key industries including agriculture, hospitality and retail, manufacturing, health care and social assistance, construction, and emerging sectors such as renewable energy. These shortages are impacting business productivity, regional growth, and the ability to meet future workforce demands. With the development of the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ) there is significant opportunity to utilise transferable skills from coal mining, trades, and manufacturing to support roles in renewable energy projects.

##### How are we responding?

- Working with industry leaders to identify critical skill gaps and future workforce needs, including those specific to the CWOREZ.
- Supporting targeted training and upskilling initiatives through partnerships with registered training organisations (RTOs), employers, employment service providers, local TAFEs, and other education providers with emphasis on renewable energy competencies where relevant.

- Promoting apprenticeships and traineeships in industries with projected high growth and those with immediate demand for skilled workers.
- Facilitating pathways for school leavers, job seekers, and career changers into priority industries through career expos, mentoring, and job readiness programs highlighting opportunities in renewable energy.
- Engaging with employers to co-design training that aligns with real-world job requirements and industry standards including renewable energy technologies and project delivery.
- Support the inclusion of digital literacy and foundation skills training in specific vocational training and as stand-alone programs.
- Promoting regional employment opportunities to skilled workers from outside the area, including relocation support where appropriate.

## Priority 2 – Transport and housing

### What are our challenges?

Significant transport limitations and housing instability continue to restrict people's ability to engage in employment and training opportunities, creating ongoing challenges for labour market participation.

### How are we responding?

- Facilitating and supporting utilisation of available funding and resources to support people to gain drivers licences where required to take up employment and training opportunities.
- Connect NSW Government Workforce Development Order sponsors and Revenue NSW to potentially reduce time without a driver's licence for participants.
- Encouraging and facilitating usage of funding opportunities to support transport and housing initiatives.
- Working with employers and stakeholders to incorporate transport support options when designing targeted employment programs.
- Identifying and sharing best practice solutions, including the use of technology, which seek to positively impact transport and housing issues.
- Working with existing housing networks to share intelligence and promote opportunities that meet the needs of homeless people, individuals relocating for work and temporary workers who need short-term or flexible housing solutions.

## Priority 3 – First Nations people in employment services

### What are our challenges?

First Nations people in the region continue to face barriers to building skills and securing available local jobs, creating ongoing challenges for equitable participation in the labour market.

### How are we responding?

- Collaborating with First Nations communities to support sustainable employment strategies, including connection to mob and country.
- Collaborating with RTOs, community organisations and Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program providers to develop and deliver culturally safe foundation skills training, including digital skills training, across the region.
- Facilitating and supporting promotional campaigns targeting local businesses to highlight the benefits of workforce diversity and the range of available resources to support the recruitment and retention of First Nations people.
- Collaborating with RTOs, Employment Services providers, First Nations stakeholders and government to develop targeted, culturally safe pre-employment training and work placements to support sustainable employment and promote apprenticeships and traineeships as a key employment strategy to grow a skilled workforce.

## Priority 4 – Support other priority cohorts

### What are our challenges?

People who are young, mature-age, living with disability, long-term unemployed, or returning to the workforce continue to face significant barriers to developing essential skills and transitioning into available employment opportunities.

### How are we responding?

- Facilitating engagement and connection between stakeholders, including Workforce Australia Employment Service Providers, industry representatives, training providers, business owners and Training Services NSW to support labour shortages across the region.
- Identifying industries and roles experiencing skills shortages/recruitment difficulties and the core entry level skills required for those roles.
- Collaborating with RTOs, community organisations and SEE Program providers to develop and deliver foundation skills training, including digital skills training, across the region.
- Collaborating with RTOs, Workforce Australia Employment Service Providers and government partnerships to develop targeted pre-employment training and work placements to support sustainable employment.
- Promoting apprenticeships and traineeships as a key employment strategy to grow a skilled workforce.
- Collaborating with Workforce Australia Employment Service Providers to develop work ready skills for the long-term unemployed.

## Priority 5 – Strengthen support for individuals facing prolonged or intergenerational unemployment

### What are our challenges?

The region is experiencing persistent and, in some cases, intergenerational unemployment, with many Workforce Australia participants requiring personalised, long-term support to build job-readiness skills. Short, intensive training programs on their own are not effective in the region unless they are paired with ongoing engagement, mentoring and peer support, highlighting the need for more sustained and holistic assistance for this cohort of job seekers.

### How are we responding?

- Working closely with local Workforce Australia Employment Service Providers networks to identify and deliver both short-term and long-term initiatives that enhance job readiness and provide clear employment pathways.
- Collaborating with programs that reflect the needs of mature age participants, including part-time delivery options, digital literacy support, foundation skills, and tailored employment pathways.
- For individuals affected by intergenerational unemployment, we are encouraging Workforce Australia Employment Service Providers to engage with participants' families to foster broader support and involvement.
- Increasing access to wraparound services such as mentoring, mental health support, and career coaching to ensure participants receive holistic assistance.
- Leveraging community partnerships to create locally relevant training and employment opportunities that align with regional labour market needs.

## Want to know more?

- Contact: Anthony Dawson, Central West Job Coordinator: [jobcoordinator@localjobscw.com.au](mailto:jobcoordinator@localjobscw.com.au)
- Visit [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)