SEPTEMBER 2025

RCAT
ROMA COMMERCE AND TOURISM



Maranoa Region Environmental Scan

DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of Country

Roma Commerce and Tourism Inc (RCAT) respectfully acknowledges the First Nations peoples in the Maranoa Region and state of Queensland and acknowledges the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the land and sea. We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique and diverse peoples with their own rich and distinct cultures, resilience and strengths. We specifically acknowledge the unique history and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We are dedicated to the inclusion of cultural knowledge and values as critical factors in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions to support First Nations people.

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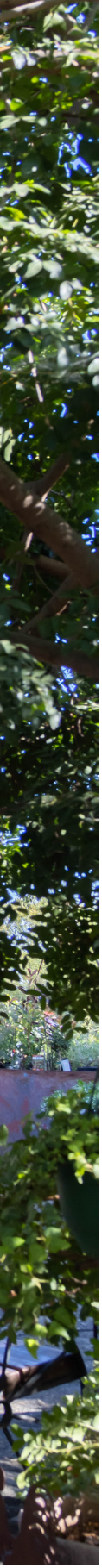
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01

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Grow Your Own Regional Workforce program

The Queensland Government collaborates with industry, business, community and government stakeholders to build a strong, skilled workforce that supports the state's economic prosperity. Given the distinct industry profiles and workforce challenges across Queensland's regions, applying a regional perspective to workforce planning and capability development is essential to address local needs and opportunities.

Jobs Queensland (JQ) is working alongside regional and industry partners to support locally driven workforce planning through its Grow Your Own Regional Workforce Program (GYO). GYO is facilitating the development and implementation of codesigned, place-based workforce strategies. These projects are focussing on locally driven solutions, led by regional stakeholders.

Research suggests that connection to family and community is important to Queensland workers. Having a strong connection to their region often motivates individuals to remain living and working locally. When workers, especially those with families, are established with local services, such as having children enrolled in local schools and partners with employment, they can be hesitant to relocate to a different region.[1] This creates a solid basis for the GYO Regional Workforce Program model, which motivates regions to enhance their local population's skills and abilities to meet the present and future demands of local industries.

1.2 Why the Maranoa region

Roma Commerce and Tourism has partnered with the Queensland Government, through Jobs Queensland (JQ), to lead the development of a workforce plan to support 'Grow Your Own' workforce and cross-sector skills development through locally led solutions. This workforce plan for the Maranoa region aims to take a collaborative, regional approach to addressing workforce needs by aligning job opportunities with industry growth while also considering shared challenges such as population decline and shifting industry demands.

The Maranoa region Environmental Scan aims to provide data and supporting information to inform the development of the Maranoa Region Workforce Development Plan.

The Environmental Scan provides a snapshot of the Maranoa region, including:

* demographics and labour market information
* region and industry profile
* education and training profile
* region and industry analysis
* future workforce requirements.

This data provides valuable insights into current supply and demand challenges, supporting more informed future planning. Additionally, this report offers an overview of the expected growth in key industries that will drive future job demand and local skills needs.

1.3 Project scope

This project aims to:

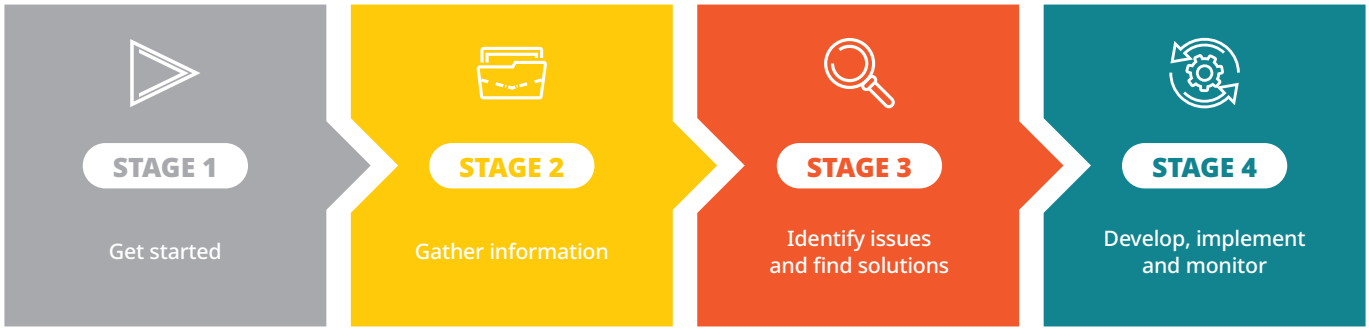
* build an understanding of the current business landscape and workforce capabilities in the Maranoa region to identify existing skills gaps
* explore opportunities, challenges and anticipated cross-sector skilling needs specific to the Maranoa region and identify strategies for retaining and upskilling the existing workforce across key industries in the region
* recommend approaches to attract, develop and equip new workers to meet the workforce needs of priority industries in the Maranoa region.

This Maranoa region environmental scan provides an historical and in-time point of reference to support industry consultation and guide the development of a region-focused, industry-endorsed workforce development plan.

1 Jobs Queensland. (2023). *Supporting individuals in the transition to future work framework.* Ipswich: Queensland Government. https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/supporting-individual-transition.pdf

1.4 Governance and methodology

Effective workforce planning has four stages:



STAGE 1

GET STARTED

The Industry Advisory Group (IAG) was established to support the delivery of workforce planning activities across the Maranoa Local Government Area. Formed in February 2025, the IAG comprises of representatives from:

* employment services and training
* education
* resources
* construction and manufacturing
* health
* aged care
* hospitality
* commerce and tourism
* local government.

The group provides strategic guidance to RCAT and Jobs Queensland, ensuring the project remains aligned with local industry needs and expectations across all four stages of the workforce planning process.

The IAG endorsed Maranoa Local Government Area as the focus region and identified six priority industries:

* mining
* manufacturing
* construction
* retail trade
* accommodation and food services
* health care and social assistance.

This endorsement has enabled a comprehensive analysis of the current workforce profile and future skills needs, supporting the development of an industry-led and industry-endorsed workforce plan.

STAGE 2

GATHER INFORMATION

The findings presented in this report are based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, drawing from established and credible data sources. Comprehensive desktop research was conducted for the Maranoa Local Government Area, with a focus on the six priority industries and specified workforce groups identified within the project scope.

Key sources of quantitative data include:

* Jobs Queensland Anticipating Future Skills (AFS)
* Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO)
* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
* National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) four-year training trend
* Vocational Education and Training Industry Advisory Organisation (VETIAO) reports
* Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET) apprenticeship and traineeship
* National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) modelling.

While much of the analysis draws on the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data (2021), more current statistics have been incorporated where available. This report should be considered alongside other economic research, publications and consultation activities to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the regional workforce landscape.

1.5 Region snapshot

The Maranoa region, located in south-west Queensland approximately 500 kilometres west of Brisbane, covers an expansive area of 58,719.3 square kilometres and is home to approximately 13,371 people.

Between 2016 and 2024, the region experienced modest annual population growth of 0.4 per cent. However future projections indicate a population decline of 0.6 per cent, alongside an increase in the median age from 37.8 years to 41 years by 2046.[2]

The Maranoa is home to 2620 registered businesses and provides 7321 jobs locally, with 6463 residents employed at an employment rate of 97.6 per cent.[3] There are more local jobs per resident, signalling a surplus of employment opportunities. Worker productivity is particularly strong, averaging $270,785 per worker, which is $129,000 above the Queensland average, underlining the region's significant economic contribution.[6]

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the economy, contributing 19 per cent of total employment. However, it also has the highest proportion of non-employing businesses, indicating a strong presence of sole operators and small-scale enterprises.[5] While agriculture will continue to play a key role, this environmental scan and workforce development plan also aims to support the development and diversification of other industries to strengthen regional economic resilience and employment opportunities.

The largest employing sectors are:

* resources and trade services (34.2 per cent)
* health and community services (25.5 per cent)
* retail (10.5 per cent).

Workforce sourcing patterns differ significantly across industries. Manufacturing, retail trade and health care rely heavily on the local labour market, with over 90 per cent of their workforce drawn from local residents. In contrast, the mining industry sources only 29.2 per cent of its workforce locally, indicating a greater dependence on workers from outside the region.[6]

An ageing workforce and a declining proportion of younger workers signal emerging challenges for workforce sustainability. This demographic shift is likely to increase demand for:

* school-based training pathways
* upskilling and reskilling initiatives
* targeted qualifications to fill projected workforce gaps.

These actions will be critical in ensuring that local industry remains supported by a skilled and sustainable workforce into the future.



Figure 1. Queensland Local Government Areas (LGA), 2021 - Maranoa (R) (ASGS Code 34860)

2 Queensland Government Statistician's Office. (2024). Regions. *Population projections.* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/regions

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release#data-downloads; Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

4 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). *Maranoa Regional Council, Productivity per worker (annual) by industry, 2022/23.* Compiled by economy.id. Findings based on use of NIEIR data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/worker-productivity-by-industry

5 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

6 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). *Maranoa Regional Council, Industry sector analysis, 2023/24.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of ABS data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/industry-sector-analysis

1.6 The industry ecosystem

Roma Commerce and Tourism Inc, in partnership with Jobs Queensland, is working to understand current labour market challenges, the extent of skills shortages and opportunities to address future workforce needs in the Maranoa Region.

This report focuses on the Maranoa Region Local Government Area (LGA) and examines key industries with a focus on the relevant ANZSIC groups listed below.

Table 1 Industries in focus

Name	ANZSIC Group	
Resources & Trade Services		
Mining	070	Oil and Gas Extraction
	101	Exploration
	109	Other Mining Support Services
Manufacturing	111	Meat and Meat Product Manufacturing
	141	Log Sawmilling and Timber Dressing
	211	Basic Ferrous Metal Manufacturing
	229	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
	246	Specialised Machinery and Equipment
	249	Other Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing
Construction	301	Residential Building Construction
	302	Non-Residential Building Construction
	310	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction
	321	Land Development and Site Preparation Services
	322	Building Structure Services
	323	Building Installation Services
	324	Building Completion Services
	329	Other Construction Services
Retail		
Retail Trade	411	Supermarket and Grocery Stores
	421	Furniture, Floor Coverings, Houseware, Textile Goods
	422	Electrical and Electronic Goods Retailing
	423	Hardware, Building and Garden Supplies Retailing
Accomoodation and Food Services	440	Accommodation
	451	Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services
	452	Pubs, Taverns and Bars
Health and Community Services		
Health Care and Social Assistance	840	Hospitals
	851	Medical Services
	853	Allied Health Services
	859	Other Health Care Services
	860	Residential Care Services
	871	Child Care Services
	879	Other Social Assistance Services


BUNDABERG
RUM
SPORTS BAR &
POKIES LOUNGE
OPEN 10AM
TO MIDNIGHT
7 DAYS
LADIES
NIGHT
FREE
POOL



02

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS AND FINDINGS



2.1 Maranoa region analysis

2.1.1. Demographic analysis

The Maranoa LGA resident population has a modest average annual growth rate of 0.8 per cent, with a current population of 13,371 people. However, future projections indicate a population decline of 0.6 per cent (approximately 1714 people) by 2046, alongside an increase in the median age from 37.8 to 41 years. The region's age structure is expected to continue shifting, with a declining proportion of younger residents (aged 0 to 24 years) and a growing proportion of people aged 65 and over. Notably, a demographic shift is also occurring in the gender balance, with the number of females increasing while the number of males is decreasing.

The region has a high portion of residents identifying as Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islander peoples (9.7 per cent), increasing by 2.6 per cent between 2016 and 2021. While the portion of residents born overseas (7 per cent) is also increasing.[7]

2.1.2. Workforce and labour market landscape

The Maranoa LGA has 7321 people working in the region and 6463 employed residents, showing more local jobs available than resident workers.[8] Of the people working in the region, 18.5 per cent live outside the LGA representing the fly-in-fly-out workforce. Meanwhile, 4.6 per cent of resident workers travel outside the region for work.[9]

The region boasts low unemployment rates while job vacancies are high with strong demand for highly qualified workers across industries such as health care, education and engineering. The largest employing industries in the region are mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing, and health care and social assistance, with these three industries accounting for 39.2 percent of the total workforce.[10]

The region's workforce is undergoing demographic shifts, with fewer workers aged 25 to 49, more workers aged over 55, and a declining number of males. Additionally, a high proportion of male workers (42.9 per cent) are working more than 50 hours per week.[11]

2.1.3. Business ecosystem and challenges

The majority of businesses in the region are small enterprises, having a turnover of less than $200,000 (52.5 per cent) and non-employing (71.9 per cent). Only 32 businesses have 20 to 199 employees, and 27 businesses have a turnover of $10 million or more.[12]

Key challenges for businesses include high vacancies in skilled positions, low unemployment of resident workers, and a large portion of businesses operated by owners who are working high number of hours per week.

7 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Regional population by age and sex.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population-age-and-sex/latest-release

8 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile and Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

9 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Maranoa Regional Council, Residents place of work by industry.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of ABS data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/residents-place-of-work-industry

10 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

11 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Time Series Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

12 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Exits and Entries.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release#data-downloads

2.2 Educational attainment

2.2.1. Vocational education and training (VET) trends

The majority of residents have a non-school qualification (57 per cent), with the most common field of study being engineering and related technologies (15.1 per cent), followed by management and commerce (13.7 per cent), and health (9.8 per cent).[13]

Vocational Education and Training enrolments are generally increasing, peaking at 1621 enrolments in 2023, with 36 per cent of students aged between 15-19 years and 10.3 per cent identify as First nations. Apprentice and trainee enrolments remain steady in the region, with 370 apprentices and trainees in training, 185 new commencements and 95 successful completions, and 95 cancellations or withdrawals. The number of school-based apprenticeships and traineeship commencements peaked at 59 in 2021, increasing from 35 in 2020.[14]

The industries with the highest apprenticeship and traineeship completions include administrative and support services, other services, and construction.[15] While the top employing industries for commencements are manufacturing, construction and health care and social assistance.

2.2.2. Training and employment pathways

The Maranoa region has a diverse education and training network that facilitates a range of training and employment pathways and support services available to residents. The region has a TAFE campus, private and public schools, a range of community, enterprise and private training providers, locally based registered training organisations and group training organisations, and a Country University Centre. Collaboration across providers, industries and employers provides opportunities to target training and align pathways with employment needs in the region.

There are a number of barriers to accessing vocational education and training in the region, including the need to travel to major centres for training blocks (for both employers and employees), and the cost of bringing trainers into the region when student numbers are low. As a result of these barriers, the region experiences a high number of apprentice and trainee cancellations and turnover, further increasing costs for businesses.

2.3 Regional development and sustainability

The Maranoa LGA Gross Regional Product was $2.41 billion in 2024, with the region's three dominant industries being mining, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and gas, water and waste services, with construction and manufacturing also contributing significantly to the local economy.[16]

The resources and trade services sector are set to remain strong underpinned by major projects underway and planned for the region, including continued gas field developments, renewable energy and transmission line projects, and construction projects enhancing community infrastructure, transportation and recreational facilities.

Confidence in the retail sector remains steady, with the presence of international brand stores and recent new builds in fuel and major retail stores. The goods-related sector accounts for 30.4 per cent of employment, making the retail, hospitality, and food services sector a significant employer across the region.

Roma is a major regional hub for health services, underpinned by the new hospital. The South West Hospital and Health Service provides hospital, community and allied health services, and home and community care support to the Roma community, nearby towns and the wider South West.

The health care and social assistance industry is projected to increase in jobs over the next few years, particularly in occupations including residential care services, medical and other health care services, and social assistance services. This projection corresponds with the increasing demand for services in aged care, mental health, allied health and specialists, which is the case for most regional areas.

Maranoa Regional Council is renewing its Economic Development Strategy and will consider the major projects and industry developments driving economic growth and workforce demand in the region. The Strategy aims to put in place coordinated and targeted strategies that can provide combined economic and lifestyle benefits for the region.

13 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

14 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocation Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats

15 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocation Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats

16 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). *Maranoa Regional Council, Gross product.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of NIEIR data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/gross-product



2.4 Maranoa region focus industry analysis

2.4.1. Workforce composition

The six focus industries represent around 30 per cent of the workforce in the region. The largest employing industry is health care and social assistance, reflecting the industry's critical role in supporting community wellbeing. Construction and mining also contributed significantly to local employment, highlighting the regions strong ties to infrastructure development and resource extraction.

The majority of focus industries have the highest number of workers in the age bracket 25 to 34 years. A high portion of the health care and social assistance industry workforce is over the age of 45 (48 per cent), while the youngest workforce was represented by accommodation and food workers aged 15 to 19 years (28 per cent).[17]

The top occupations include professionals and community and personal service workers in the health care and social assistance industry, and sales workers in retail trade. Technicians and technical trade workers form the majority of the workforce for the construction, mining, and manufacturing industries. Machinery operators and drivers and labourers are also significant occupations for these industries.

The industries with the highest portion of their workforces working more than 50 hours per week are mining (51.2 per cent), construction (24 per cent) and manufacturing (24 per cent). This represents a combination of shift work in the resources sector as well as high number of non-employing small businesses in construction. Mining and construction are also the highest earning industries for workers, compared with 90 per cent of manufacturing workers and 92 per cent of accommodation and food services workers earning less than $1750 per week.

2.4.2. Education and skills development

The highest qualified workforce is the health care industry, with 58 workers with postgraduate degrees and 205 people with bachelor degrees level. The construction industry has 81 per cent of its workforce with certificate level qualifications as the highest level of non-school qualification, followed by manufacturing at 75 per cent.[18]

2.4.3. Labour market dynamics and challenges

The region's ageing population and growing demand for health and care services presents significant opportunities for skills development and career growth in areas such as aged care, disability services and allied health.

Employment contractions in construction and manufacturing may impact entry-level and trade-based workers, however these shifts also present an opportunity to support transitions through targeted reskilling and upskilling initiatives in growth industries and occupations.

Technicians and technical trade workers and machinery operators and drivers account for a large portion of the workforce for mining, manufacturing and construction, these are also the occupations with the highest rate of non-resident workers. Furthermore, a higher portion of these workforces are characterised as being aged 25 to 34 years, male, and working more than 50 hours per week. The declining trends in the number of residents forming this workforce present specific and shared challenges for these industries.

17 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

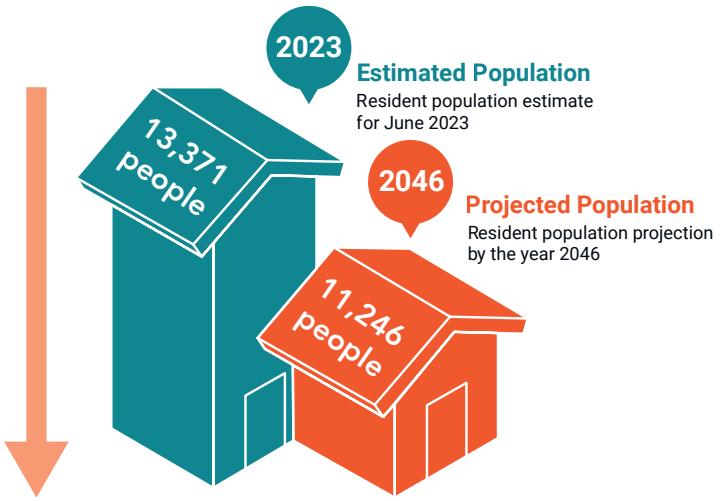
18 Ibid



03

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MARANOA REGION





3.1 Population profile

The Maranoa LGA Estimated Resident Population was 13,371, as of 30 June 2024. Between 2016 to 2021, with an average annual growth rate of 0.8 per cent over five years from 12,835 persons in 2019.[19]

Despite current population growth, projections indicate a decrease by 2046, with the population expected to fall from 12,960 in 2021 to 11,246 in 2046, a decline of 1714 persons (average annual growth rate of -0.6 per cent). This contrasts with a projected increase in Queensland's population for the same period from 5,217,653 to 7,299,934 persons, an annual average growth rate of 1.4 per cent.[20]

Table 2 Projected population, Maranoa LGA and Queensland

	Queensland	Maranoa (R)
2021[(a)]	5,217,653	12,960
2026	5,663,247	12,705
2031	6,079,887	12,371
2036	6,492,441	12,027
2041	6,899,969	11,657
2046	7,299,934	11,246
Average annual growth rate	**1.4%**	**-0.6%**

(a) 2021 data are preliminary rebased estimated resident population (ERP).
Source: QGSO, Queensland Government population projections: Regions, 2023 edition

19 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Regional population by age and sex.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population-age-and-sex/latest-release

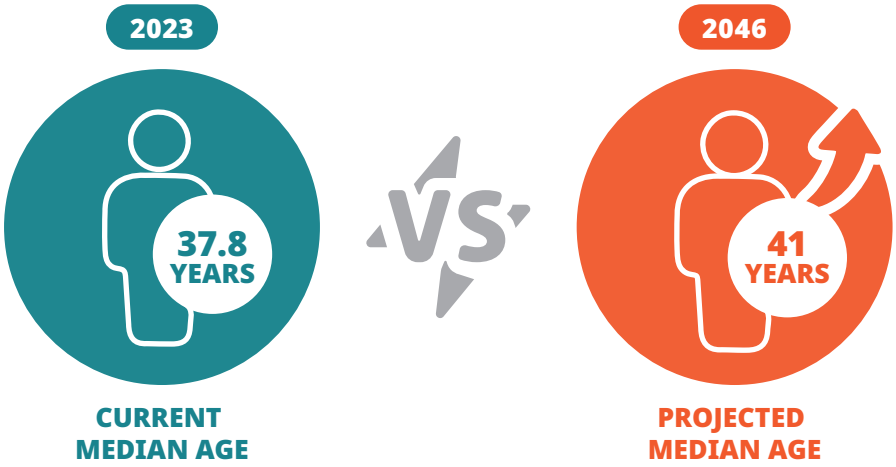
20 Queensland Government Statistician's Office. (2024). Regions. *Population projections.* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/regions

3.1.1. Age profile and median age

The region's median age is 37.8 years at 30 June 2023, an increase of 1.4 years since 30 June 2013. Whereas Queensland's median age is 38.5 years, an increase of 1.8 years over the same period.[21] It is anticipated that by 2046, the median age will be 41 years for Maranoa LGA compared to 41.6 years for Queensland.[22]

The estimated resident population by age in 2023 shows that 25–44-year-olds account for 25.4 per cent (3367 persons) of the total population (13,255 persons). However, the 65 years and over showed the highest annual growth rate from 2001 to 2023 of 2.1 per cent (2164 persons in 2023).[23]

By 2046, the age structure is projected to show a further decline in the younger population (0 to 24 years), while the number of people aged 65 and older will continue rising.[24]



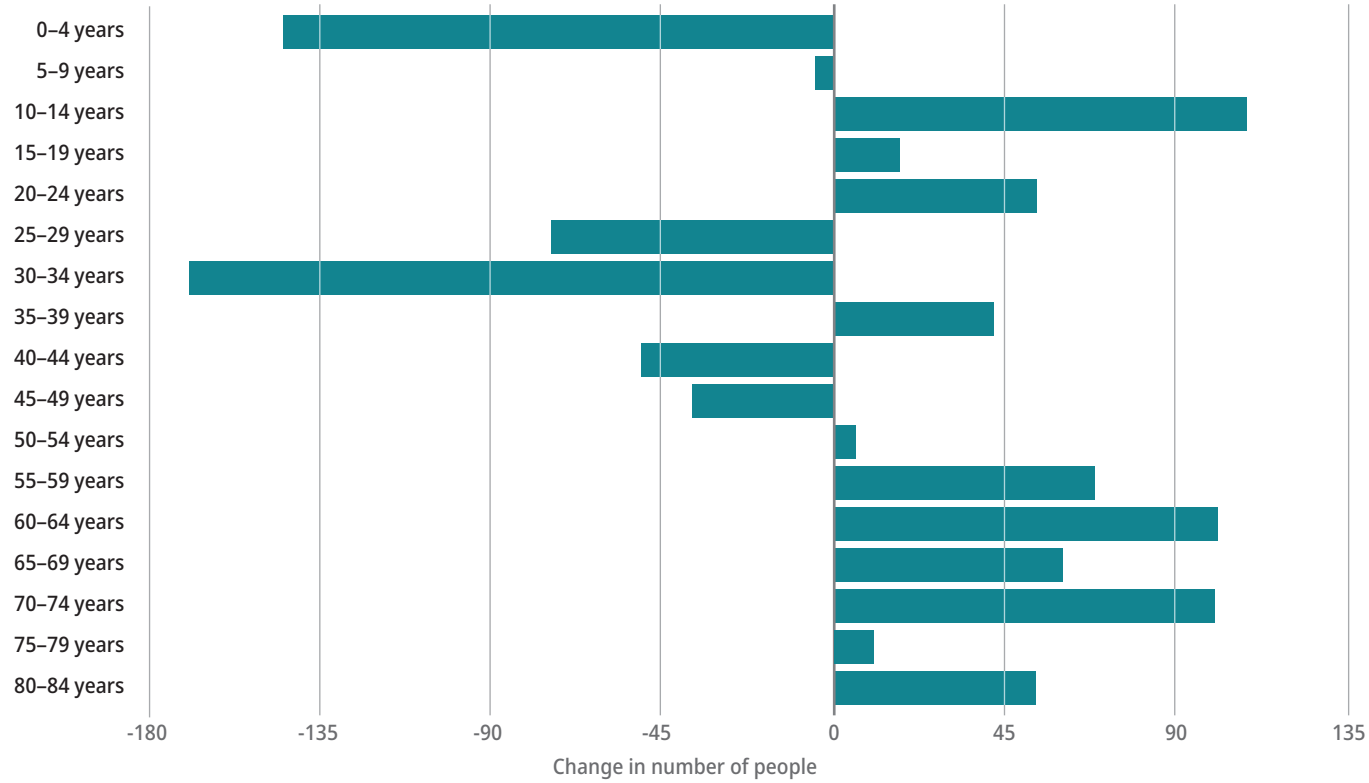
21 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Regional population by age and sex.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population-age-and-sex/latest-release

22 Ibid

23 Queensland Government Statistician's Office. (2024). Regions. *Population projections.* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/population-projections/regions

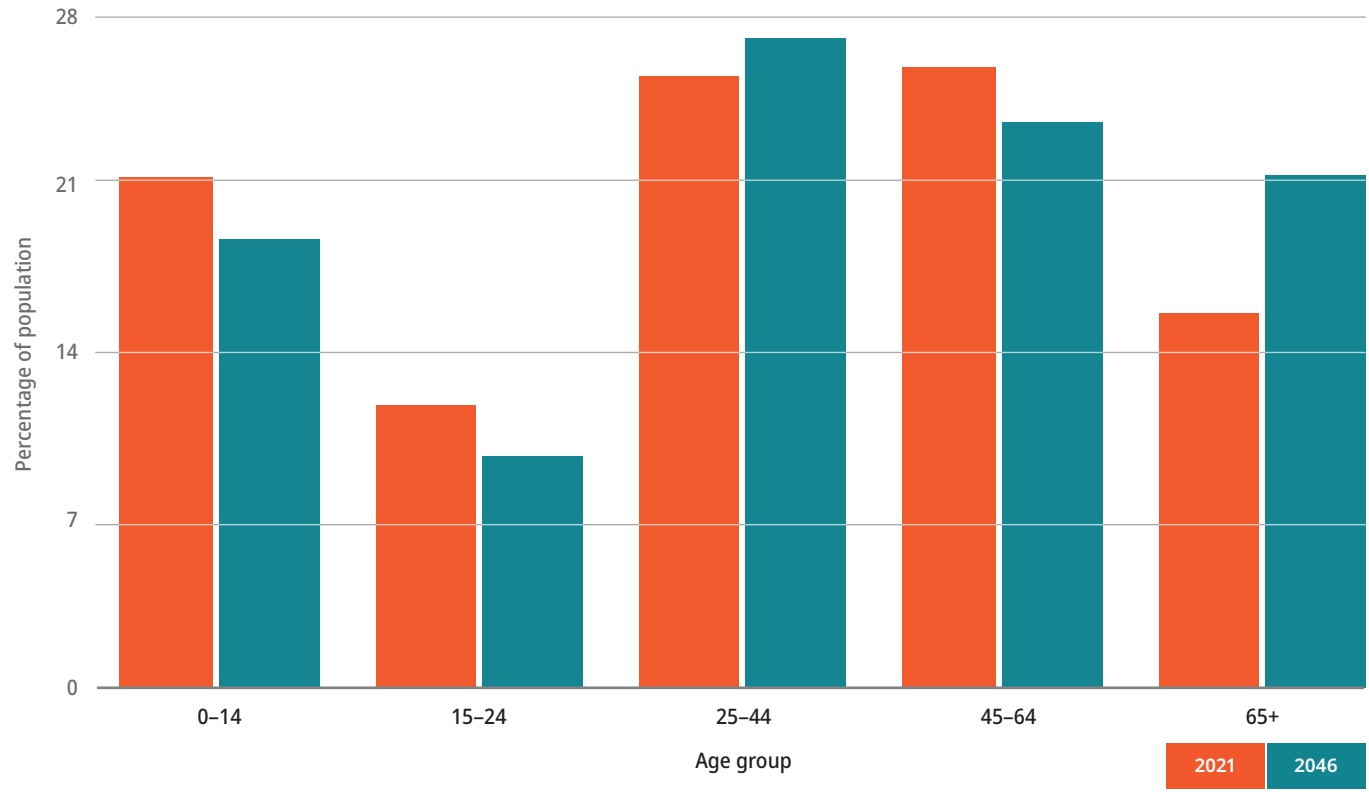
24 Ibid

Figure 2 Change in age group structure 2016 – 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T03a and T03b*

Figure 3 Age Structure projection 2021-2046, Maranoa LGA



Source: QGSO, *Queensland Government population projections: Regions, 2021 to 2046*

3.1.2 Population Diversity

In 2021, with a population of 12,825 persons, females made up 50.1 per cent of the population, while males made up 49.9 per cent. The largest age cohort of females was in the 25-44 years (1684 persons) and for males was the 45-64 years (1670 persons). The 65 years plus group accounted for 16.2 per cent (2072 persons) of the total population, with 50.4 per cent female and 49.5 per cent male.[25]

The region has a higher proportion of residents identifying as Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islander peoples (9.7 per cent) compared to Queensland overall (4.6 per cent). Between 2016 and 2021, the First Nations community increased by 344, a jump from 7.1 per cent to 9.7 per cent of the population. The corresponding changes for Queensland were 4 per cent and 4.6 per cent.[26]

The proportion of residents born overseas is comparatively low at 7 per cent, well below the 22.7 per cent recorded for Queensland. Additionally, 4.2 per cent of the population speaks a language other than English at home, compared to 13.5 per cent across Queensland.[27]

Just 4 per cent (513 persons) of the population reported needing assistance with core activities, which is lower than the 6 per cent (309,366 persons) reported for Queensland.[28]

Between 2016 and 2021, the region experienced a demographic shift, with an increase of 274 females, and a decrease of 117 males.[29]

25 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

28 Ibid

29 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Time Series Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

POPULATION: 12,825 (2021)

97.6%
Employed

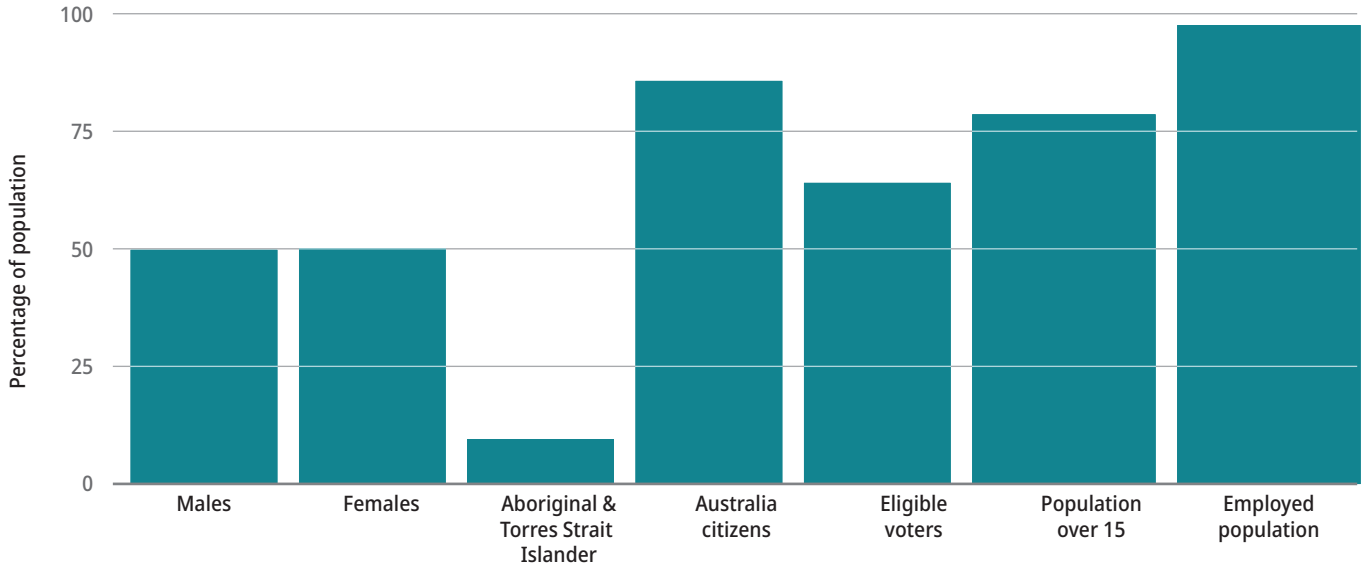
78.8%
Over the age of 15

9.7%
1249 persons
Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples

7%
894 persons
Born Overseas

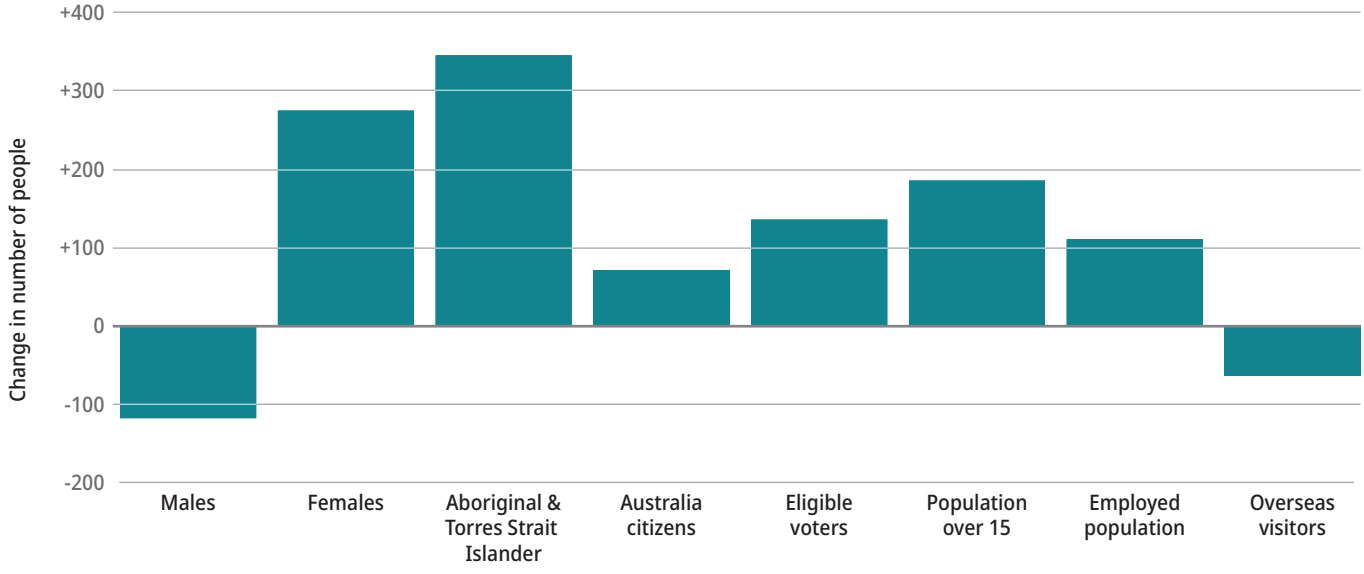
4%
513 persons
Disability Status

Figure 4 Subpopulation categories 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile - G01*

Figure 5 Change in subpopulation categories 2016 – 2021, Maranoa LGA



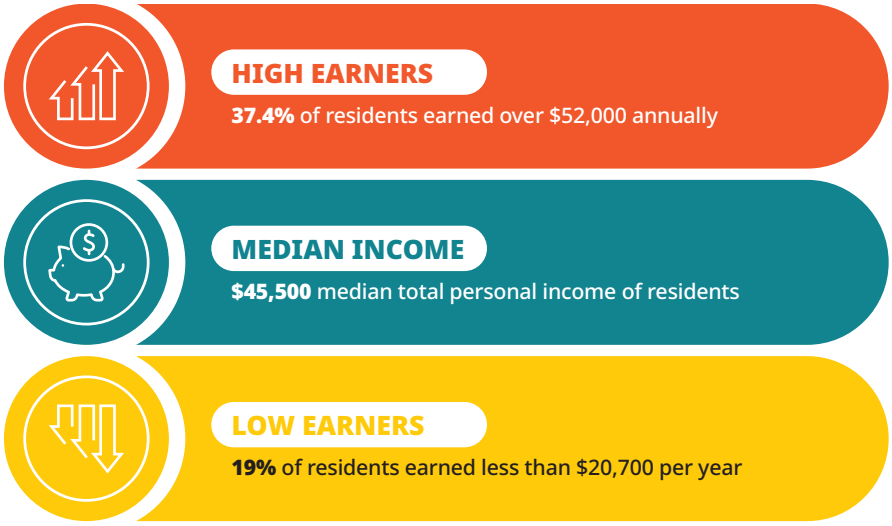
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T01*

3.1.3 Income

The median total personal income for residents was $45,500 in 2021, slightly higher than the Queensland median of $40,924 per year. The median total family income is $106,184 per year, with 232 (7.3 per cent) families earning a low-income of less than $33,800 per year.[30]

	Queensland	Maranoa LGA
Less than $20,800 per year	999,942 23.9%	1919 19%
$20,800 to $51,999 per year	1,316,078 31.4%	3006 29.7%
$52,000 to $103,999 per year	1,085,654 25.9%	2757 27.3%
$104,000 or more per year	461,162 11%	1021 10.1%
Total[(a)]	**4,191,812**	**10,105**
Median $/year	**40,624**	**45,500**

(a) Includes personal income not stated.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G02 and G17*



30 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area



3.2 Workforce and labour market profile

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Census of Population and Housing* provides two distinct datasets when reporting on the Maranoa LGA workforce: the General Community Profile, based on place of usual residence and the Working Population Profile, based on place of work.

The Working Population Profile captures all employed individuals who nominated the Maranoa LGA as their usual place of work, including fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers who are not local residents. In 2021, this dataset reported a workforce total 858 persons higher than that recorded in the General Community Profile, which reflects residents of the Maranoa LGA who are employed.

It is important to note that not all employed residents work within the LGA, some commute outside the region for employment or have no fixed place of work.

Both datasets are used throughout this report; however, they are not always available for every topic referenced. Variations in the number of employed persons between the two datasets are outlined in the accompanying table.

Table 4 Employed persons 2016 and 2021, Maranoa LGA

	2016 Employed persons [(a)]	2021 Employed persons [(a)]
General Community Profile - Place of usual residence	6352	6463
Working Population Profile - Place of work	6540	7321
Difference	**188**	**858**

(a) Count of employed persons aged 15 years and over. Includes employed persons who did not work any hours in the week prior to Census Night.

Source: ABS. *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile - G60 and Working Population Profile - W06*

3.2.1. Employment to population rate

In 2021, the Maranoa region recorded an employment to population rate of 48.3 per cent, indicating that nearly half the working age population (aged 15 years and over) was employed. This is slightly higher than Queensland state average of 46.8 per cent, suggesting relatively stronger labour market engagement in the region.[31]

The employment data for the Maranoa region reveals patterns across age groups, reflecting both life-stage participation and broader regional labour market dynamics.

Youth (15-24 years): The employment rate for young people in the Maranoa region is 7.5 per cent, with 5.9 per cent of those aged 15-19 years and 9.1 per cent aged 20-24 years in employment. This suggests a relatively low level of engagement in the labour market compared to broader regional trends. Factors contributing to low employment may include ongoing education commitments, limited local entry-level opportunities or barriers related to transport or accessibility. This highlights a clear opportunity for local industries, particularly those facing persistent workforce shortages, to attract younger workers through targeted initiatives such as school-to-work pathways, apprenticeships and traineeships.

Primary working age adults (25-44 years): This cohort records a 38.4 per cent employment rate, with employment evenly distributed between the 25-34 years (19.1 per cent) and the 35-44 age group (19.2 per cent). While this group makes up the largest share of the employed population, the overall rate suggests there may still be untapped capacity. Barriers such as lack of childcare, training opportunities or flexible employment may be limiting participation. Addressing these issues could increase engagement and improve long-term workforce sustainability.

Mature adults (45-54 years): People aged 45-54 years represent 20.1 per cent of the employed population. This is a strong showing, indicating a high degree of workforce engagement and experience. This group may hold a range of leadership, technical or skilled roles across key industries such as mining, construction and health care. Retaining this cohort as they transition into older age brackets will be important, especially in areas where skills shortages are emerging.

Older adults (55-64 years): This group makes up 17.8 per cent of the employed population. While participation remains steady, the data suggests a gradual decline as workers approach retirement age. Given the experience and industry knowledge this age group offers, there is significant potential to support continued workforce participation through flexible work arrangements, mentoring opportunities and upskilling programs tailored to their needs.

Seniors (65+ years): Employment among those aged 65 and older stands at 8.5 per cent, with most activity concentrated in the 65-74 years bracket (6.2 per cent). Employment drops significantly for those aged 75-84 years (2.1 per cent) and 85+ (0.2 per cent). Strategies that support older individuals to remain in or return to work, such as through consultancy roles or part-time positions, could unlock valuable workforce contributions and ease pressure on industries experiencing shortages.

31 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

3.2.2. Employment status

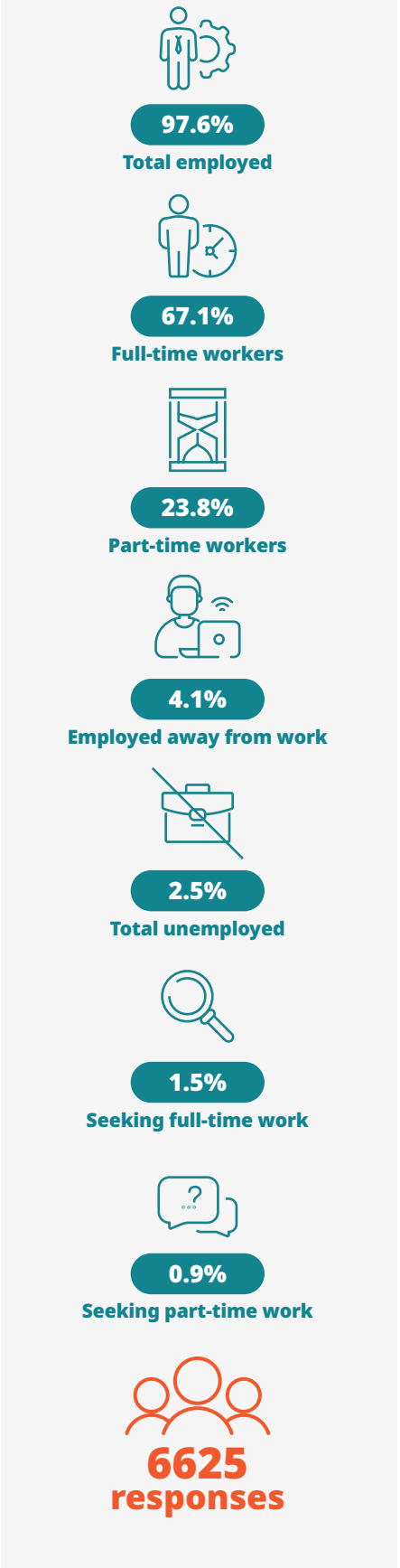
In 2021, the Maranoa LGA labour force comprised 6625 people with an employment rate of 97.6 per cent (6463 persons), which included 4448 working full-time, 1577 employed part-time and 164 unemployed. Of the labour force by age, 94.1 per cent (381) of 15 to 19 years old were employed compared to 98.2 per cent (1153) in the 55-64 years age group.[32]

As of March 2025, the vacancy fill rate for the Darling Downs – Maranoa SA4 was 71.2 per cent, classified as an average rating according to the Labour Market Rating by Jobs and Skills Australia.[33] The region has remained stable with an average rating in March 2024. The working age employment rate was 77.1 per cent while the unemployment rate was 3.2 per cent.

Table 5 Unemployment and labour force 2021, Maranoa LGA and Queensland

Labour force status	Census	
	2016	2021
Maranoa		
Employed	6352 64.1%	6463 64%
Unemployed	250 2.5%	164 1.6%
Labour force	6601 66.6%	6625 65.6%
Not in labour force	2317 23.4%	2304 22.8%
Total[(a)]	9907 100%	10,105 100%
Queensland		
Employed	2,136,450 56.4%	2,444,090 58.3%
Unemployed	175,667 4.6%	138,714 3.3%
Labour force	2,312,119 61%	2,582,802 61.6%
Not in labour force	1,206,041 31.8%	1,340,215 32%
Total[(a)]	3,790,497 100%	4,191,812 100%

(a) Includes labour force data not stated.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile - G46*



32 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

33 Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). *Regional Labour Market Indicator. Labour Market Ratings by SA4, March 2025*. Canberra; Australian Government. https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data/regional-labour-market-indicator#downloads

3.2.3. Unemployment rate

In 2021, the Maranoa LGA area recorded an unemployment rate of 1.6 per cent, significantly lower than the Queensland state average and many other regional areas. This suggests strong labour market engagement across the region's key industries including mining, construction, manufacturing, health care and social assistance, retail trade and accommodation and food services.

Youth unemployment in the region was also notably low, sitting at just 0.5 per cent in 2021. While this indicates that young people who are actively participating in the labour market are generally able to find work, it may also reflect limited participation among this age group due to factors such as education commitments, access to opportunities, or a lack of local entry-level jobs.[34]

While low unemployment rates typically reflect a healthy economy, they can also signal workforce challenges. In tight labour markets, employers often face increased competition for skilled workers, making it more difficult to fill vacancies, particularly in high-demand sectors such as trades, health care and professional services.

Additionally, the unemployment rate does not capture underemployment or those who are not actively seeking work but may be available under the right conditions. To fully understand workforce dynamics in the Maranoa region, unemployment data should be considered alongside other indicators such as participation rates, vacancy trends and skills alignment.

Looking ahead, as demand for workers continues to grow and the regional population ages, targeted strategies to attract, retain and upskill workers, including young people, will be essential to maintaining workforce sustainability.

3.2.4. Age Structure

Between 2016 and 2021, the Maranoa region saw an increase in the number of local workers in the following age groups:

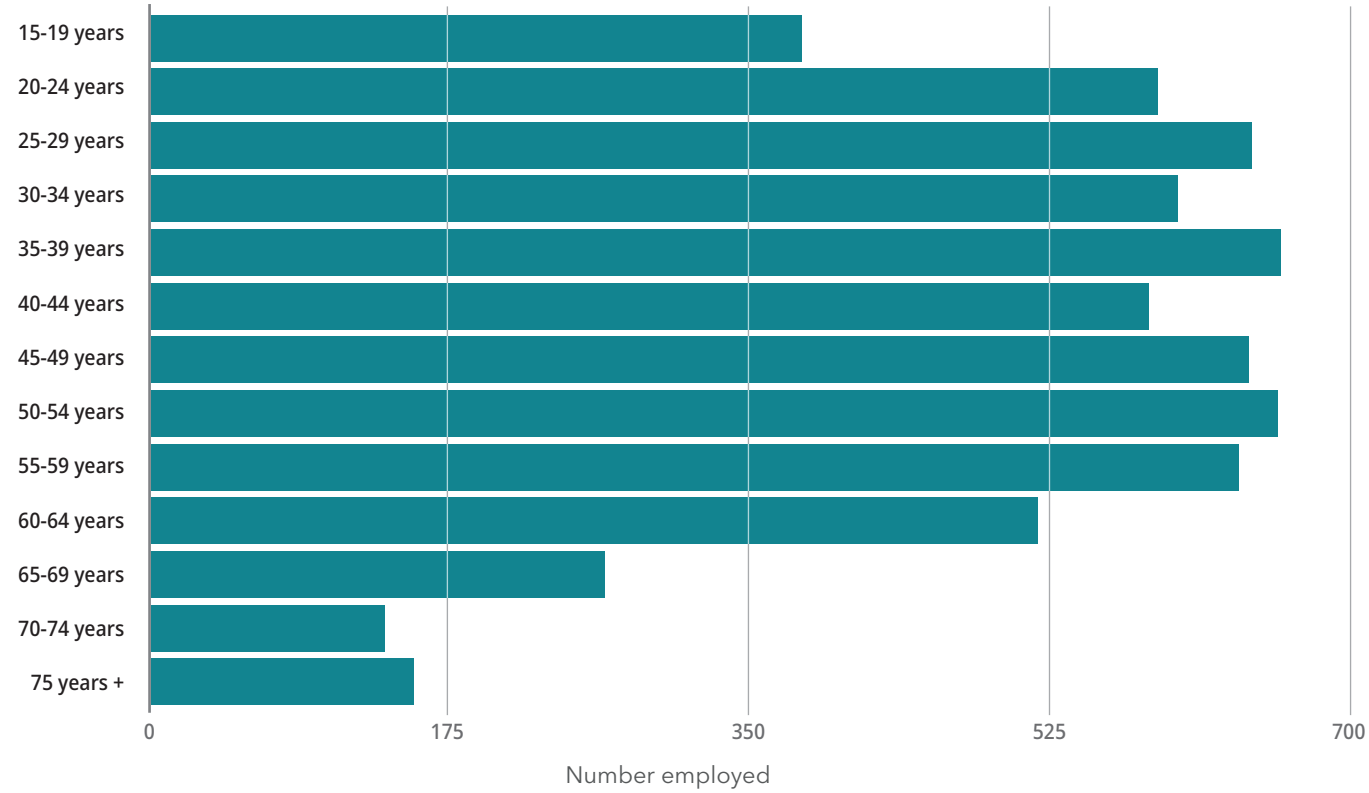
* 15 to 24 years (+60 workers)
* 55 to 64 years (+160 workers)
* 65 years and over (+76 workers).

However, there was a decrease of 182 local workers in the 25 to 34 age group.[35]

34 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

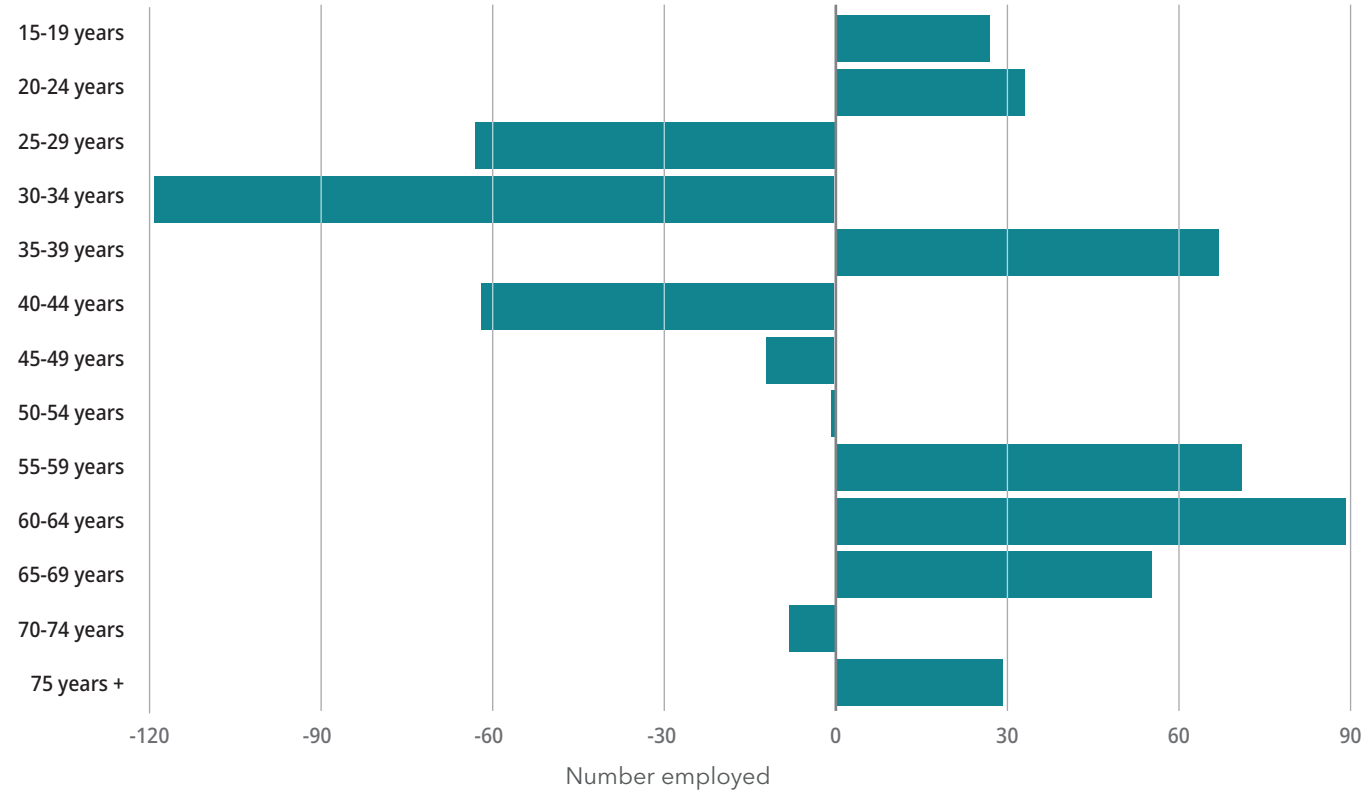
35 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Time Series Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile*. Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

Figure 6 Employed persons by age, 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T33c*

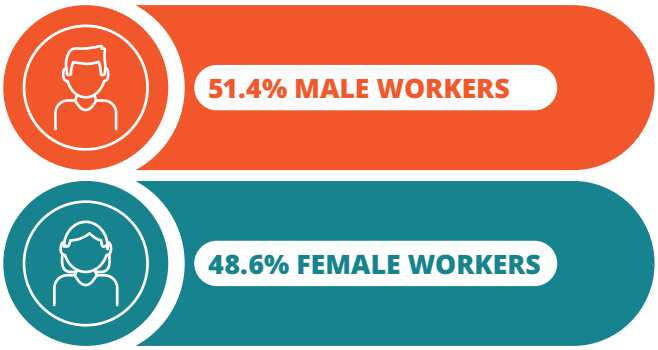
Figure 7 Change in age structure, employed persons, 2016-2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T33c*

3.2.5. Gender

In 2021, the labour force comprised of 3407 males (51.4 per cent), and 3219 females (48.6 per cent). Of the number of males in the labour force, 52.5 per cent were aged under 45 years, and 10.1 per cent were aged over 65 years. Comparatively 54.9 per cent of the female labour force were aged under 45 years, and 6.5 per cent aged over 65 years.[36]



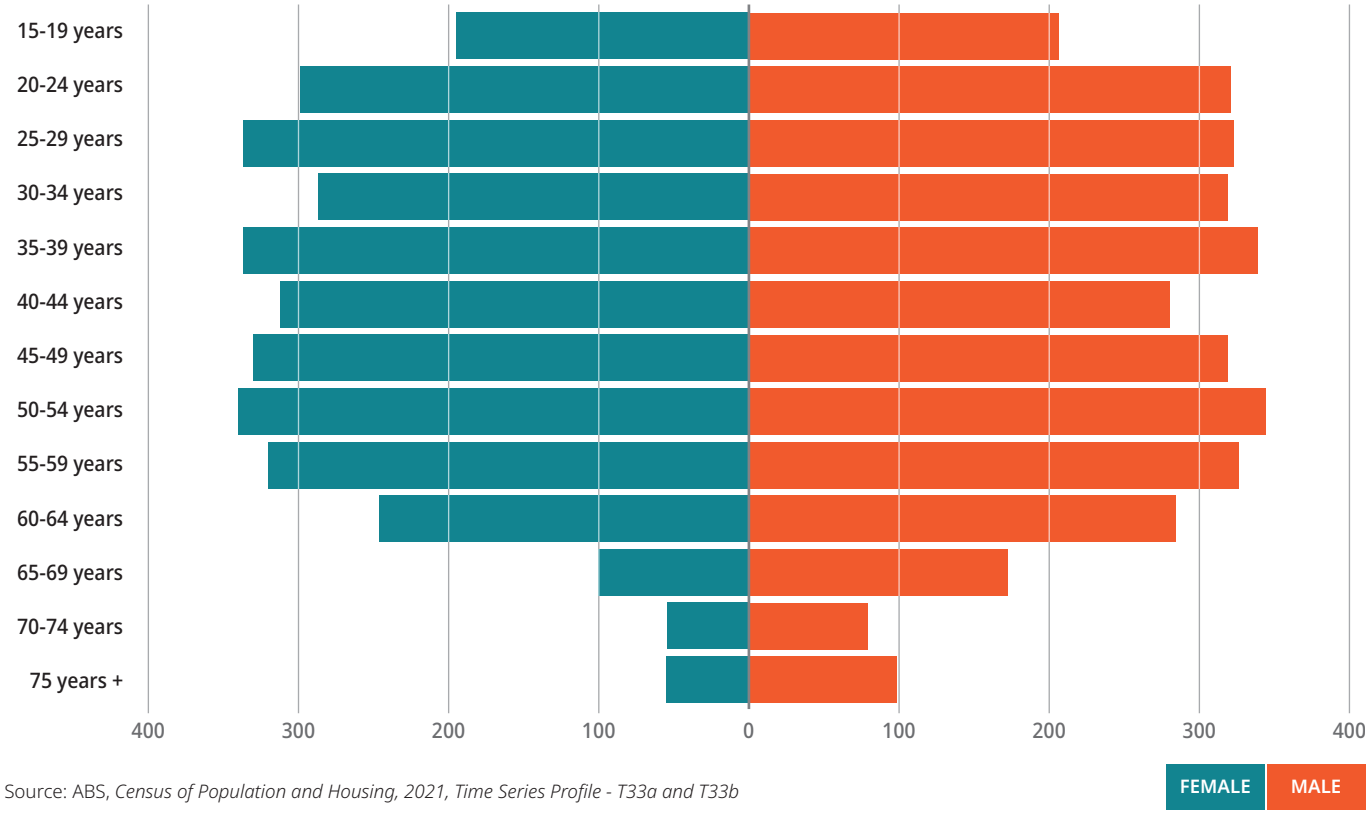
Between 2016 and 2021, the most significant changes in the age structure of the labour force in the Maranoa region were seen in the 25 to 49 years age group, which recorded a decline of 212 males and 25 females. In contrast, the labour force participation of older workers (aged 55 years and over) increased, with 88 additional males and 123 additional females entering or remaining in the workforce.[37]

36 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

37 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Time Series Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

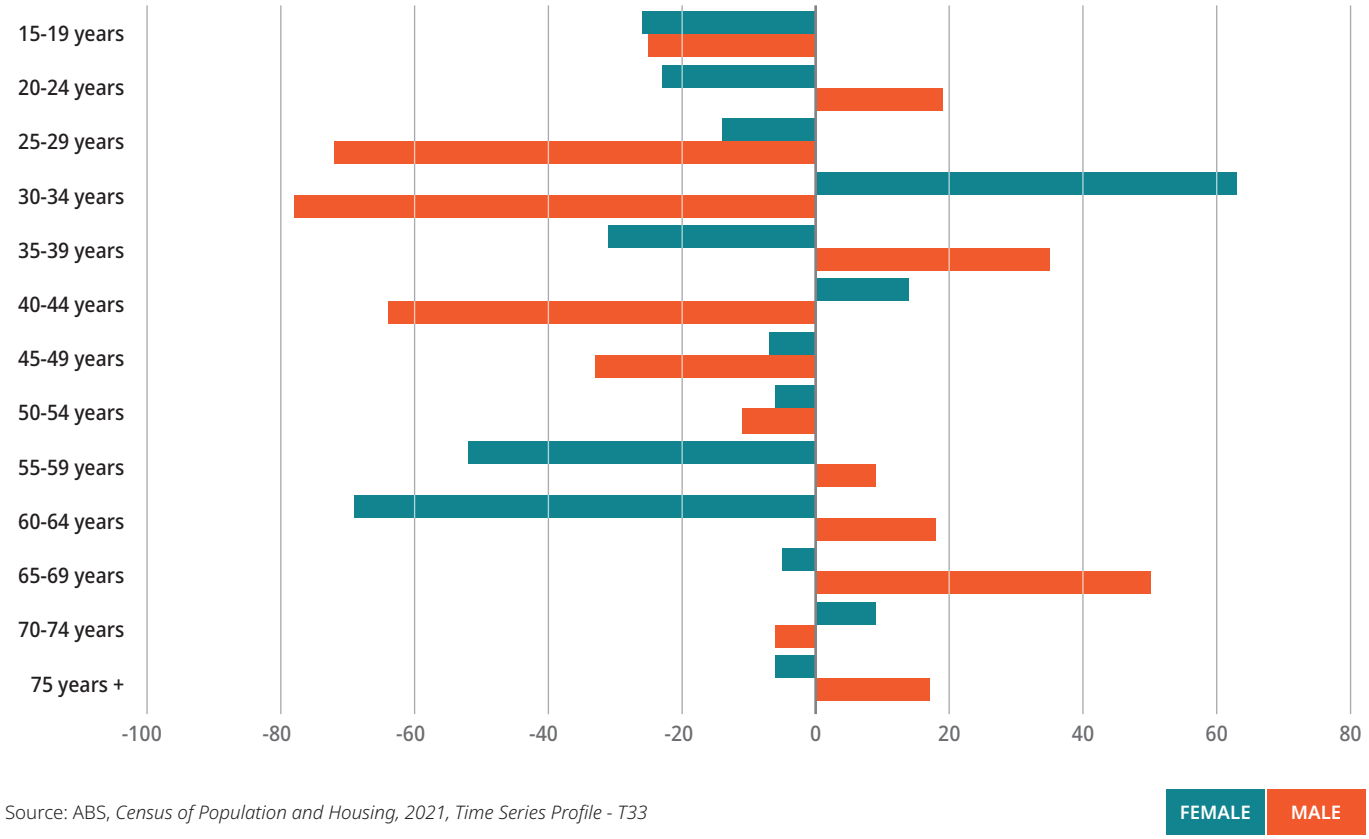


Figure 8 Labour force by age and sex, 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T33a and T33b*

Figure 9 Change in labour force by age and sex 2016-2021, Maranoa LGA



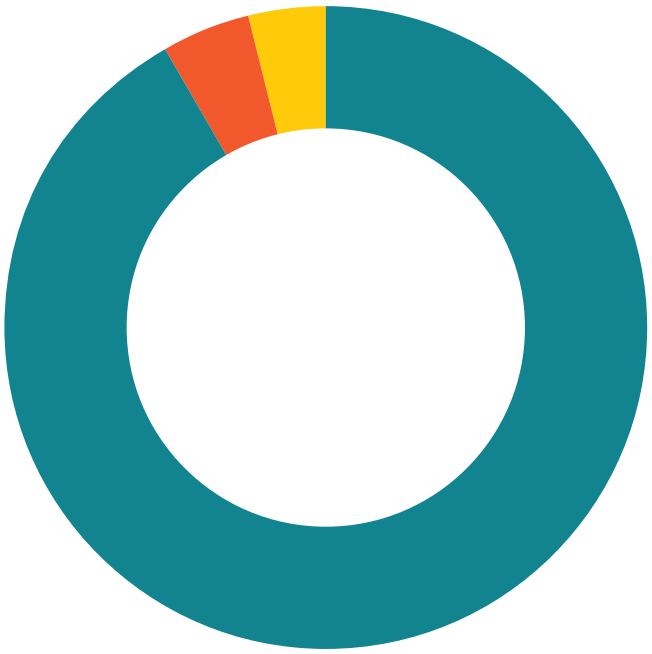
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T33*

3.2.6. Residency

In 2021, Maranoa LGA had 7321 local workers, with 5911 (80.7 per cent) also residing in the area.[38] Meanwhile, 296 resident workers (4.6 per cent) commuted outside the region for work. Residents in the Darling Downs – Maranoa region travelling for work are primarily to Toowoomba, Brisbane, Western Downs, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay.[39]



Figure 10 Employment location of resident workers 2021, Maranoa LGA





Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016 and 2021 - by place of work*

Figure 11 Residential location of local workers 2021, Maranoa LGA





Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016 and 2021 - by place of work*

38 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

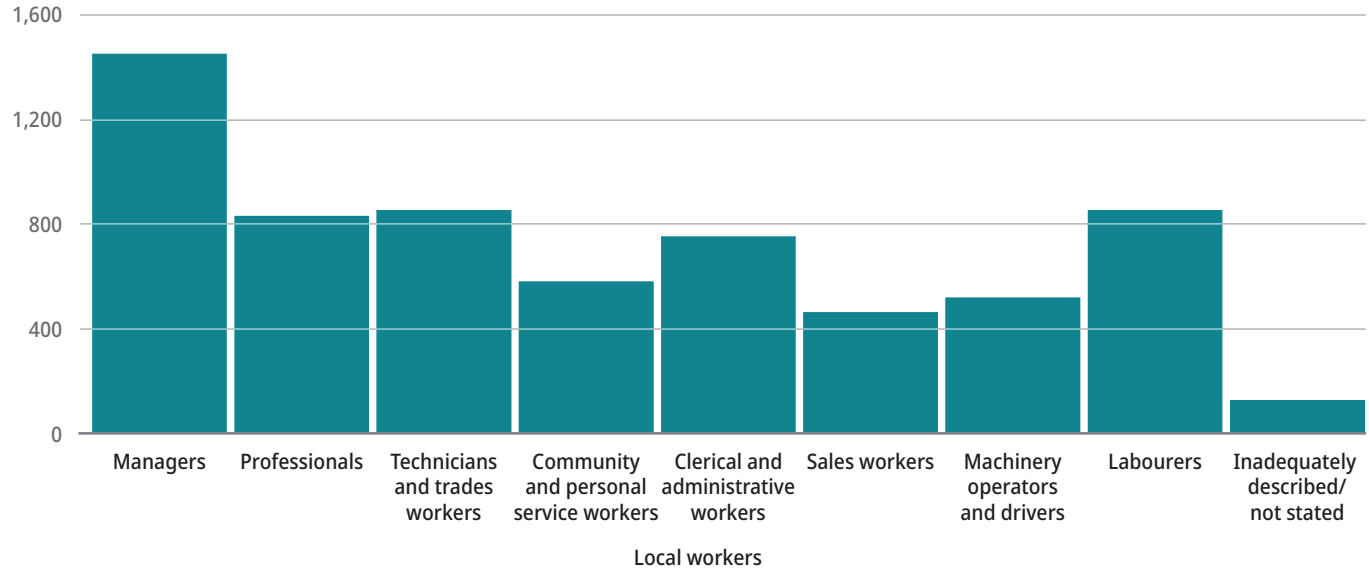
39 Ibid

3.2.7. Occupations

Maranoa LGA had a significantly higher proportion of managers, accounting for 21 per cent (1534) of the workforce, compared to 12.4 per cent (301,661) in Queensland. In contrast, the proportion of the workforce employed as community and personal service workers was smaller, at 8.5 per cent (619), compared to 12.4 per cent (300,182) for Queensland.[40]

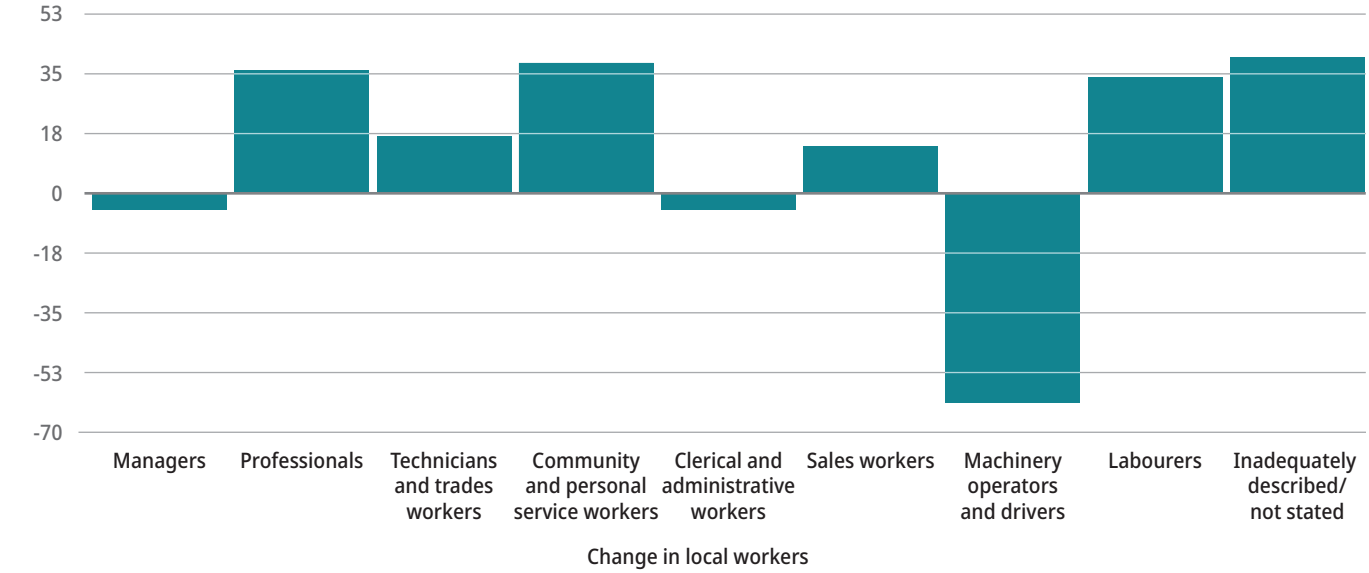
The number of workers increased on average by 4 per cent across most occupations between 2016 and 2021, with a notable exception of machinery operators and drivers which saw a significant decrease by 11.6 per cent or 60 workers. [41]

Figure 12 Occupations 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T35*

Figure 13 Change in occupations 2016 - 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS. *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile. T35.*

40 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

44 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Time Series Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

3.2.8. Hours worked

The Maranoa LGA had a higher proportion of workers working full time (35 hours or more a week) at 68.6 per cent (5021 persons) compared to Queensland's rate of 58.9 per cent (1,430,439 persons). Additionally, 31 per cent (2267 persons) of workers in the region worked 50 hours and over.[42]

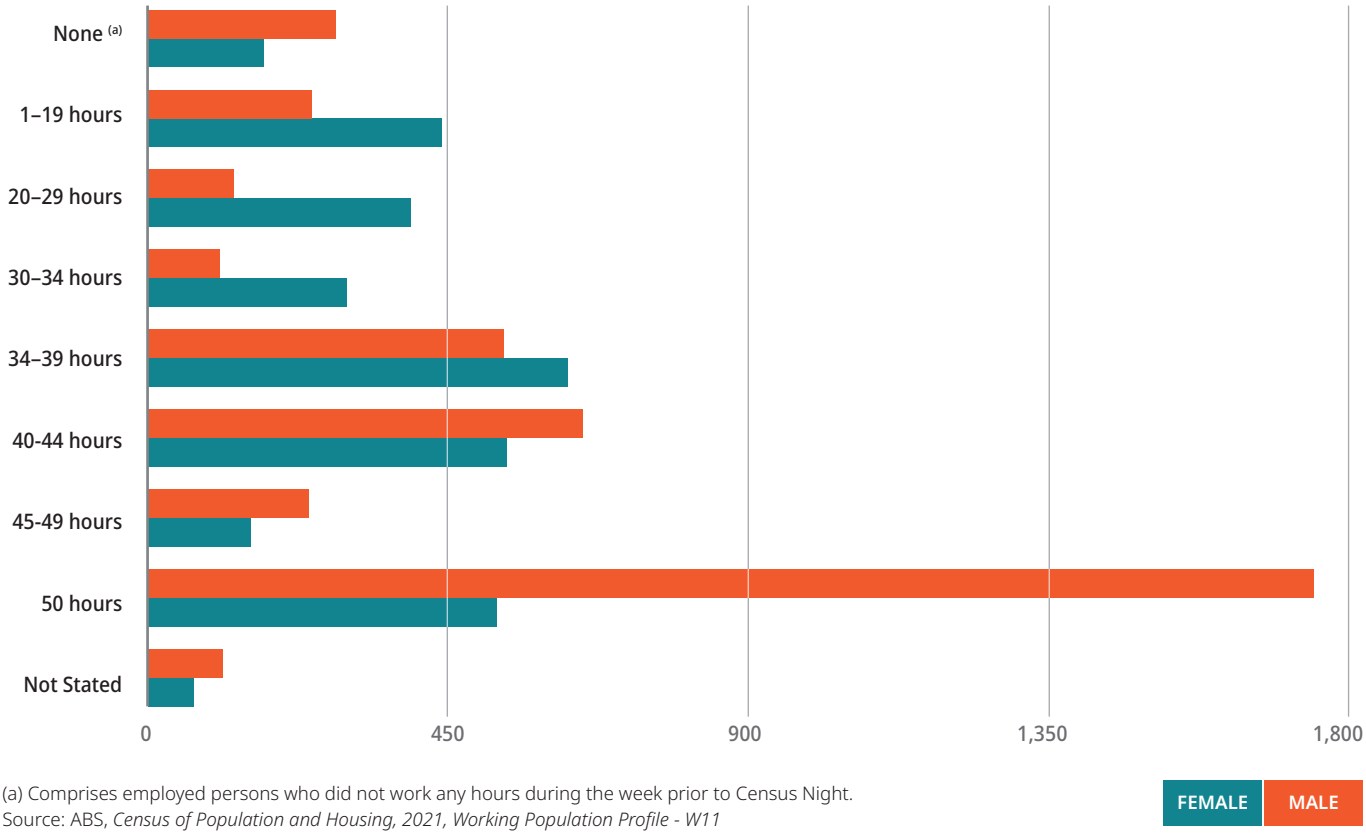
* 68.6 per cent of workers in Maranoa LGA worked full time (35 hours or more a week)
* 58.9 per cent of workers in Queensland worked full time.

Most significantly, 42.9 per cent of males worked over 50 hours or more per week, with the highest hours worked in agriculture, forestry and fishing (487 males), mining (285 males) and construction (222 males).

Females working over 50 hours per week was also highest in agriculture (187 females), followed by health care and social assistance (60 females) and education and training (55 females).[43]



Figure 14 Hours worked by sex 2021, Maranoa LGA



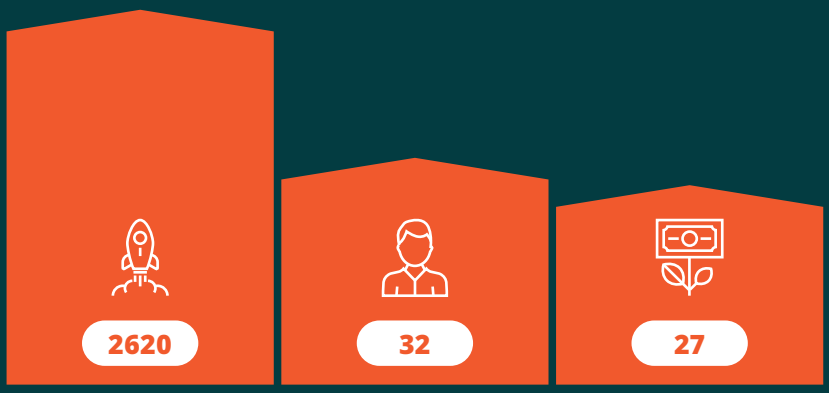
(a) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours during the week prior to Census Night.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Working Population Profile - W11*

42 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

43 Ibid

3.3 Business profile

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry had the largest number (1367) of total registered businesses in Maranoa LGA, comprising 52.2 per cent of all total registered businesses, compared to 8.1 per cent in Queensland. Construction accounts for 11.5 per cent of businesses and experienced the largest increase by 15 businesses from 2023 to 2024. Meanwhile, agriculture, forestry and fishing saw a reduction of 23 businesses.[44]

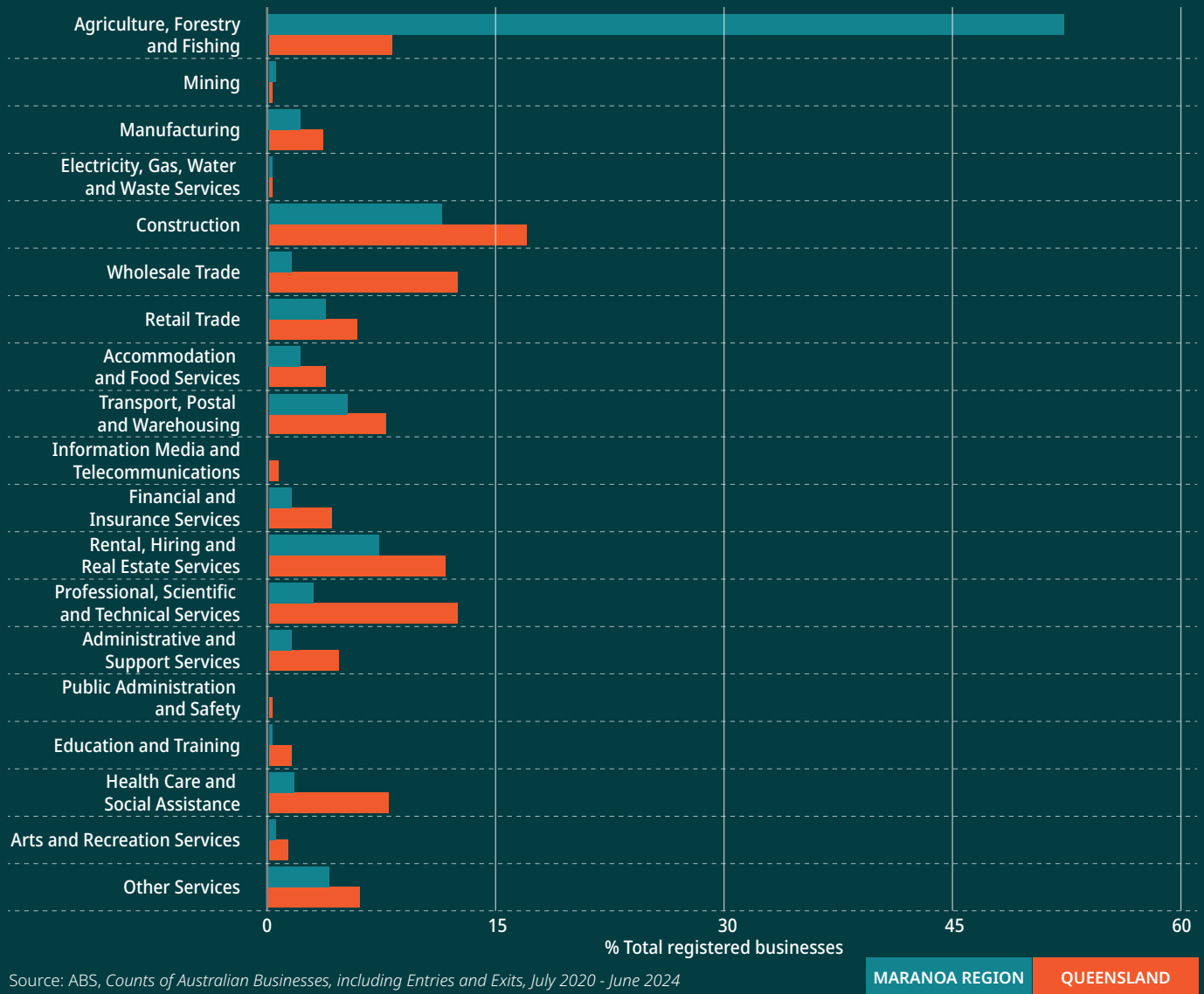


Total registered businesses
Overall business count in the area

Businesses with 20-199 employees
Mid-sized businesses with moderate workforce

Businesses with $10+ turnover
High-revenue businesses in the region

Figure 15 Registered business by industry 2024, Maranoa LGA and Queensland



Source: ABS, *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, July 2020 - June 2024*

44 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits*. Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release#data-downloads

In 2024, there were 27 businesses (or 1 per cent) with a turnover range of $10 million or more. Whilst 21.5 per cent of businesses had a turnover of less than $50,000. The majority of businesses in the Maranoa have turnover of $200,00 to $2 million, representing 40.3 per cent of total businesses.[45]

Table 6: Business counts by turnover range June 2024, Maranoa LGA

Total turnover	Businesses at 30 June 2024	% of total
$0 to less than $50k	562	21.5
$50k to less than $200k	813	31
$200k to less than $2m	1056	40.3
$2m to less than $5m	123	4.7
$5m to less than $10m	39	1.5
$10m or more	27	1
Total	**2620**	

Source: ABS, *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, July 2020 – June 2024*

45 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release#data-downloads

3.4 Economic value

The Maranoa LGA's Gross Regional Product (GRP) was $2274 million in 2024, representing 0.44 per cent of Queensland's Gross State Product (GSP). The GRP grew by 6.04 per cent from the previous year.[46] The region's two dominant industries; mining, and agriculture, forestry and fishing, accounted for 64.7 per cent of the region's total value added, 65.9 per cent of total output and 74.1 per cent of total exports by industry.[47]

In 2023-2024, the three largest industries contributed $954.3 million in total or 58.3 per cent of total imports for the region. These top three industries were:

* manufacturing ($472 million or 28.9 per cent)
* financial and insurance services ($296.4 million or 18.1 per cent)
* professional, scientific and technical services ($185.2 million or 11.3 per cent).

These three industries also experienced the largest increases in the value of imports in the region between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, along with transport, postal and warehousing and wholesale trade. The mining industry showed the most significant change, with a decline in imports of $1767 million over these five years, with the region experiencing an overall decrease of total imports of $1537 million.[48]

Whilst mining experienced a massive decrease in imports, the industry conversely showed a significant increase in local sales, by $1980 million between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, attributed largely to oil and gas extraction. Total local sales in the region increased by $2058.7 million over this time, valued at $3409.8 million in 2023/2024. The top three industries were:

* mining ($2014.3 million or 59.1 per cent)
* construction ($315.7 million or 9.3 per cent)
* electricity, gas, water and waste services ($180 million or 5.3 per cent).

Despite having strong local sales, the construction industry showed a significant decrease in local sales of $125.5 million, with losses shown across all sub-categories of building construction, heavy and civil engineering construction, and construction services. Sales showing strong five year growth include:

* property operators and real estate services (+$51.3 million)
* electricity supply (+$28.1 million)
* agriculture (+$21.5 million)
* food product manufacturing ($+15.6 million)
* other services repair and maintenance (+$15.5 million)
* polymer product and rubber product manufacturing (+$6.2 million)[49]



GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT

$2.27 billion GDP
2023-24, Maranoa LGA



WORKER PRODUCTIVITY

$254,511 per worker

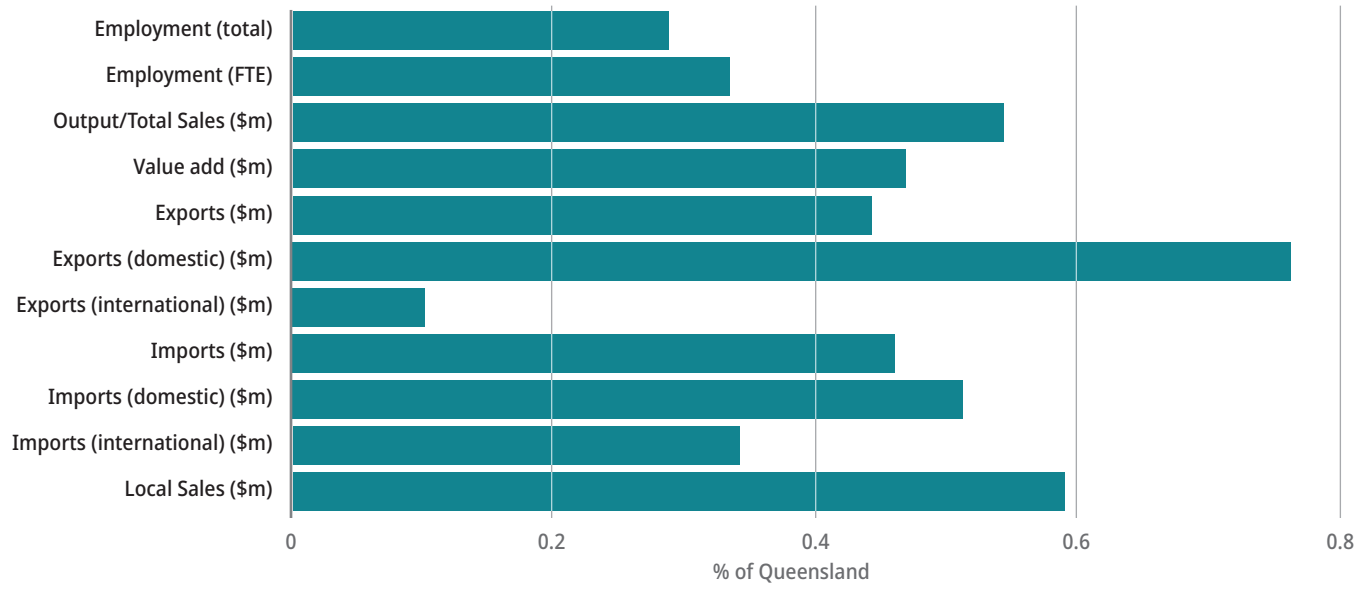


TOTAL LOCAL SALES

$3,409.8 million

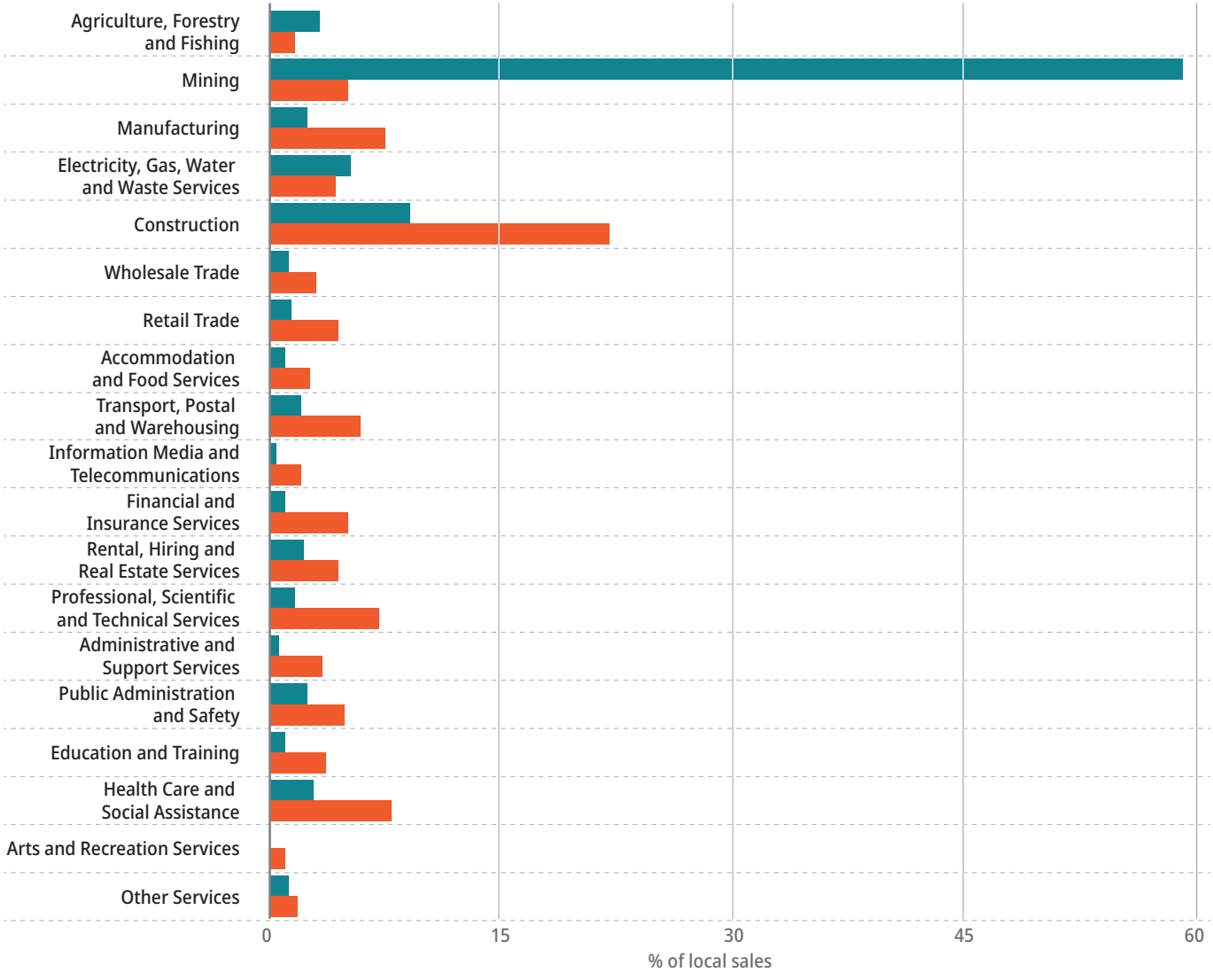
46 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). Maranoa Regional Council, Gross product. Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of NIEIR data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/gross-product
47 Ibid
48 Ibid
49 Ibid

Figure 16 Industry contribution to Queensland economy 2023-2024, Maranoa LGA



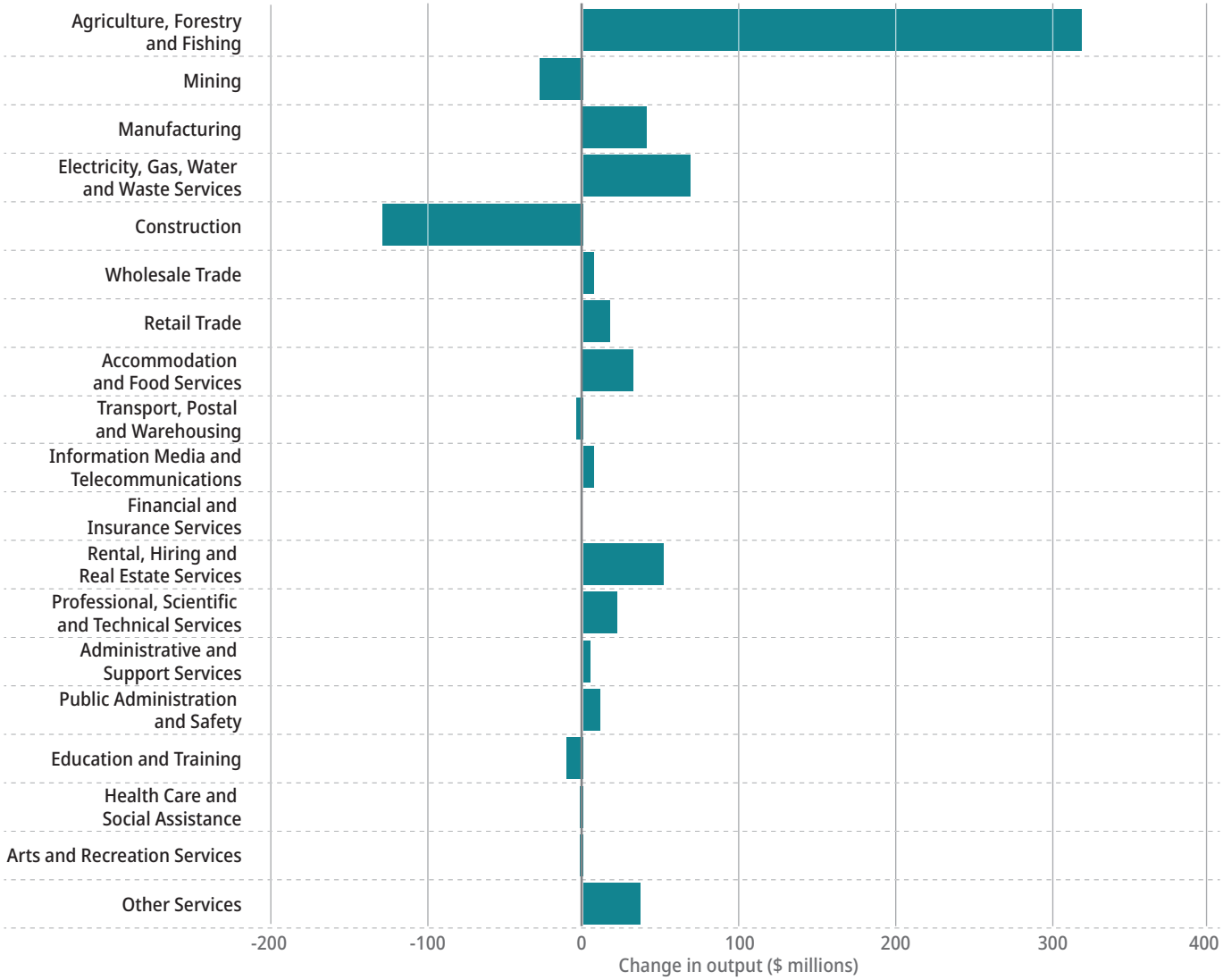
Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series - Industry sector analysis.*

Figure 17 Local sales by industry 2023-2024, Maranoa LGA



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series - Local sales*

Figure 18 Change in output by industry 2018-2019 to 2023-2024, Maranoa LGA



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series – Output by industry*

3.5 Job Profile

In 2021 there were 7327 people aged 15 years and over working in the Maranoa LGA and 6463 residents employed.[50] There are more local jobs available than resident workers, with the jobs to residents ratio remaining steady at around 1.2:1 over the past few years. In 2023-2024 mining had the highest employment capacity ratio (3.42:1), where of the 1239 local jobs available, there were only 362 residents employed. Mining was followed by electricity, gas, water and waste services (2.09:1) and construction (1.32:1).[51]

In 2023-2024 the three largest employers in the region were mining, generating 1239 jobs, agriculture, forestry and fishing with a comparable contribution of 1145 jobs, and health care and social assistance with 848 jobs generated. These three industries combined accounted for 39.2 per cent of the local workers.[52]

The goods-related sector accounted for 30.4 per cent of employment, though its significance has declined slightly over the last decade (34.7 per cent in 2014).[53]

7327

Local jobs were available in the region in 2021

6463

Local resident workers were employed locally in 2021

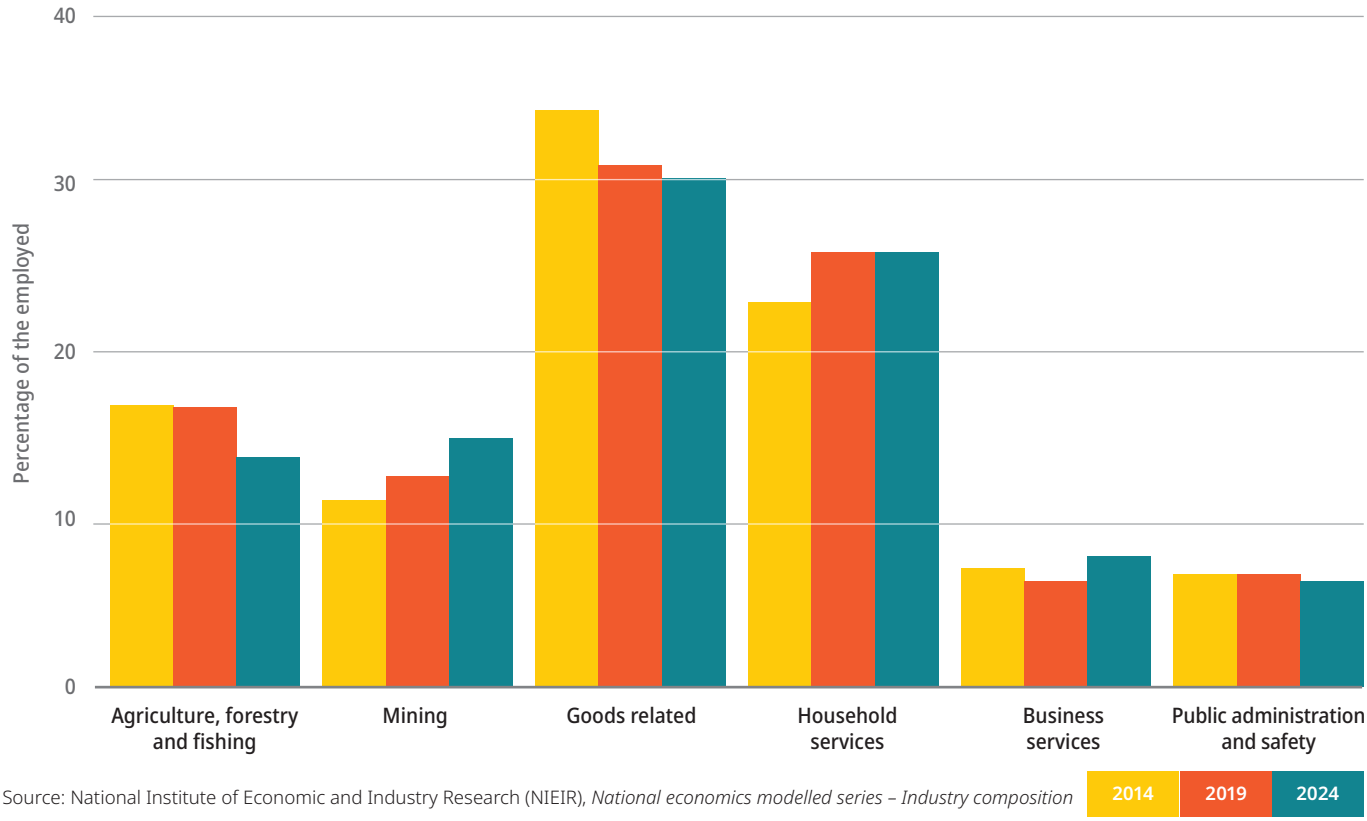
1.2:1

Ratio of local jobs to residents meaning more jobs that workers

91.7%

Local employment percentage of resident workers employed within the local area in 2021

Figure 19 Employment composition across broad industry sectors, Maranoa LGA



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series – Industry composition*

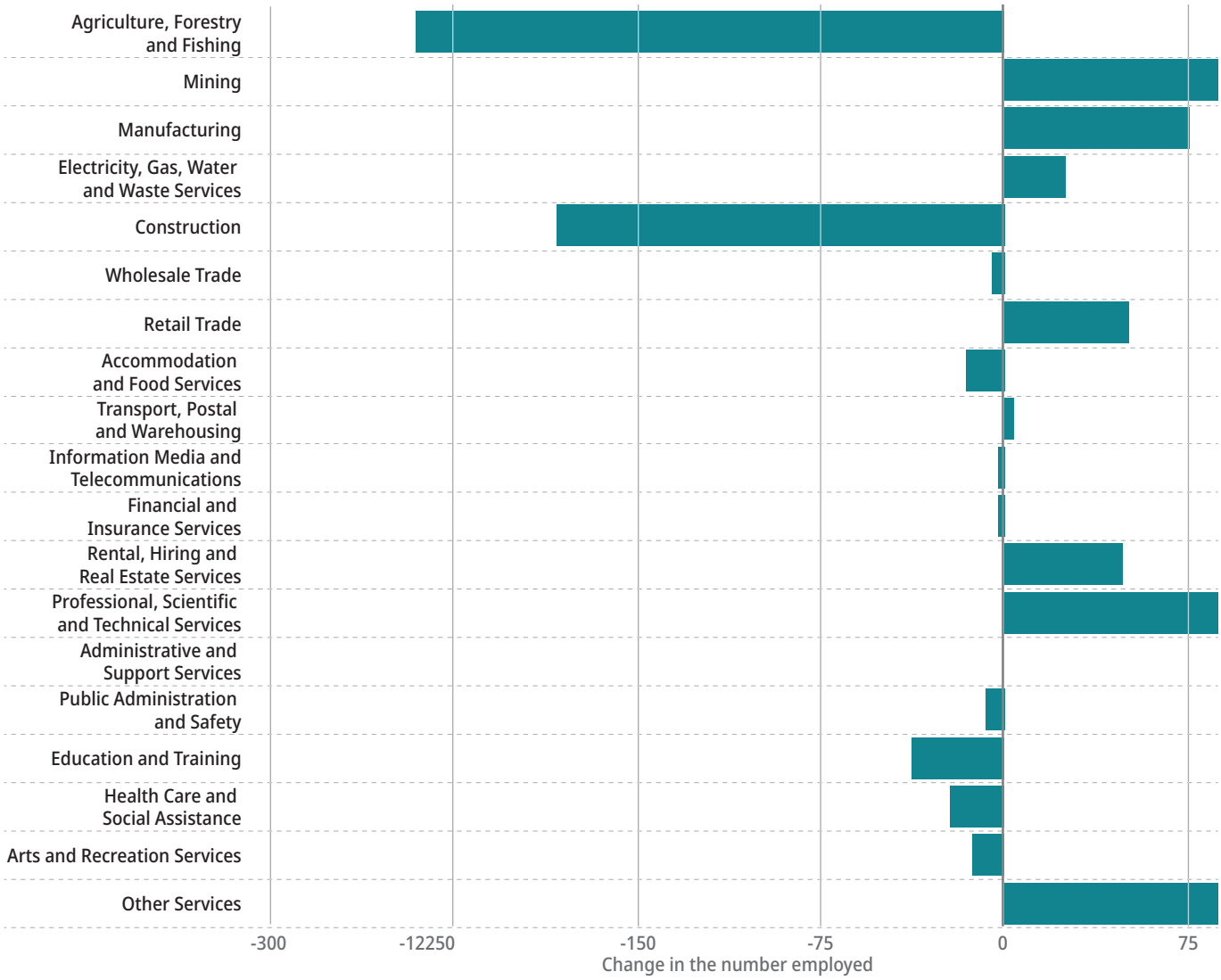
50 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

51 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). *Maranoa Regional Council, Jobs to workers ratio.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of NIEIR data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/Employment-capacity

52 ibid

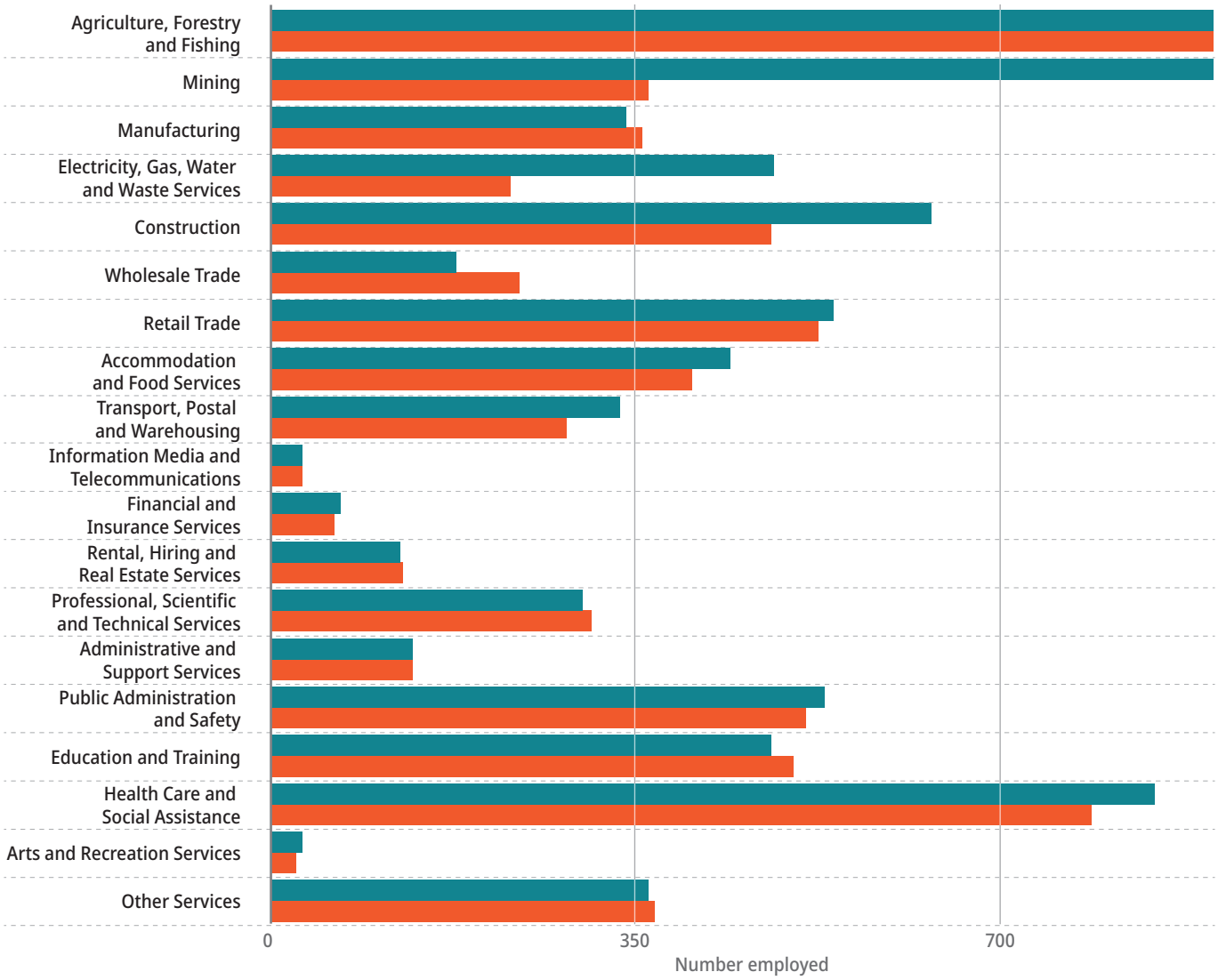
53 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). *Maranoa Regional Council, Industry composition.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of NIEIR data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/industry-composition

Figure 20 Change in employment by industry 2018-2019 to 2023-2024, Maranoa LGA



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series – Employment by industry*

Figure 21 Employment capacity by industry 2023-2024, Maranoa LGA



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series – Employment capacity by industry*

3.5.1. Job vacancies

To understand labour market trends in the Maranoa, internet job vacancy (IVI) data was reviewed and provides insights into current demands for occupations and skills. Regional data identified in the IVI may not fully correlate to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) regions referenced on other data sets. The region that most closely aligns with the Maranoa region is Darling Downs – Maranoa SA4.[54]

As of April 2025, 972 job vacancies were advertised across the Darling Downs – Maranoa region, reflecting continued demand for workers across a diverse range of industries and occupations. The data highlights significant workforce pressures, particularly in skilled roles and underscores the need for targeted strategies to build and maintain a resilient regional workforce.

The largest number of advertised roles were for Professionals (218 vacancies), indicating strong demand for highly qualified workers across industries such as health care, education and engineering. This was followed by:

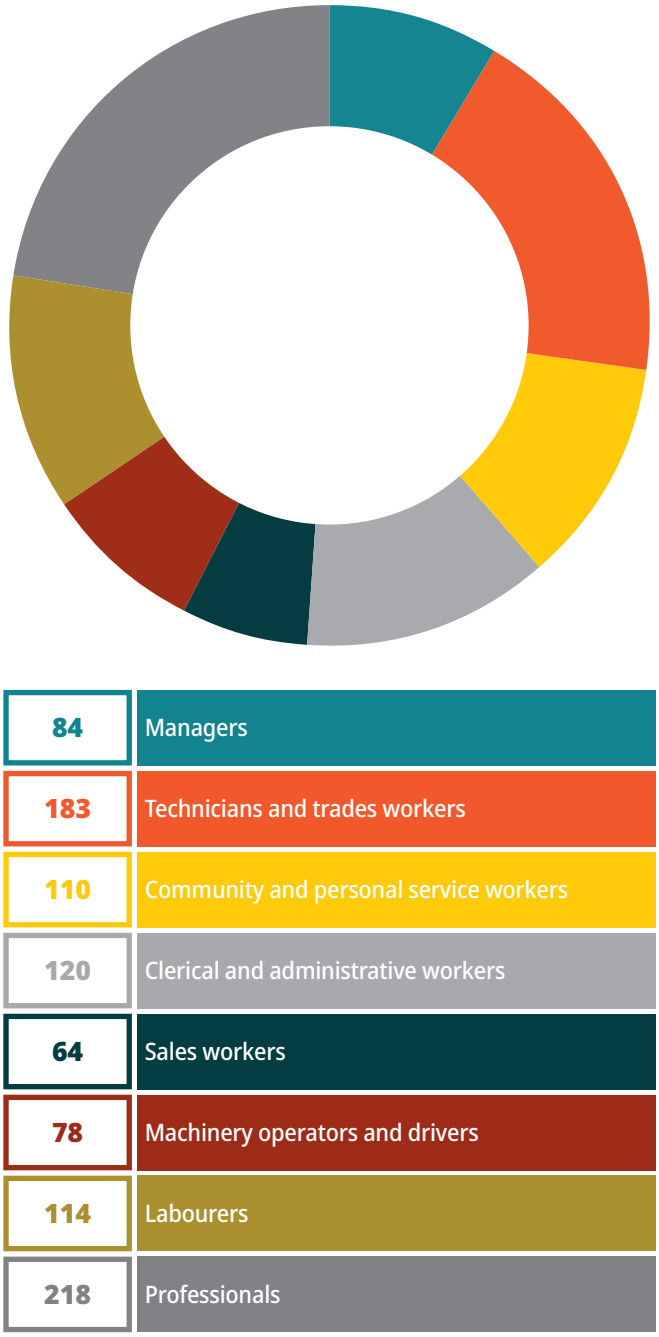
Technicians and trades workers (183 vacancies): demand in this category is likely driven by the construction and manufacturing industries, where skilled trade workers remain essential to project delivery and ongoing operations.

Clerical and administrative workers (120 vacancies): these roles are critical to the functioning of both public and private industry organisations, highlighting the need for workers with strong organisational, communication and coordination skills.

Labourers (114 vacancies): although unskilled, labourer roles remain an important part of the local workforce mix, supporting industries such as agriculture, construction and logistics.

Community and personal services workers (110 vacancies): reflecting trends seen across Queensland, there is growing demand for care and support roles, particularly in health care, aged care and disability services.

Figure 22 Online vacancies by occupation April 2025, Darling Downs-Maranoa



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016 and 2021 - by place of work*

54 Jobs and Skills Australia. (2025). *Internet Vacancy Index.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index

3.6 Education level profile

3.6.1. Qualifications

In 2021, in the Maranoa region, 5761 persons (57 per cent) had a non-school qualification (e.g. bachelor degree, diploma), compared to 62.5 per cent for Queensland. The majority of qualifications were certificates which equated to 2394 (23.7 per cent of the population). Of these certificate holders, 1432 (59.8 per cent) were held by males and 962 (40.2 per cent) by females. In contrast, 1327 females held a diploma or higher compared to 615 males.[55]

The most common field of study was engineering and related technologies with 869 persons (15.1 per cent), followed by management and commerce 788 persons (13.7 per cent) and health 562 persons (9.8 per cent). The age groups that featured strongly in engineering and related technologies was the 25-34 years (200 persons) and 35-44 years (172 persons). The converse was true for management and commerce with 35-44 years (219 persons) and 25-44 years (164 persons). It is noted that a total of 1465 persons either inadequately described or did not state their field of study.[56]

Of the total 5761 persons, males accounted for 14.3 per cent (825 persons) of those who studied engineering and related technologies, while females accounted for 10.1 per cent (582 persons) for management and commerce. It is noted that the lowest field of study (in total) was information technology. It was the third lowest field of study for males, and second lowest for females.

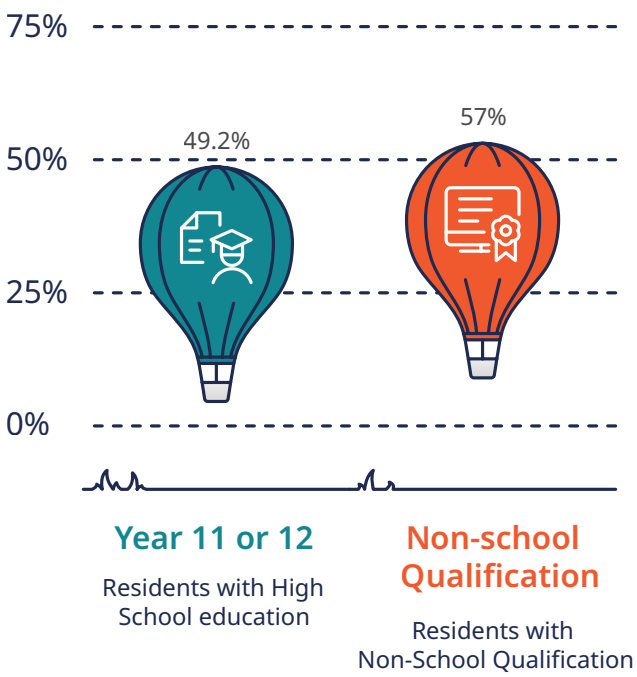


Table 7 Highest non-school qualification(a) 2021, Maranoa LGA and Queensland

Level of Education	Queensland	Maranoa (R)
Bachlor's degree or higher[(b)]	918,468 21.9%	1233 12.2%
Advanced diploma or certificate	395,615 9.4%	697 6.9%
Certificate[(d)]	927,894 22.1%	2394 23.7%
Persons with a qualification	**2,618,666** **62.5%**	**5761** **57%**
Total Persons	**4,191,812**	**10,105**

(a) Includes persons aged 15 years and over with a qualification within the scope of the Australian Standard Classification of Education
(b) Includes bachelor degree, graduate diploma, graduate certificate and postgraduate degree.
(c) Includes Certificate, I, II, III and IV and Certificates not further defined responses.
(d) Includes inadequately described and not stated level of education responses.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G43 and G49*

55 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area
56 ibid

Table 8 Non-school qualifications by field of study 2021, Maranoa LGA and Queensland

Field of study	Maranoa LGA	Queensland	Specialisation ration
Natural and Physical Sciences	59 1%	63,861 2.4%	0.42
Information Technology	50 0.9%	64,750 2.5%	0.35
Engineering and Related Technologies	869 15.1%	380,136 14.5%	1.04
Architecture and Building	272 4.7%	151,067 5.8%	0.82
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	410 7.1%	49,434 1.9%	3.77
Health	562 9.8%	285,611 10.9%	0.89
Education	451 7.8%	205,309 7.8%	1.00
Management and Commerce	788 13.7%	480,526 18.4%	0.75
Society and Culture	464 8.1%	309,683 11.8%	0.68
Creative Arts	55 1%	86,519 3.3%	0.29
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	310 5.4%	146,167 5.6%	0.96
Mixed Field Programmes	10 0.2%	4427 0.2%	1.03
Total	**5761** **100%**	**2,618,666** **100%**	**1.00**

(a) Includes inadequately described and not stated responses.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile* – G50 and unpublished data

3.6.2. Field of study occupation

In 2021, the highest level of schooling completed was Year 12 or equivalent with 4201 persons (43.1 per cent) having completed. Year 10 rated second with 2563 persons (26.3 per cent) completed. In the 2021 Census, 1266 persons (13 per cent) did not state their highest level of completion. According to the Census data, 37.3 per cent (1798) of males completed Year 12, and 48.7 per cent (2401) of females completed Year 12. This correlates to 18.4 per cent and 24.6 per cent respectively in relation to the total of 9750 persons.

The age group with the highest rate of completion of Year 12 was the 25-34 year olds (1030 persons), followed by the 35-44 year olds (919 persons). This was also reflected across the data for both males and females. Of the 9750 total persons, 47 persons (0.5 per cent) stated they did not go to school, with the highest representations in 65-74 and 75-84 years age groups (10 and 11 persons respectively).[57]

Table 9 Highest level of schooling completed 2021, Maranoa LGA and Queensland

Level of Education	Queensland	Maranoa (R)
Did not go to school or Year 8 or below	178.101 4.4%	627 6.4%
Year 9 or 10 equivalent	989,350 24.6%	3046 31.2%
Year 11 or 12 equivalent	2,554,330 63.6%	4801 49.2%
Total	**4,017,211**	**9750***

* Includes highest year of school not stated (1266)
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G16*

3.6.3. Vocational education and training activity

In 2023, there was a total of 1621 student enrolments in Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses in the Statistical Area 2 (SA2) of Roma (1083 persons) and Roma Surrounds (538). This was an increase from 2021 when the figures were 1052 persons (Roma SA2) and 484 persons (Roma Surrounds SA2). Of those, 335 persons (Roma SA2) and 248 persons (Roma Surrounds SA2) were aged from 15 to 19 years. There were 51 persons (Roma SA2) and 27 persons (Roma Surrounds SA2) who identified as having a disability which includes impairment or long-term condition. Indigenous students accounted for 124 (Roma SA2) and 43 (Roma Surrounds SA2) enrolments in 2023.[58]

Key attributes of the students include (2023):

- 36 per cent are aged 15-19 years (Queensland is 38.9 per cent)
- 10.3 per cent identify as First nations (Queensland is 7.1 per cent)
- 4.8 per cent have a disability (Queensland is 6.5 per cent)

Total VET program enrolments

VET enrolments in Roma and Roma Surrounds SA2s, peaked at 1621 in 2023 from 1536 in 2021. This is in contrast to Queensland's figures which fell from 634,355 in 2021 to 630,394 in 2023. While both areas registered a fall in 2022, the rate of increase for Roma and Roma Surrounds SA2s was approximately 6 per cent higher than for Queensland.[59]

Proportion of VET program enrolments for key cohorts

- **Students aged 15 to 19 years:** Roma SA2 and Roma Surrounds SA2 averaged 351 and 236 enrolments respectively from 2021 to 2023. Queensland's average for the same period was 240,461 enrolments. For both SA2s, this group accounted for 37.8 per cent (588) of the total enrolments for the region compared to 38.8 per cent (240,461) across Queensland.
- **First Nations students:** Enrolments for the First Nations cohort of students accounted for an average of 9.9 per cent (155) for both SA2s in comparison to the Queensland average of 6.9 per cent (42,520) for the period from 2021 to 2023.
- **Students with disability:** Enrolments of students with a disability averaged 78 (5 per cent) for both SA2s combined compared to Queensland's average of 40,968 (6.6 per cent) student enrolments.

57 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area
58 NCVER. (2025). VOCSTATS. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats
59 Ibid



TOTAL ENROLMENTS

1621 students enrolled
in VET programs in 2023



EMPLOYED STUDENTS

2190 students employed
while also studing



FULL-TIME STUDENTS

5.6% of students
study full-time

Table 10 Total VET enrolments 2021 to 2023, Roma and Roma Surrounds

		2021	2022	2023	Average	Average %
All enrolments	Roma	1052	1015	1083	1050	
	Roma Surrounds	484	493	538	505	
	Total	1536	1508	1621	1555	
	Queensland	634,355	594,166	630,394	619,638	
Young people	Roma	381	338	335	351	33.5
	Roma Surrounds	226	235	248	236	46.8
	Total	607	573	583	588	37.8
	Queensland	246,882	229,375	245,126	240,461	38.8
First Nations	Roma	125	103	124	117	11.2
	Roma Surrounds	32	37	43	37	7.4
	Total	157	140	167	155	9.9
	Queensland	43,225	39,821	44,515	42,520	6.9
Students with a disability	Roma	65	59	51	58	5.6
	Roma Surrounds	14	19	27	20	4
	Total	79	78	78	78	5
	Queensland	42,777	38,901	41,226	40,968	6.6

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Table 11 Education level, all VET students, 2021 to 2023, Roma and Roma Surrounds

Level of Education	2021	2022	2023
Advanced Diploma	5	-	-
Diploma	90	85	75
Certificate IV	160	160	180
Certificate III	575	580	570
Certificate II	260	275	310
Certificate I	30	15	20
Non-AQDF level	1890	1980	2090
Total student enrolments	**2535**	**2600**	**2775**

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Table 12 Provider type, all VET students, 2021 to 2023, Roma and Roma Surrounds

Provider type	2021	2022	2023
TAFE institutes	555	515	495
Universities	40	20	25
Schools	45	55	95
Community education providers	45	45	55
Enterprise providers	195	140	195
Private training providers	1990	2150	2260
Total student enrolments	**2535**	**2600**	**2775**

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS.

Table 13 Age and labour force status, all VET students 2024, Roma and Roma Surrounds

Labour force status by age, 2023	Total	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Not known
14 years and under	25	10	-	5	5
15 to 19 years	465	260	35	75	95
20 to 24 years	370	305	20	10	30
25 to 29 years	310	260	15	5	30
30 to 39 years	585	505	15	5	60
40 to 49 years	450	385	5	-	55
50 to 59 years	365	305	10	-	50
60 to 64 years	125	110	5	-	15
65 years and over	70	45	-	5	25
Total students enrolments	**2775**	**2190**	**105**	**110**	**370**

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Apprenticeship and traineeship activity

In the 12 months to 30 June 2024, there were 370 apprentices and trainees in training in the Roma and Roma surrounds statistical area. During this period, 185 new apprentices and trainees commenced their training, while 95 successfully completed their programs.

- **Commencements:** Apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in Roma and Roma Surrounds peaked in 2022 at 210 persons, before easing to 185 commencements in 2024.[60] At the state level, commencements increased from 36,314 in 2019 to a peak of 64,992 in 2022, then declined to 44,613 in 2023.
- **School-based commencements:** School-based apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in the region doubled from 35 in 2020 to a peak of 59 in 2021. Similarly, Queensland saw strong growth, with commencements increasing by 18.8 per cent from 7598 in 2020 to 9031 in 2022.

Table 14 All apprentices and trainees for 12 months ending June 2020 to 2024, Roma and Roma Surrounds

Training status	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Commencements	135	185	210	175	185
Completions	70	85	90	80	95
In-training	255	300	345	350	370
Cancellations/withdrawals	75	70	90	105	95

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Apprenticeship and traineeship completions by industry

Completion trends in Roma and Roma Surrounds differ slightly from the Queensland profile. The top five industries in the region were:[61]

1. Administrative and support services (11 completions)
2. Other services (10 completions)
3. Construction (9 completions)
4. Electricity, gas, water and waste services (6 completions)
5. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (6 completions)

At the state level, the top industries for completions were:

1. Construction (1458 completions)
2. Accommodation (911 completions)
3. Other services (787 completions)
4. Health care and social assistance (603 completions)
5. Administrative and support services (591 completions)

60 NCVER. (2025). *Apprentices and trainees 2024 - March quarter.* DataBuilder. Findings based on use of NCVER DataBuilder data. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats

61 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS.* Adelaide: National Centre for Vocation Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats

3.7 VET and employment pathways

3.7.1. Training pathways

The Maranoa region has a diverse education and training network, including a TAFE campus, private and public schools, community education providers, enterprise providers and private training providers offering both accredited and non-accredited vocational education. Partnership arrangements between local organisations, employers, registered training organisations (RTO) and supervisors help deliver courses and workplace training locally. Group training organisations also play a key role by employing apprentices and trainees directly and partnering with RTOs to meet training requirements.

Apprentices and trainees are consistently enrolled and in training packages aligned with key trade-based industries in demand for resident workers.

The Country University Centre (CUC) Maranoa provides learning and study facilities, along with support services, for students enrolled in apprenticeships, traineeships, certificates, diplomas and undergraduate or postgraduate courses. As of February 2025, there were 140 students registered with CUC Maranoa across 22 education providers. Of these, 71 were studying full-time, 69 part-time and 72.1 per cent were employed. The most popular fields of study included health (40 students), education (32 students), and psychology, social work and community services (18 students).[62]

Top five qualification enrolments

The qualifications with the highest enrolments in the Maranoa region in 2023 were:[63]

1. Certificate IV in Justice Studies - 37 enrolments
2. Diploma of Justice Studies - 15 enrolments
3. Certificate IV in Ministry and Discipleship - 14 enrolments
4. Certificate IV in Adult Tertiary Preparation - 13 enrolments
5. Certificate IV in Cyber Security and Diploma of Social Media Marketing - 11 enrolments

Table 15 Top 5 total VET activity program enrolments 2023

Top 5 by Course Name	Qualification Enrolments
Queensland	
Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways	23,926
Certificate III in Business	22,479
Certificate III in Individual Support	21,935
Certificate III in Fitness	20,422
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	15,870
Maranoa	
Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways	92
Certificate III in Business	88
Certificate II in Medical Service First Response	88
Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping	43
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	43

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Top five skill set enrolments

The most enrolled skill sets in the Maranoa region in 2023 were:[64]

1. Responsible service of alcohol - 139 enrolments
2. Food safety supervision - 92 enrolments
3. Surface coal mine safety - 77 enrolments
4. Swimming and water safety teacher - 54 enrolments
5. Perform rescue from a live LV panel and CPR - 45 enrolments

These enrolments highlight active training in the hospitality, mining and aquatic education sectors across the region.

62 Country Universities Centre Maranoa. (2025). *Country Universities Centre Maranoa.* Roma: Country Universities Centre Maranoa. https://www.cucmaranoa.edu.au/

63 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS.* Adelaide: National Centre for Vocation Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats

64 Ibid

Top five occupations for program enrolments

The occupations most aligned with VET program enrolments (qualifications, skill sets and accredited courses) in the Maranoa region in 2023 were:[65]

1. General clerk - 699 enrolments
2. Swim coach or instructor - 495 enrolments
3. Hospitality workers - 487 enrolments
4. Earthmoving plant operator (general) - 398 enrolments
5. Emergency services worker - 382 enrolments

This demonstrates a strong local focus on clerical, hospitality, safety and infrastructure related occupations.

Top five employer industries for apprenticeships and traineeship commencements

The leading employer industries for apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in the Maranoa region (12 months until September 2024) were:[66]

1. Manufacturing - 278 commencements
2. Construction - 251 commencements
3. Health Care and Social Assistance - 217 commencements
4. Other Service - 172 commencements
5. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing - 134 commencements

These figures suggest continued regional investment in skilled trades, care-related roles and service industries.

65 ibid.
66 ibid.



3.8. Maranoa regional development

Maranoa Regional Council will be renewing its Economic Development Strategy for the region in 2025-2026, which was last produced in 2018. The consultative planning seeks to acknowledge new developments and continued growth and aspirations of industries to put in place coordinated and targeted strategies that can provide significant combined economic and lifestyle benefits for the region.

3.9. Employment projections and jobs growth

Jobs Queensland's Anticipating Future Skills report indicates that the Darling Downs – Maranoa statistical region is expected to experience a net loss of 770 jobs between 2023-2024 and 2027-2028, representing a 2.5 per cent decline across the selected focus industries. This is in comparison to a net loss of 475 jobs (-0.7 per cent) for the same time period across the whole region.[67]

The occupations expected to see the largest decline are labourers (-4.6 per cent) and sales workers (-4.1 per cent), while an increase is expected for professionals (4.0 per cent) and community and personal service workers (1.2 per cent).[68]

This corresponds with industries that are expected to see the largest increase in people employed, namely the rental, hiring and real estate services industry (10.3 per cent increase) and professional, scientific and technical services industry (9.9 per cent increase). While the largest decline will be for arts and recreation services (6.2 per cent decline) and retail trade (5.9 per cent decline).[69]

Table 16 Top five industry sectors projected to experience employment growth 2023-2024 to 2027-2028, Darling Downs – Maranoa

Industry	People employed 2023-2024	People employed 2027-2028	Percentage change since 2023-2024
Rental, hiring and real estate services	883	974	10.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	2548	2801	9.9
Wholesale trade	2331	2461	5.6
Health care and social assistance	6088	6349	4.3
Transport, postal and warehousing	2877	2960	2.9

Source: Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal*

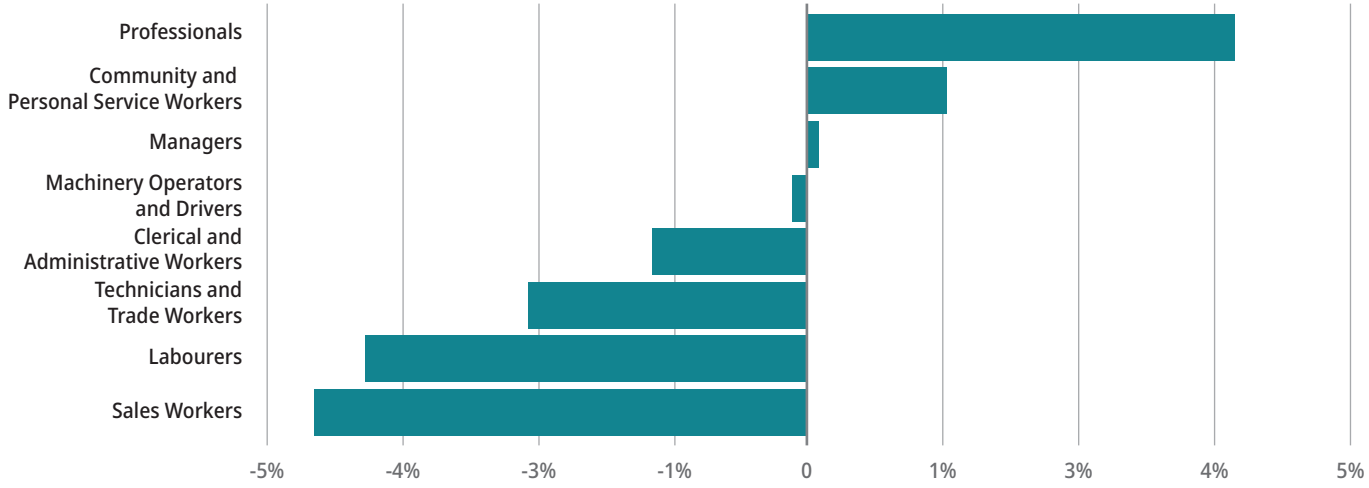
67 Jobs Queensland. 2025. Data Portal, *Anticipating Future Skills.* Ipswich: Queensland Government. https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal

68 ibid.

69 ibid.

In terms of qualifications, the biggest change is expected for certificate I and II levels with a 26.4 per cent decline in qualifications for the Darling Downs – Maranoa region. Meanwhile, a growth of 9.5 per cent in postgraduate degree level attainment is predicted. The change in all qualifications by occupations further demonstrates the increase expected in professional occupations and decline in labourers and sales workers over the four year period.[70]

Figure 23 Projected change in qualification field by occupation 2023-2024 to 2027-2028, Darling Downs - Maranoa



Source: Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal*

Table 17 Projected employment by qualification level 2023-2024 to 2027-2028, Darling Downs - Maranoa

Qualification level	Employment 2023-2024	Employment 2027-2028	Change %
No post school	22,662	21,513	-5.1
Certificate I & II Level	687	505	-26.4
Certificate III & IV Level	17,805	17,666	-0.8
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate Level	1937	2017	4.1
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	7530	7514	-0.2
Bachelor Degree Level	13,380	13,861	3.6
Postgraduate Degree Level	4903	5368	9.5

Source: Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal*

70 Jobs Queensland. (2025). Data portal. *Anticipating Future Skills.* Ipswich: Queensland Government. https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal



04

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MARANOA REGION'S FOCUS INDUSTRIES



4.1. Industry sectors and regional operations

This section explores the labour market challenges and workforce needs of the priority industries in the resources and trade services, retail, and health and community services sectors.

Resources and trade services: The Surat Basin is one of Queensland's most significant Coal Seam Gas (CSG) production regions, with the Maranoa and Western Downs LGAs accounting for over 80 per cent of Queensland's CSG activity. The Basin currently has approximately 9000 CSG wells, with that number expected to reach 22,000 by 2030 at the peak of development.[71] According to the Major Projects Pipeline 2023 report, Queensland is forecast to deliver a record $92 billion in civil construction and engineering projects over the next five years, with the Darling Downs – Maranoa region contributing $3.5 billion of this total.[72] Major CSG projects operating in the Maranoa include:

* GLNG Project (Santos)
* Australia Pacific LNG Project (Origin)
* Western Surat Gas Project (Senex)
* Kincora Gas Project (Armour Energy)
* Hunter Gas Pipeline (Santos)

Mining remains the region's most productive industry, generating $729,488 per worker (2023–2024) and employing the largest workforce. The mining industry also has the region's highest jobs-to-residents ratio at 3.42, with 1239 jobs in total, but only 362 local residents employed in these roles, reflecting significant fly in fly-out (FIFO) workforce reliance. The majority of mining workers are:

* technicians and trades workers – 42.7 per cent
* machinery operators and drivers – 22.7 per cent.[73]

Approximately 50 per cent of the mining workforce hold Certificate II–IV level qualifications, while 22.9 percent have no formal qualification.[74]

The Maranoa is also emerging as a diversified energy production hub, with a growing pipeline of renewable energy and transmission line projects. Notable developments include:

* Bottle Tree Energy Park (WestWind Energy) – up to 50 wind turbines with a workforce of 180 during construction and 17 ongoing operational jobs.[75]
* Planned wind and solar farm developments at Yuleba, including the Jackson North Wind Farm (Equis) and Yuleba North Solar PV Park (Vena Energy).

71 Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment. (2025). *The Surat CMA, Cumulative Management Area (CMA).* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.ogia.water.qld.gov.au/surat-cma

72 Queensland Major Contractors Association. (2023). *Queensland Major Projects Pipeline 2023.* Brisbane: Queensland Major Contractors Association. https://qmca.com.au/queenslands-major-projects-pipeline-grows-to-record-92-billion/

73 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

74 ibid

75 Bottle Tree Energy Park. (2025). Bottle Tree Energy Park. Gisborne: Bottle Tree Energy Park. https://bottletreeenergypark.com.au/

Civil construction and infrastructure: Significant community infrastructure projects are underway across the Maranoa, including:

* $36 million redevelopment of the Denise Spencer Aquatic Centre, led by Maranoa Regional Council ($29.2 million construction contract commencing April 2025)[76]
* Yuleba Water Play Park as part of the Yuleba CBD Liveability Upgrade.[77]

Council also maintains an ongoing capital works program in:

* roads and drainage
* water and sewerage
* waste management
* community facilities and housing development.

The Maranoa LGA has one of Australia's largest road networks, supported by investments from Maranoa Regional Council, the Department of Main Roads and RoadTek, in partnership with local civil contractors, quarries and concrete plants supplying materials for major projects.

Local heavy and civil engineering contractors are tightly linked to oil and gas sector demand, with civil works closely aligned to energy developments. While Tier 1 and Tier 2 contractors typically deliver major infrastructure and resource projects, they frequently engage local subcontractors for specialist tasks such as earthworks, paving and fencing.

Construction and trade services: Outside of major resource developments, Maranoa's local construction industry focuses on:

* small to medium-scale commercial and residential projects
* upgrades to community facilities
* private residential improvements
* rural property upgrades
* maintenance of government housing.

In 2023–2024, there were:

* 18 new house approvals, valued at $7.27 million
* $20.64 million in residential and non-residential alterations and additions.[78]

Manufacturing: Key manufacturing activities in the Maranoa region include:

* metal fabrication
* machinery maintenance
* agricultural equipment manufacturing
* value-added meat processing
* baked goods
* timber milling (two operating mills).

The sector plays a critical role in supporting the energy and resource industries, supplying:

* plant infrastructure
* gas pipeline networks
* custom machinery and equipment
* emergency maintenance services.

The manufacturing sector's close alignment with the region's major gas extraction operations strengthens supply chains and creates additional readiness to service agriculture and construction industries.

Regional trade services hub: The Maranoa acts as a trade services hub, with over 450 Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) licensed trade contractors delivering services to:

* local industries
* western communities.[79]

The capability of the construction and manufacturing workforce directly influences the ability of businesses and major project developers to source and buy locally.

The workforce composition of these sectors shows strong demand for:

* technicians and trades workers – 34.4 per cent (construction); 26.1 per cent (manufacturing)
* machinery operators and drivers
* labourers.[80]

These overlapping occupational needs present opportunities for cross-industry collaboration in:

* workforce attraction
* retention
* skills development.

With growing demands across multiple industries, especially energy, resources and construction, ongoing investment in workforce planning will be essential to support long-term regional growth and ensure local businesses can compete for talent.

76 Maranoa Regional Council. (2025). *Council Projects.* Roma: Maranoa Regional Council. https://www.maranoa.qld.gov.au/council-projects

77 Maranoa Regional Council. (2025). *Work Begins on Yuleba's Water Play Park.* Roma: Maranoa Regional Council. https://www.maranoa.qld.gov.au/news/article/715/work-begins-on-yuleba-s-water-play-park

78 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025). *Building Approvals, Australia.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/building-and-construction/building-approvals-australia/apr-2025

79 Queensland Government. (2025). QBCC Licensed Contractors Register. *Open Data Portal.* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/qbcc-licensed-contractors-register

80 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

Retail sector: The retail sector plays a vital role in supporting both the economy and liveability of the Maranoa region. The industry encompasses a wide range of businesses, from supermarkets and hardware stores to agricultural suppliers, fashion outlets, fast food chains, gift shops and specialty retailers.

Roma, the commercial centre of the Maranoa, is home to a diverse mix of nationally owned outlets and locally operated businesses. Well-established national and international brands include:

* Woolworths, IGA
* McDonald's, KFC, Domino's, Subway
* Supercheap Auto, Repco, Kmart, Pets Domain
* Mitre 10, Home Hardware
* BP, Liberty, Caltex

These outlets are complemented by a strong presence of independent retailers that add local character and deliver personalised service. Many local businesses now operate online stores alongside their physical shopfronts, helping them reach broader markets and providing greater convenience to local customers.

Retail businesses servicing agriculture are particularly central to the Maranoa economy. Suppliers of farm machinery, vehicle parts, mechanical services, livestock equipment, rural merchandise and feed play a critical role in supporting the productivity of local primary industries. Their operations help ensure producers have access to the essential tools and services required for efficient and resilient farm management.

In addition to retail, Roma offers a vibrant mix of restaurants, cafés, pubs, accommodation providers, function centres and other food services, catering to the region's residents, workers, tourists and visiting contractors.

Overall, the goods-related sector accounts for 30.4 per cent of employment across the Maranoa region, making retail, hospitality and food services a major employer and an essential contributor to the region's economic sustainability and community wellbeing.

Health and community services: Roma serves as a major regional hub for health services, anchored by the new $116.6 million Roma Hospital, which opened in 2021. This significant investment has boosted both healthcare capacity and the local economy.[81] The hospital now provides:

* increased outpatient capacity
* 22 beds
* two birthing suites
* two operating theatres.

The South West Hospital and Health Service (SWHHS) delivers hospital, community, allied health, and home care services to Roma and surrounding towns across the South West. Core hospital services include:

* accident and emergency
* general ward care
* outpatient services
* surgical procedures
* birthing services, supported by visiting specialists and the Flying Specialist Service.

In smaller communities such as Injune, Mitchell and Surat, Multipurpose Health Services provide an integrated mix of:

* hospital care
* community and allied health services
* home and community care support.

These facilities, together with general physician services and clinics in Roma, form a comprehensive local healthcare network. The Royal Flying Doctor Service and LifeFlight also operate out of Roma, delivering primary healthcare and 24-hour emergency services across the broader region.

81 Premier and Minister for Trade and Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. (2021, June 1). *Palaszczuk Government delivers major redevelopment of Roma Hospital.* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/92240

Aged care and allied health: Key aged care services include:
* Westhaven Aged Care Facility (40 beds)
* Pinaroo – a not-for-profit facility run by the Rotary Club of Roma, offering 71 beds and 10 independent living units.

Vital Health, a multi-disciplinary allied health practice and NDIS provider, delivers services including:
* physiotherapy
* massage therapy
* dietetics
* exercise physiology
* occupational therapy
* psychology
* speech pathology.

Other private health providers and community organisations also offer a broad range of services across:
* dentistry
* podiatry
* maternity care
* pathology
* mental health services
* youth services
* aged care
* disability services and support.

The health care and social assistance industry in the Darling Downs – Maranoa region is forecast to experience continued growth over the coming years, with an estimated 4.3 per cent net increase in jobs, equivalent to approximately 261 additional positions across the sector.

This growth is being driven by increasing demand for services, particularly as the population ages and as needs for specialist services such as mental health and allied health expand in line with broader trends across regional Queensland.

Specific industry subsectors expected to see the strongest growth include:[82]

Residential care services – projected to grow by 7.9 per cent, reflecting the rising need for aged care facilities and services in the region.

Medical and other healthcare services – forecast to increase by 3.7 per cent, supporting both primary care and a range of specialist services.

Social assistance services – projected growth of 3.7 per cent, as demand continues to rise for disability support, community health programs, and family and youth services.

Hospitals – anticipated to grow by 3.1 per cent, supported by the expanded capacity of the new Roma Hospital and continued investments in regional healthcare infrastructure.

These trends signal an ongoing need to build the local health workforce across a variety of roles, including:
* aged care workers
* mental health professionals
* allied health practitioners (such as physiotherapists, dietitians, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists)
* specialist medical staff (both resident and visiting specialists)
* nurses and midwives.

Attracting and retaining skilled professionals across these areas will be critical to meeting future service needs and supporting positive health outcomes for the region's communities.

South West Hospital and Health Service (SWHHS) plays a leading role in building the future health workforce through a range of local training pathways and programs. These include:
* Graduate programs for newly qualified nurses and midwives, helping them transition from education to employment within the region.
* Clinical placements for nursing, midwifery, and allied health students, providing valuable hands-on experience in rural and remote healthcare settings.

The Roma TAFE campus offers a suite of training programs that support local health industry needs, including study areas in:
* nursing
* allied health
* dental services
* laboratory science
* sport and fitness.

Further support for growing the local health workforce is provided through "grow your own" initiatives, such as:
* Country Universities Centre (CUC) Maranoa, which offers a supportive learning environment for both local and visiting health students to complete higher education qualifications close to home.
* Bursary programs funded by Maranoa Regional Council, which encourage and support local students to pursue careers in health-related fields.

These combined initiatives aim to address critical workforce challenges in attracting, training, and retaining skilled health professionals in the region. They also help to build a pipeline of local talent who are more likely to remain in the region and contribute to sustainable healthcare delivery for years to come.

82 Jobs Queensland. (2025). Data portal. *Anticipating Future Skills.* Ipswich: Queensland Government. https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal

4.1.1. Economic value

The Maranoa LGA experienced an increase across most economic indicators between 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, including output sales, value added, exports and local sales. Mining generates the largest economic contribution to the region, and accounts for 59.1 per cent of local sales, 47.3 per cent of output, and 43 per cent of the total value added. The mining industry saw an overall decline in economic value in the past five years.

The construction industry also experienced a decline in output value by $127.3 million, spread across all industry sub-categories. Manufacturing remained stable, with a modest increase of $41.6 million in output sales and retail trade experienced an increase of $18.4 million along with accommodation and food services of $31.8 million. Health care and social assistance saw an increase in local sales by $4.5 million and decline in output and value added.[83]

In 2023-2024, the productivity per worker in the Maranoa LGA was $254,544.[84] Mining exhibited the highest productivity, generating $729,488 per worker. The productivity for the other focus industries were:

* construction $153,799 per worker
* manufacturing $130,848 per worker
* retail trade $92,315 per worker
* accommodation and food services $89,206 per worker
* health care and social assistance $87,671 per worker.

Table 18 Economic value by industry sector for focus industries 2018-2019 to 2023-2024, Maranoa LGA

Local workers, age structure	LGA Total workers	Mining	Manufacturing	Construction	Retail Trade	Accommodation and Food Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Employment (total)	8252	1239	341	635	540	442	848
Employment (FTE)	7920	1338	300	653	432	339	707
FTE to total employment	0.96	1.08	0.88	1.03	0.8	0.77	0.83
Output/ Total Sales ($m)	4949.62	2340.25	161.9	317.21	78.52	93.46	108.54
Value add ($m)	2100.62	903.64	44.65	97.63	49.86	39.46	74.31
Exports ($m)	1550.82	329.75	76.08	1.55	24.95	55.64	5.95
Exports (domestic) ($m)	1381.28	264.03	69.64	0	24.05	52.05	5.95
Exports (international) ($m)	169.53	65.72	6.45	1.55	0.9	3.6	0
Imports ($m)	1637.33	50.35	472.7	0	36.78	51.81	62.47
Imports (domestic) ($m)	1265.69	43.72	148.86	0	36.78	30.79	61.63
Imports (international) ($m)	371.65	6.63	323.83	0	0	21.02	0.84
Local Sales ($m)	3409.8	2014.28	85.81	315.65	53.57	37.82	102.59
Worker productivity ($ per worker)	254,544	729,488	130,848	153,799	92,315	89,206	87,671

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *National economics modelled series – Industry sector analysis*

83 National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). (2025). *Maranoa Regional Council, Industry sector analysis*. Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of NIEIR data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/industry-sector-analysis

84 ibid

4.2 Workforce profile

4.2.1. Employment

In 2021, there were 3155 people employed across the industries of focus in the Maranoa LGA.[85] The largest employing industry was health care and social assistance, reflecting the industry's critical role in supporting community wellbeing. Construction and mining also contributed significantly to local employment, highlighting the regions strong ties to infrastructure development and resource extraction.

Table 19 Focus industry employment 2021, Maranoa region

Industry of focus	Number of employees
Mining	592
Manufacturing	282
Construction	551
Retail trade	477
Accommodation and food services	441
Health care and social assistance	812

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Working Population Profile – W12*

4.2.2. Local labour demand

The proportion of local workers who also reside in the Maranoa LGA is an indication of employment self-sufficiency, reflecting the extent to which resident workers meet local labour demands. Industries with a very high proportion of workers who are local residents are manufacturing (98.5 per cent), retail trade (99.1 per cent), accommodation and food (100 per cent) and health care and social assistance (97.2 per cent).

In contrast, mining sources only 32.5 per cent of its workforce locally while construction sources around 70 per cent. Furthermore, 22.5 per cent of residents employed in the mining industry travel outside of the region for work, as do 17.4 per cent of those employed in the construction industry.[86]

The change in self-sufficiency for occupations across the Maranoa LGA from 2016 to 2021 shows a decline in residents employed in skilled occupations particularly relevant for the mining, manufacturing and construction industries. While the portion of residents employed in occupations such as professionals and sales workers showed an increase.

85 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

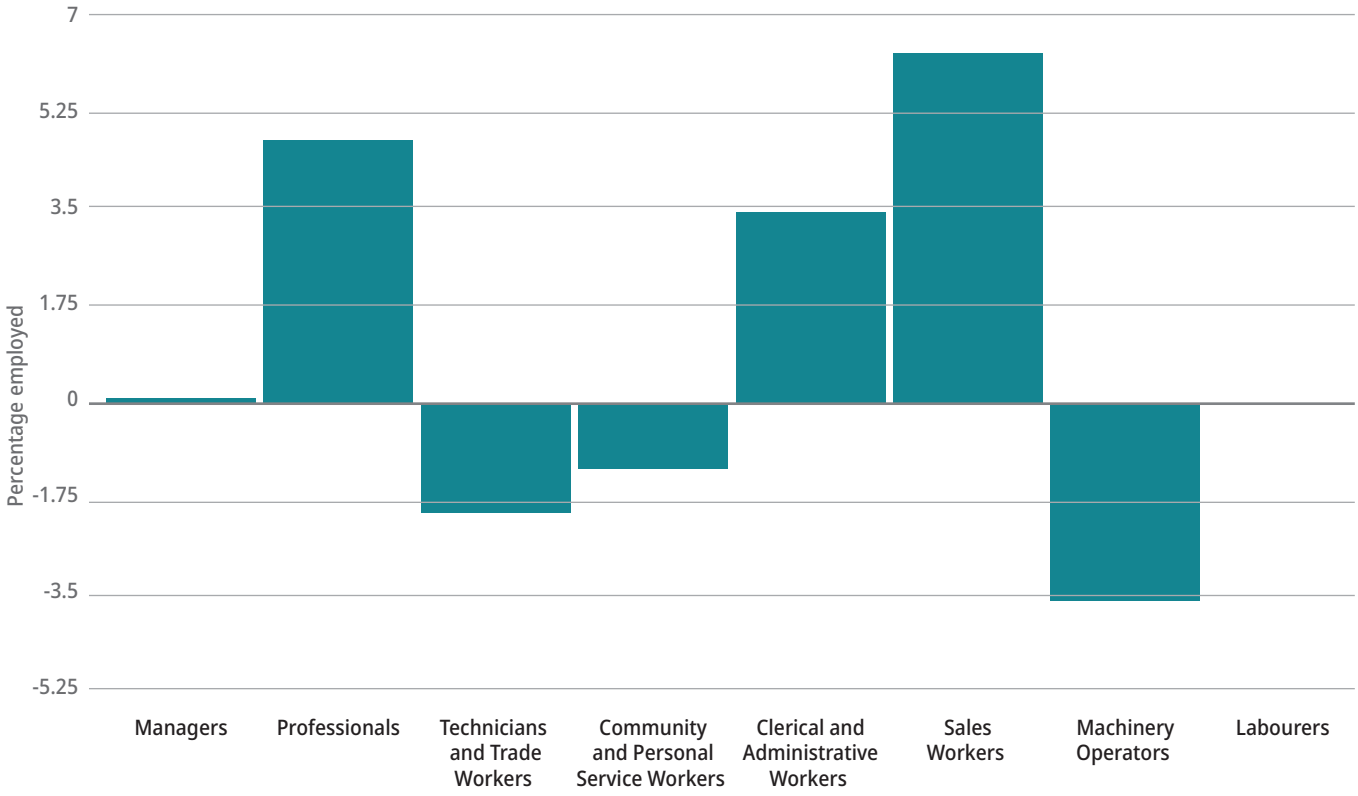
86 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Maranoa Regional Council, Employment self-sufficiency.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of ABS data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/local-employment

Table 20 Employment self-sufficiency for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Workers	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food	Health Care
Local workers living in the region	5909	176	256	379	465	349	736
% of local workers living in the region	81.51%	32.5%	95.2%	69.9%	98.5%	81.5%	93%
Change 2016 - 2021	+1.7%	+0.6%	+12.4%	+3.7%	+1.7%	-5%	+1.7%
Total resident workers	6446	227	260	459	469	349	757
Resident workers employed in the region	5909	176	256	379	465	349	736
% of resident workers employed in region	91.7%	77.5%	98.5%	82.6%	99.1%	100%	97.2%
Change 2016 - 2021	+3.1%	+8%	+5.1%	+9.5%	+2.3%	+3.8%	+1.4%
Total workers	**7252**	**542**	**269**	**542**	**472**	**428**	**791**

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 – by journey to work and place of work*

Figure 24 Change in employment self-sufficiency percentage by occupation 2016 to 2021, Maranoa LGA



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 – by place of work*

4.2.3. Age structure

The majority of focus industries have the highest number of workers in the age bracket 25 to 34 years, ranging from 18 to 26 per cent of total workers in the industry. Whilst 28 per cent of accommodation and food workers are aged 15 to 19 years, and only 16 per cent are 25 to 34 years. The health care and social assistance industry has 48 per cent of its workers over the age of 45, with 168 workers (22 per cent) aged 55 to 64 and 36 workers (5 per cent) over the age of 65.[87]

Industry workforce aged 25 to 34 years

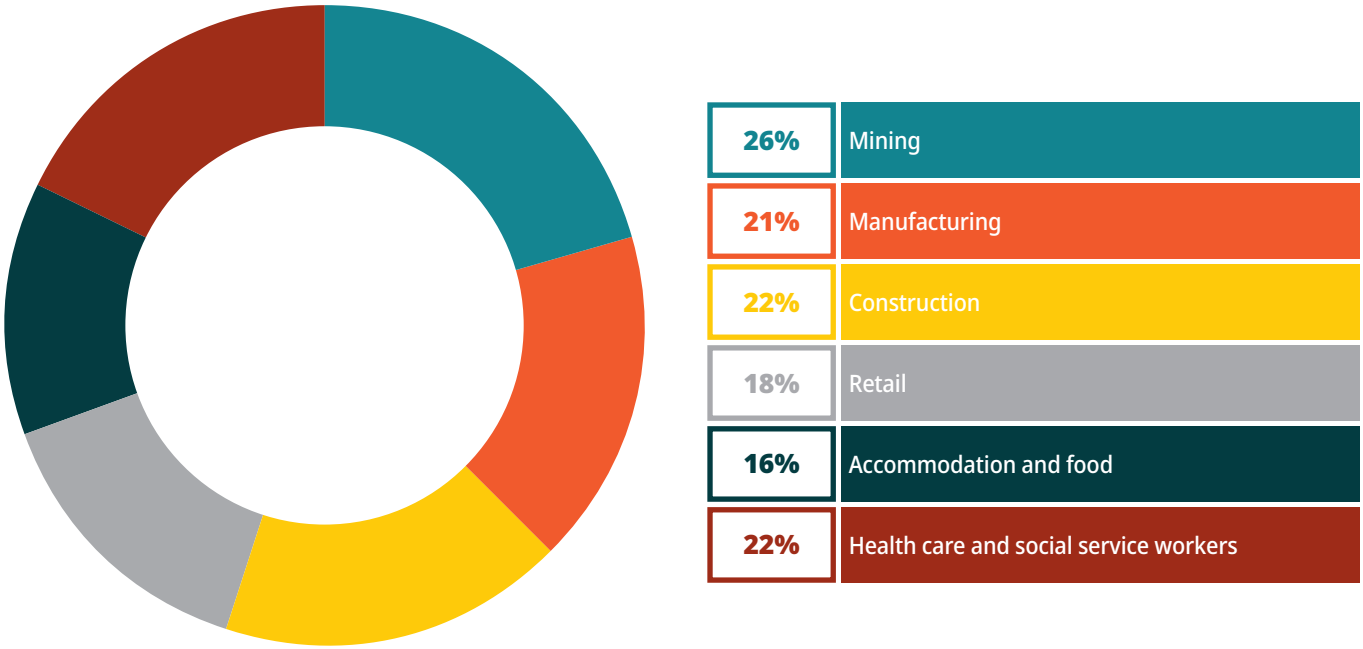


Table 21 Age structure for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Local workers, age structure	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Focus Industry % total workers	40%	3.6%	4.2%	7.2%	7.4%	5.6%	11.9%
15-19 years	5.9%	4	28	24	61	102	13
20-24 years	9.1%	15	35	57	56	46	69
25-34 years	19.2%	61	56	105	86	57	171
35-44 years	19.3%	72	50	87	79	51	148
45-54 years	20.1%	45	49	81	92	51	168
55.-64 years	17.8%	34	41	86	73	51	168
65-74 years	6.2%	4	14	20	22	6	36
75-84 years	2.2%	0	0	5	6	6	0
Total Persons (Number)	**6463**	**233**	**269**	**467**	**480**	**363**	**772**

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G54*

87 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

4.2.4. Occupations

The focus industries account for 50 per cent of the region's technicians and technical trade workers, and form the majority of the workforce for the mining (39 per cent), manufacturing (27 per cent) and construction (34 per cent) industries. Machinery operators and drivers are also significant for mining (24 per cent) and construction (20 per cent), while manufacturing has more labourers (23 per cent). Managers make up 11 to 21 per cent of focus industry workforces, except for health care and social assistance at just 7 per cent of its total workforce. These group of occupations are relevant and generally transferable across industries in the Maranoa region.

Occupations such as sales workers are specialist to the retail trade industry (50 per cent of workers) and accommodation and food services (13 per cent of workers). Health care and social assistance workers have a high portion of professionals (35 per cent) and community and personal service workers (31 per cent).[88]

The top five occupations and industry:

* 273 professionals in health care and social assistance
* 240 sales workers in retail trade
* 239 community and personal service workers in health care and social assistance
* 158 technicians and trade workers in construction
* 115 clerical and administrative workers in health care and social assistance.

Table 22 Occupations for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Occupations (number)	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Focus industry (% total workers)	40%	4%	4%	7%	7%	6%	12%
Managers	22.5%	25	43	84	83	77	55
Professionals	12.9%	24	10	10	8	4	273
Technicians and Trades Workers	13.3%	90	73	158	51	35	20
Community and Personal Service Workers	9%	0	0	0	5	93	239
Clerical and Administrative Workers	11.7%	22	34	50	36	21	115
Sales Workers	7.2%	0	15	0	240	46	0
Machinery Operators and Drivers	8.1%	56	26	93	12	9	3
Labourers	13.3%	11	63	72	36	85	61
Inadequately described, not stated	2%	4	3	8	0	0	6
Total persons	**7328**	**233**	**269**	**467**	**480**	**363**	**772**

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G56*

88 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

4.2.5. Business profile



300

Construction Businesses
(11.5%) as at June 2024



100

Retail Trade Businesses
(3.8%) as at June 2024



21

New Businesses
in focus industries, 2023–2024

The six focus industries account for 22 per cent (577 businesses) of total businesses in the Maranoa Region. Following agriculture, forestry and fisheries, construction has the highest number of businesses (300 businesses), 57 per cent of which have no employees. There was a total growth of 21 new businesses across the focus industries from 2023 to 2024, with construction having the highest increase of 15 new businesses. Meanwhile, the retail trade industry lost four businesses employing 5 to 19 people.[89]

* 15 new businesses registered in construction, 2023 to 2024
* 5 new businesses registered in accommodation and food services, 2023 to 2024
* 3 new businesses registered in health care and social assistance, 2023 to 2024

In 2024, manufacturing and retail trade together accounted for 14.6 per cent of all businesses with a turnover of $2 to $5 million. Accommodation and food services had a high portion (70.2 per cent) of businesses in their industry with a turnover of $200,000 to $2 million, while 21 per cent earned less than $200,000. The most common turnover bracket for the focus industries was $200,000 to $2 million. The exception is health care and social assistance where the 68.8 per cent of businesses had a turnover of less than $200,000 (39.6 per cent $50,000 to less than $200,000).[90]

The industries with a turnover of $10 million or more were:

* manufacturing (3 businesses or 5.5 per cent)
* construction (3 businesses or 1 per cent)
* retail trade (3 businesses or 3 per cent)
* accommodation and food services (3 businesses or 5.3 per cent).

89 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024). *8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release#data-downloads

90 ibid.

Table 23 Registered businesses and employees for focus industries 2024, Maranoa LGA

Businesses	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Const.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Change in businesses 2023 to 2024	+21	+2	0	+15	-4	5	3
Registered businesses 2024	2620	17	55	300	100	57	48
Non-employing	72%	10	33	171	45	15	35
1 - 4 employees	20%	5	6	101	29	21	9
5 - 19 employees	7%	3	10	24	21	18	3
20 - 199 employees	1%	0	6	4	5	3	3
200+ employees	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: ABS, *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, July 2020 – June 2024*

Table 24 Registered businesses and turnover for focus industries 2024, Maranoa LGA

Business, 2024	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Registered businesses 2024	2620	17	55	300	100	57	48
Zero to less than $50k	21.5%	3	14	52	17	8	14
$50k to less than $200k	31%	4	13	90	23	4	19
$200k to less than $2m	40.3%	9	17	133	40	40	13
$2m to less than $5m	4.7%	0	5	19	13	4	0
$5m to less than $10m	1.5%	0	3	3	4	0	0
$10m or more	1%	0	3	3	3	3	0

Source: ABS, *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, July 2020 – June 2024*

4.2.6. Income

Mining is the highest paying industry, with 73 per cent of workers earning more than $1750 per week, compared to 38 per cent of those working in construction and 29 per cent in health. The accommodation and food services industry has the highest portion of its work force in the lower income brackets, with 27 per cent earning up to $499 per week.[91]

Industries with the highest weekly income:

* 73 per cent of mining workers earn more than $1750 per week
* 38 per cent of construction workers earn more than $1750 per week.

Industries with the lowest weekly income:

* 92 per cent of accommodation and food workers earn less than $1750 per week
* 90 per cent of manufacturing workers earn less than $1750 per week
* 68 per cent health care and social services earn less than $1750 per week.

Table 25 Individual income, as percentage of workers for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Gross weekly individual income, %	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Negative Income/ Nil income	2.1	0	0	0.9	1.3	0	0
$1 - $149	2.3	0	4	1.7	6.4	10.7	0
$150 - $299	2.1	0	2.2	0.9	4.7	6.2	0.4
$300 - $399	2.3	0	1.8	1.7	5.3	4.8	1.5
$400 - $499	3.2	0	1.8	1.5	3.2	5.2	3.1
$500 - $649	5.9	0.5	7.2	3.7	10.4	8.9	5.1
$650 - $799	8.6	1.4	11.6	6.4	16.3	11.6	8.8
$800 - $999	11.4	2.7	25.7	8.5	18.9	14.1	12.7
$1000 - $1249	12.3	5.6	13.8	14.3	14	11.8	13.5
$1250 - $1499	9.4	5.6	13	9.2	5.3	10.3	11.6
$1500 - $1749	9.9	9.8	8	12.1	3.4	8	12
$1750 - $1999	7.6	12	1.1	10.8	3.4	3	9.3
$2000 - $2999	13.7	37.2	5.1	17.8	4	2.7	14.5
$3000 - $3499	3.3	13.7	0	5.3	0	0	2.7
$3500 or more	4.1	10.3	3.3	3.7	1.1	1.1	3.3
Not stated	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.5	2.5	1.6	1.5
Total Persons	**7331**	**592**	**276**	**544**	**472**	**439**	**816**

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 - by place of work*

91 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Maranoa Regional Council, Local workers – Individual income.* Compiled and presented by economy.id. Findings based on use of ABS data. https://economy.id.com.au/maranoa/workers-income

4.2.7. Hours Worked

The industries with the highest portion of their workforces working more than 50 hours per week are mining (51.2 per cent), construction (24 per cent) and manufacturing (24 per cent). These results support the shift work associated with these industries. The accommodation and food services industry has 22 per cent of its workforce working more than 50 hours, and 26 per cent less than 19 hours per week. Nearly 50 per cent of the health care and social assistance industry works between 35 and 44 hours per week, and only 10 per cent work more than 50 hours.

* 51.2 per cent (303) of mining workers worked 50 hours and over
* 41 per cent (226) of construction workers worked 50 hours and over
* 10.3 per cent (84) of health care and social assistance workers worked 50 hours and over

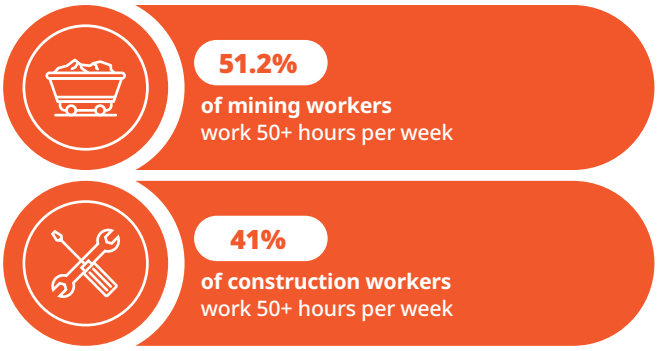
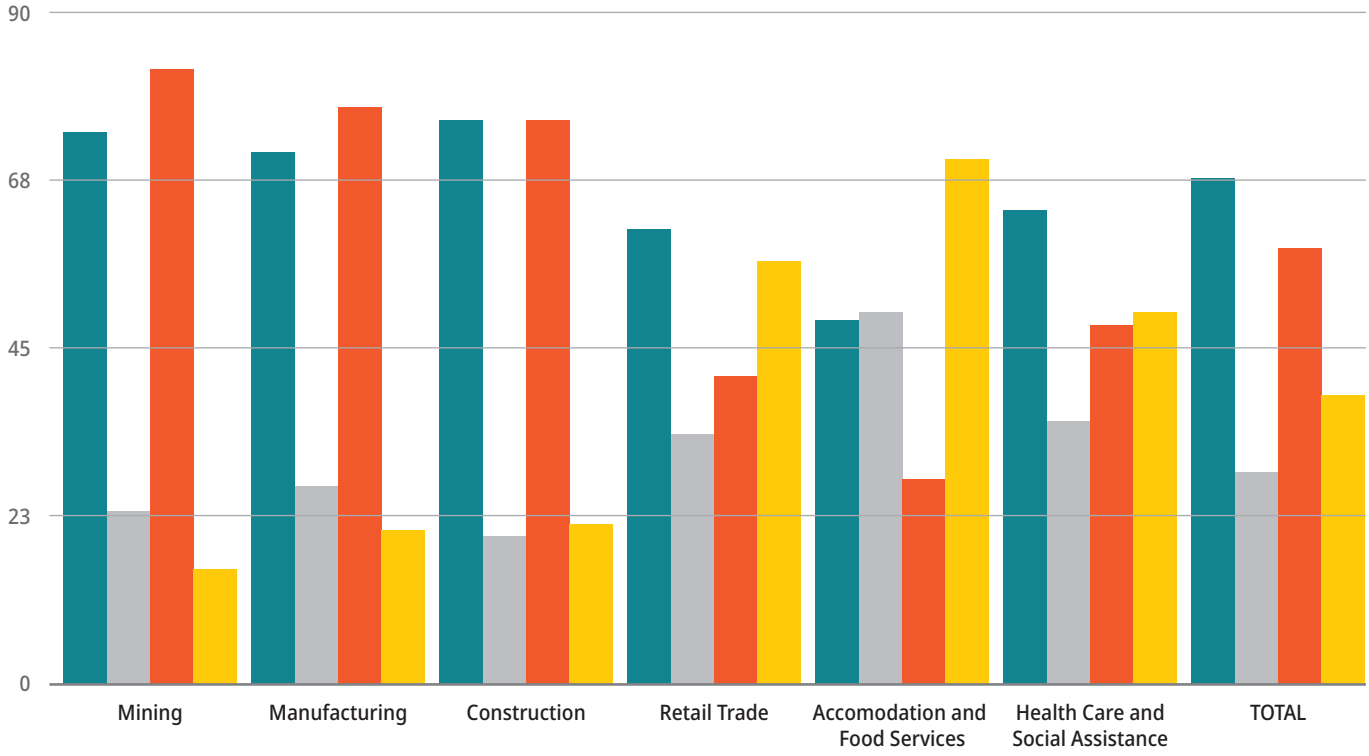


Figure 25 Focus industries hours worked 2021, Maranoa LGA and Queensland



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Working Population Profile – W11*

Table 26 Hours worked per week, focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Hours worked[(a)]	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
None[(b)]	461	103	9	40	16	21	58
1 - 19 hours	697	11	28	29	79	113	60
20 - 29 hours	542	14	15	26	40	67	86
30 - 34 hours	412	10	24	18	28	21	83
35 - 39 hours	1165	40	54	57	100	65	198
40 - 44 hours	1191	69	54	91	81	31	201
45 - 49 hours	398	28	26	45	36	21	37
50 hours and over	2267	303	67	226	78	99	84
Not stated	192	11	3	12	3	7	7
Total Persons	**7321**	**592**	**282**	**551**	**477**	**441**	**812**

This table is based on place of work.
(a) Hours worked is an aggregate of the number of hours worked in all jobs during the week prior to Census Night.
(b) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours during the week prior to Census Night.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Working Population Profile – W11*

All industries, except for health, showed the highest portion of males in their workforce working more than 50 hours per week. Mining ranked the highest, with 54 per cent of its male workforce working more than 50 hours, closely followed by construction with 46 per cent.[92]

Table 27 Male hours worked per week, for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Male hours worked[(a)]	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
None[(a)]	7%	19%	4%	8%	0%	5%	2%
1 - 19 hours	6%	1%	9%	5%	14%	18%	4%
20 - 29 hours	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%	8%	7%
30 - 34 hours	3%	2%	8%	3%	3%	5%	8%
35 - 39 hours	13%	7%	22%	9%	18%	14%	26%
40 - 44 hours	16%	10%	18%	17%	19%	10%	32%
45 - 49 hours	6%	3%	7%	9%	8%	5%	4%
50 hours and over	43%	54%	27%	46%	31%	36%	17%
Not stated	3%	2%	2%	3%	0%	3%	3%
Total Males	**4072**	**532**	**187**	**479**	**169**	**165**	**133**

(a) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours during the week prior to Census Night.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Working Population Profile – W11*

Table 28 Female hours worked per week, for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Female hours worked[(a)]	LGA Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
None[(a)]	5%	13%	0%	4%	6%	4%	8%
1 - 19 hours	14%	5%	14%	12%	19%	30%	7%
20 - 29 hours	12%	8%	15%	19%	10%	19%	11%
30 - 34 hours	9%	8%	16%	4%	10%	6%	11%
35 - 39 hours	19%	13%	9%	23%	22%	15%	25%
40 - 44 hours	17%	25%	20%	16%	14%	5%	24%
45 - 49 hours	5%	16%	11%	5%	7%	5%	4%
50 hours and over	16%	23%	18%	14%	10%	15%	9%
Not stated	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Total Females	**3255**	**64**	**96**	**74**	**305**	**277**	**678**

(a) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours during the week prior to Census Night.
Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Working Population Profile – W11*

92 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Working Population Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

4.3. Vocational training and tertiary profile

4.3.1. Qualifications

The industries with the highest portion of its workers holding qualifications are health care (77 per cent), construction (67 per cent) and mining (66 per cent). These rank above the total for all industries, with 60 per cent of the region's workforce holding non-school qualifications.

The majority of the focus industry workforces have certificate level qualifications as the highest level of non-school qualification, with construction ranking the highest at 81 per cent, followed by manufacturing at 75 per cent. The highest qualified workforce is the health care industry, with 58 workers with postgraduate degrees and 205 people with bachelor degrees level.[93]

Table 29 Highest non-school qualification level for focus industries 2021, Maranoa LGA

Local worker qualifications, 2021	All Industries	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Percentage of workforce with qualifications	60%	66%	51%	67%	43%	47%	77%
Postgraduate degree level	4%	3	4	4	5	6	58
Graduate diploma & graduate certificate	3%	4	0	0	4	6	41
Bachelor degree level	22%	14	15	13	25	17	205
Advanced diploma and diploma level	15%	29	15	23	26	27	112
Certificate level	52%	104	103	255	139	108	174
Inadequately described or not stated	4%	5	0	13	16	11	16
Total Persons in workforce (Number)	**6463**	**233**	**269**	**467**	**480**	**363**	**772**

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile - G53*

93 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). General Community Profile. *2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

4.3.2. Training pathways

Apprentices and trainees

A total of 170 apprentices and trainees were in occupations related to the focus industries, with 150 enrolled in relevant training packages. None of the apprentices and trainees in the focus areas reported as having a disability. Additionally, 15 Indigenous apprentices and trainees were in training across construction (5), retail trade (5) and health care (5). Of the 170 apprentices and trainees in the focus industry occupations, 20 per cent were female.[94]

Table 30 Attributes, focus industry apprentices and trainees in-training, 12 months ending June 2024

In-training, focus industries June 2024	Total	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Employer size							
Small - 99 employees or less	125	0	15	85	10	5	10
Medium - 100 to 499 employees	25	20	0	0	0	0	5
Large - 500 employees or more	20	0	0	0	0	0	20
Other							
Indigenous	15	0	0	5	5	0	5
Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	135	20	15	85	10	0	5
Female	35	0	0	5	0	0	30
Total Persons (Number)	**170**	**20**	**15**	**90**	**10**	**5**	**35**

Source: NCVER, *Apprentices and trainees, 2024 June quarter.* DataBuilder - Contract status, employer industry, training package. SA2 Roma and Roma Surrounds

Table 31 Occupation, all apprentices and trainees in-training, 12 months ending June 2020 to 2024

In-training, occupations, total	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Managers	5	5	5	0	0
Technicians and Trades Workers	170	205	240	245	265
Community and Personal Service Workers	25	30	30	40	40
Clerical and Administrative Workers	15	15	30	15	20
Sales Workers	5	5	5	5	5
Machinery Operators and Drivers	20	10	15	20	25
Labourers	20	30	25	25	15
Total Persons	**255**	**300**	**345**	**350**	**370**

Source: NCVER, *Apprentices and trainees, 2024 June quarter.* DataBuilder - Contract status, occupation. SA2 Roma and Roma Surrounds

94 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS.* Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats

Table 32 Occupation, focus industry apprentices and trainees in-training, 12 months ending June 2024

In-training, occupation, focus industries June 2024	Total focus	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Managers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professionals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technicians and Trades Workers	130	20	15	85	5	5	0
Community and Personal Service Workers	35	0	0	0	0	0	35
Clerical and Administrative Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sales Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Machinery Operators and Drivers	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
Labourers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Persons (Number)	**170**	**20**	**15**	**90**	**10**	**5**	**35**

Source: NCVER, *Apprentices and trainees, 2024 June quarter.* DataBuilder - Contract status, employer industry, occupation. SA2 Roma and Roma Surrounds

Table 33 Training package, focus industry apprentices and trainees, 12 months ending June 2024

In-training, occupation, focus industries June 2024	Total focus	Mining	Manf.	Constr.	Retail Trade	Accom. & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assist.
Australian Meat Processing	5	0	0	0	5	0	0
Automotive Industry Retail, Service & Repair	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	30	0	0	0	0	0	30
Construction, Plumbing & Services	45	0	0	45	0	0	0
Electrotechnology	20	0	0	20	0	0	0
Furnishing	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
Metal and Engineering	30	10	10	10	0	0	0
Resources and Infrastructure	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	5	0	0	0	0	5	0
Total Persons (Number)	**150**	**15**	**10**	**85**	**5**	**5**	**30**

Source: NCVER, *Apprentices and trainees, 2024 June quarter.* DataBuilder - Contract status, employer industry, occupation. SA2 Roma and Roma Surrounds

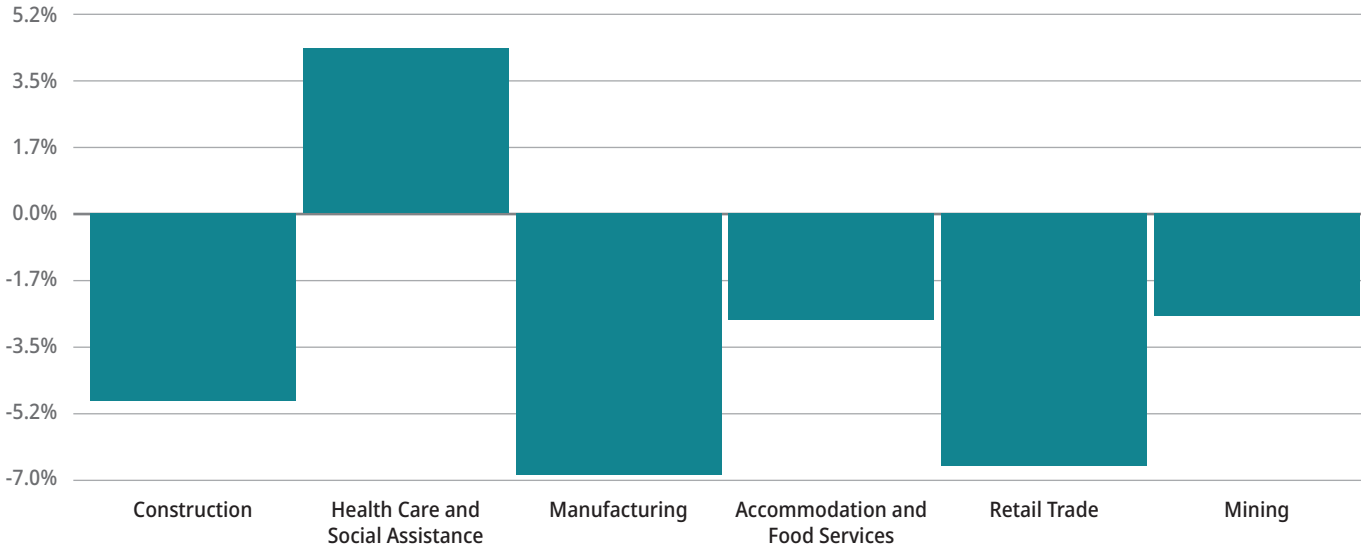
4.4. Employment projections and jobs growth

4.4.1. Employment projections

While overall employment across the focus industries in the Darling Downs – Maranoa region is projected to decline slightly by 2.7 per cent (a net change of -636 jobs over the five-year period 2023-2024 to 2027-2028), this shift reflects changes in the local economy, with some industries declining and others growing. Importantly, the region is expected to see continued job growth in health care and social assistance. This presents an opportunity to build a more resilient and responsive workforce that aligns with evolving demand, particularly in care related fields.[95]

Jobs Queensland's *Anticipating Future Skills* report indicates that the Darling Downs – Maranoa statistical region is expected to experience a decline in employment within the focus industries, labourers (-7.4 per cent) and sales workers (-6.3 per cent). Professionals (3.7 per cent) and community and personal service workers (3.1 per cent) are the only occupations projected to show an increase.[96]

Figure 26 Four-year employment growth projections 2023-2024 to 2027-2028, Darling Downs – Maranoa



Source: Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal*

Table 34 Focus Industry projected employment by occupation 2023-2024 and 2027-2028, Darling Downs – Maranoa

Occupation	Employment 2023–24	Employment 2027–28	Change %
Technicians and Trades Workers	6550	6289	-4.0%
Professionals	4156	4308	3.7%
Labourers	4540	4206	-7.4%
Managers	3687	3665	-0.6%
Sales Workers	3640	3412	-6.3%
Community and Personal Service Workers	3188	3288	3.1%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	2658	2569	-3.4%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	2289	2202	-3.8%

Source: Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal*

95 Jobs Queensland. (2025). Data portal. *Anticipating Future Skills.* Ipswich: Queensland Government. https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal

96 ibid.

4.4.2. Jobs growth

The region's ageing population and growing demand for health and care services underpin a strong employment outlook for the health care and social assistance industry. This presents significant opportunities for skills development and career growth in areas such as aged care, disability services and allied health.

While employment contractions in construction and manufacturing may impact entry-level and trade-based workers, particularly in regional areas reliant on major projects and processing industries, these shifts also present an opportunity to support transitions through targeted reskilling and upskilling initiatives. Workforce development programs and training partnerships can play a vital role in equipping workers with in-demand capabilities in emerging and adjacent industries.

Similarly, ongoing changes in the retail and accommodation and food services industries may disproportionately affect younger and part-time workers. However, these trends also highlight the importance of creating more diverse and secure career pathways into industries with stable or growing demand.

With coordinated investment in training, regional employment initiatives and industry collaboration, the region is well placed to build a resilient, future-ready workforce. Prioritising inclusive access to skills development, particularly for women, young people, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse communities will be critical to unlocking the full potential of regional workforce transformation.

4.4.3. Qualification requirements

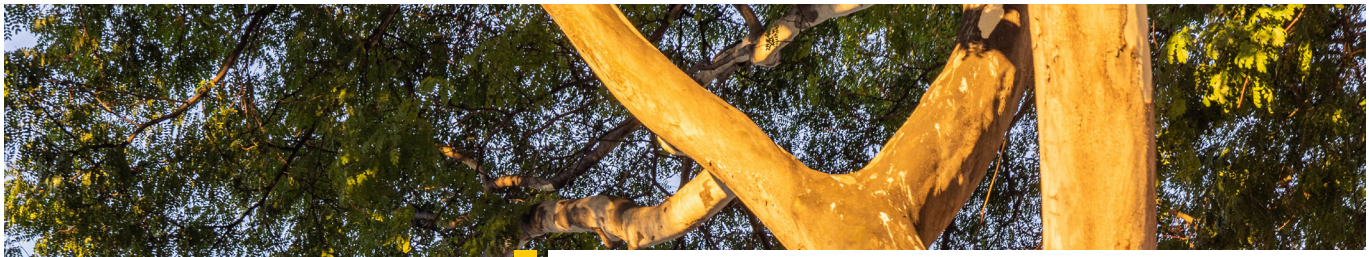
The qualification requirements of projected occupations show that within the focus industries 31.4 per cent of occupations do not require post-school qualifications, 25 per cent require a certificate level qualification and nearly 40 per cent require an advanced diploma or higher qualification.[97]

Table 35 Projected occupation by qualification level 2023 to 2028, Darling Downs – Maranoa

Qualification level	Employment 2023-2024	Employment 2027-2028	Employment 2027-2028
No post school	22,662	21,513	31.4%
Certificate I & II Level	687	505	0.74%
Certificate III & IV Level	17,805	17,666	25.8%
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate Level	1937	2017	2.95%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	7530	7514	11%
Bachelor Degree Level	13,380	13,861	20.3%
Postgraduate Degree Level	4903	5368	7.8%

Source: Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal*

97 Jobs Queensland. (2025). Data portal. *Anticipating Future Skills.* Ipswich: Queensland Government. https://jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/anticipating-future-skills/portal



4.5. Future opportunities

The workforce challenges observed through the environmental scan data, along with future workforce projections and regional developments and industry growth, flag potential opportunities to address future workforce needs for consideration in workforce planning.

The key workforce challenges include:

* retention of the workforce the aged 25 to 34 years in the region
* retention of males in the region
* high vacancies and demand for qualified and skilled workers
* projected population and workforce decline, while some industries are projecting growth particularly skilled and qualified occupations such as health and social services.

Grow your own workforce opportunities:

* improve apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates
* diverse and secure career pathways into industries with stable or growing demand
* upskilling or reskilling resident workers in occupations with high non-resident workers, such as technicians and trade workers and machinery operators and drivers.





05

EXISTING WORKFORCE STRATEGIES



State based workforce strategies developed for each industry provide insights into the challenges, opportunities and strategies for effective workforce management. The following summary and table highlight the existing strategies relevant to workforce planning within each focus industry.

Mining: The *Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan* (Department of Resources, Queensland, June 2022), outlines key focus areas for sustainable growth of the resources industry, particularly in building a safe and resilience future workforce.[98]

Manufacturing: The Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance *Manufacturing Workforce Plan 2024* identifies challenges and strategies related to the apprenticeship pipeline, talent pool diversity, an ageing workforce and the need for emerging skills.[99] The Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning *Skills Implementation Plan for Advanced Manufacturing 2019* details ten priority actions to support the transition of the manufacturing industry to advanced manufacturing.[100]

Construction: Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) *CQS Industry Outlook 2024-2025* addresses the challenges and opportunities within the construction industry and supports the CSQ Training Plan 2024-2025.[101] This plan focuses on delivering pathways for new entrants, building (residential and commercial) and civil programs, business capability and wellbeing and industry, corporate and support services.[102]

Retail Trade: The Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA) *Shaping Tomorrow Retail Sector, 2024 Workforce Planning Report* highlights the challenges of retaining and training a sustainable workforce in the retail industry.[103]

Accommodation and Food Services: The Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA) *Shaping Tomorrow Hospitality Sector, 2024 Workforce Planning Report* focuses on the challenges of retaining and training a sustainable workforce within the hospitality industry.[104]

Health Care and Social Assistance: The Queensland Health's *Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032* focuses on three key areas: supporting and retaining the current workforce, building and attracting new talent pipelines and adapting innovative methods for service delivery.[105]

Additionally, the *South West Hospital and Health Service Strategic Plan 2022-2026* outlines further strategies specific to the region's health workforce needs. These strategies provide a further foundation for addressing local industry workforce challenges and supporting future workforce planning.

98 (Former) Department of Resources. (2022). *Queensland resources industry development plan, June 2022*. Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1626647/qridp-web.pdf

99 Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance. (2024). *Manufacturing Workforce Plan 2024.* Melbourne: Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance. https://manufacturingalliance.org.au/workforceplan2024/

100 (Former) Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. (2019). *Skills implementation plan for advanced manufacturing.* Brisbane: State Government. https://www.nrmmrrd.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/1531032/skills-implementation-action-plan-summary.pdf

101 CSQ. (n.d.). CSQ Industry Outlook 2024-25. Brisbane: Construction Skills Queensland. https://www.csq.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/CSQ_Industry-Outlook_2024-25-1.pdf

102 CSQ. (n.d.). CSQ Training Plan 2024-2025. Brisbane: Construction Skills Queensland. https://www.csq.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/CSQ_Training_Plan_2024-25.pdf

103 Service and Creative Skills Australia. (2024). *"Shaping Tomorrow" Workforce Planning Report, Retail | 2024.* Australia: Service and Creative Skills Australia. https://sacsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Retail_Full_Report_2024_Compressed.pdf

104 Service and Creative Skills Australia. (2024). *"Shaping Tomorrow" Workforce Planning Report, Hospitality | 2024.* Australia: Service and Creative Skills Australia. https://sacsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Hospitality_Full_Report_2024_Web_Ready.pdf

105 Queensland Health. (2024). *Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032.* Brisbane: Queensland Government. https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0039/1339995/Health-Workforce-Strategy_Digital.pdf



Table 36 Summary of existing workforce strategies (References as noted above)

RISKS & CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGIES
MINING		
* Future demand for gas is uncertain and will continue to be shaped by global energy transitions and decarbonisation efforts * The industry must strengthen its environmental, social and governance (ESG) credentials to position itself as a safe, diverse and inclusive sector * Increasing workforce participation by women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, defence force veterans and people with disability remains a key priority * An ageing workforce presents opportunities for mentoring and skills transfer, particularly from workers aged 55–65. This is relevant across sectors, especially in manufacturing * Improving childcare access, such as expanding state-subsidised centres linked to local schools could support greater workforce participation by women	* Providing high-quality, high wage jobs and careers * Technological innovation and the increasing adoption of emerging or low-use technologies present opportunities to reshape * Workforce needs met through professional skills and tertiary qualifications * Reskilling workforce in roles with automation and digital technologies	* Industry Skills Advisors to provide advice on industry training needs * Skilled migration project to meet labour supply shortages * Attract former Australian Defence Force personnel talent pool with transferable skills * Provide pathway opportunities for school leavers and people changing careers * Developing a workforce plan for resource industry to identify future skills needed in the regions * Attracting skilled workforce through Gateway to Industry Schools Program * Upskilling existing and future workers
MANUFACTURING		
* Attraction and increasing pipeline of apprentices * Lack of diversity of the talent pool * Ageing workforce * Emerging skills, occupations and industries * Shortages due to low job retention and long training time * Australia's manufacturing workforce is older than the general workforce, increasing the challenges of both upskilling staff and replacing skilled staff as they retire (House of Representatives 2023, 93)	* Changing perceptions and by increasing awareness of exciting careers in manufacturing * Increase pipeline of apprentices and improve apprenticeship completions * Skills transfer and retention solutions like job transfer and redesign relating to the retirement of the ageing workforce * Attract under-utilised groups of people ready and wanting to work, including women, First Nations Australians, CALD communities, and individuals with disabilities * Formal and informal skills development, throughout individuals' careers * Positioning manufacturing workforce as key partner for advanced manufacturing * Strengthening the business capability of manufacturers * Facilitating enhanced partnerships and engagement to better prepare new entrants	* Making manufacturing an attractive worker proposition * Facilitate knowledge transfer across different age demographics * Succession planning and mentoring * Industry education programs * Provide skills and training that are responsive to emerging demand * Best practice tool kit * Priority training pathways for the manufacturing sector include: * Certificate I to Advanced Diploma level training * Apprenticeships and traineeships under the User Choice program * Entry-level skills under the Certificate 3 Guarantee program * Existing workers seeking skills to advance their careers under the Higher-Level Skills program

RISKS & CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGIES
CONSTRUCTION		
* Labour shortages * Significant challenges resulting in a record (and growing) backlog of unfinished construction work * The population continues to grow and will need more homes and infrastructure to support this * Drop in residential dwelling approvals in 2023, while non-residential building approvals surged, driven by public infrastructure projects under the Queensland Government's Big Build program, focus on transport, energy, health, water, and education projects. Concurrent projects across different sectors will heighten demand for workers from an already stretched supply * Women still only comprise 17% of the total construction workforce and just over 5% in construction trades. * Increasing apprenticeships and promoting gender diversity are crucial for workforce expansion and sustainability	* Keep projects moving on time and avoid skills shortages by identifying what the skill need is, when it is needed and how to fill the gap * Programs supporting healthy workers and a safe work environment across the three focus areas of mental health, corporate social responsibility and diversity * Enhancing participation in and completion of apprenticeships and traineeships * Enabling skills through remote, regional and state-wide engagement * Inform and inspire industry about the future of work in construction * Innovations in construction methods and workforce development will be critical to meeting future demands	* Working with schools, students and industry to promote and trial building and construction career and job options * Pre-trade programs to help potential workers achieve entry into the industry and/or a trade and help keep our industry supplied with qualified staff * Training and services designed to meet the needs of major projects and their supply chain * Tailored qualifications and services for residential and commercial builders, workers and subcontractors * Training and services designed to meet the needs of civil workers and businesses
RETAIL TRADE AND ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES		
* High turnover, entry level jobs and recruitment challenges * Perceptions as not being longer-term career pathway * Low annualised pay * Customer aggression * Difficult to fill upstream or leadership roles such as supervisors or managers * Online sales and fast food disruptions to service based industry * Automation and digital transformation requiring reskilling and upskilling * Declining VET employer engagement, enrolments and completions * Employers, especially small business, need help to navigate VET programs and initiatives * Loss of industry experience from Covid-19	* Retail sector provides an entry point into the workforce and first job for many young people * Nurturing work ethic and foundational skills * Concentration of part-time employment offers flexibility benefits * Migrant visa holders meeting gaps and shortages and seasonal demands in regional areas * Shift perceptions about career opportunities * Industry focus upskilling and delivery of training through private and enterprise training providers for in-house and on-the-job-training * Improve remuneration to enhance attractiveness	* Ensure VET meets changing industry needs for digitisation and relevancy * Migration strategy and training on current and emerging skills needs * Promote Transition to Work, Launch into Work and Traineeships programs * Employer participation in VET pathways and connect with career pathway initiatives

RISKS & CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGIES
HEALTH		
* Workforce projected increase 30.3% Queensland, 20.1% in rural and remote areas by 2032 * Increasing demand for services due to growing and ageing population. * Workforce attrition rate * Increased workforce demands, especially specialty areas in regional areas * Ability to effectively recruit and retain high quality workforce and continuously improve workplace culture	* Partnerships with social services sectors and education and training sectors * Integrate digital technologies to streamline workflows and service delivery * Think laterally and implement innovative workforce models that work to the top of scope and deliver safe, equitable and high-value care in our rural and remote communities * Invest in people and communities to develop and leverage talent and resources	* Support and retain the current workforce * Build and attract new pipelines of talent * Adapt and innovate new ways to deliver * Design and implement responsive workforce models that optimise scope of practice, capacity and workforce quality to deliver care to our communities * Partner to provide leadership in rural and remote healthcare education and training

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