SEPTEMBER 2025

RCAT
ROMA COMMERCE AND TOURISM



Maranoa Region Workforce Development Plan

Focussing on mining, manufacturing, construction, retail trade, accommodation and food services and health care and social assistance.

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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INTRODUCTION

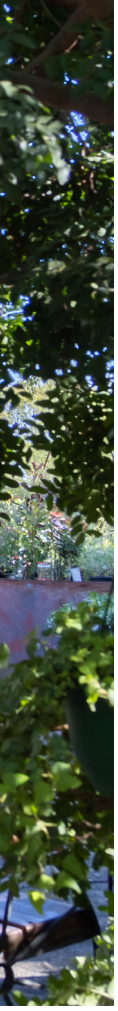
Roma Commerce and Tourism (RCAT), funded by the Queensland Government through Jobs Queensland's Grow Your Own Regional Workforce (GYO) Program, is leading the development of a locally driven workforce development plan for the Maranoa region. The GYO program empowers regions to codesign practical, place-based solutions that strengthen workforce resilience, build local capacity and ensure inclusive participation across industries.

Research highlights 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 underpins the GYO model; equipping local people with the skills and opportunities to meet both current and future industry demand.

The Maranoa Region Workforce Development Plan takes a collaborative, region-first approach to aligning job opportunities with industry growth while addressing shared challenges such as population decline, skills shortages and demographic shifts. It focuses on six industries recognised for their significance to the local economy and future workforce needs:

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

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



Development of the plan followed four key stages.

Figure 1 Developing the Maranoa region workforce development plan

STAGE 1	Get started – establishing the Industry Advisory Group to guide planning.
STAGE 2	Gather information – undertaking an environmental scan and workforce analysis.
STAGE 3	Identify issues and find solutions - consulting with industry and community stakeholders.
STAGE 4	Develop, implement and monitor - codesigning strategies with industry to build a sustainable workforce.

From this process, five priority areas of focus were identified as critical to securing the Maranoa region's future workforce:

01 **MEET FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS:** building awareness of future work pipelines and improving training engagement in priority areas.

02 **IMPROVE WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION:** promoting career pathways, encouraging diversity, supporting succession and retaining local knowledge.

03 **ENHANCE TRAINING SYSTEM ENGAGEMENT:** expanding local training options, aligning courses with industry needs and supporting apprenticeships and traineeships.

04 **DEVELOP CROSS-SECTOR WORK MOBILITY:** enabling workers to transistion between industries through targeted gap training.

05 **BUILD BUSINESS CAPABILITY:** strengthening leadership, management and industry coordination to make local businesses employers of choice.

These priority areas provide strategic framework for the workforce development plan. The following sections set out the regional context, industry insights and workforce strategies to deliver on these priorities and support a sustainable workforce for the Maranoa.



MARANOA REGION

Population

The Maranoa Local Government Area (LGA) has a resident population of 13,371 people and has experienced modest average annual growth of 0.8 per cent between 2016 to 2021.[2] However, long-term projections suggest a decline of 0.6 per cent (around 1714 people) by 2046, accompanied by a rise in the median age from 37.8 to 41 years. The age structure is expected to continue shifting, with fewer younger residents (0-24 years) and a growing proportion of older residents (65+ years).[3]

The region's population also reflects increasing diversity. Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up 9.7 per cent of the population, growing by 2.6 per cent between 2016 and 2021. The proportion of overseas-born residents is also rising, currently at 7 per cent.[4] Harnessing the strengths of these diverse communities will be important in building a sustainable and inclusive workforce.

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

2 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

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

4 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



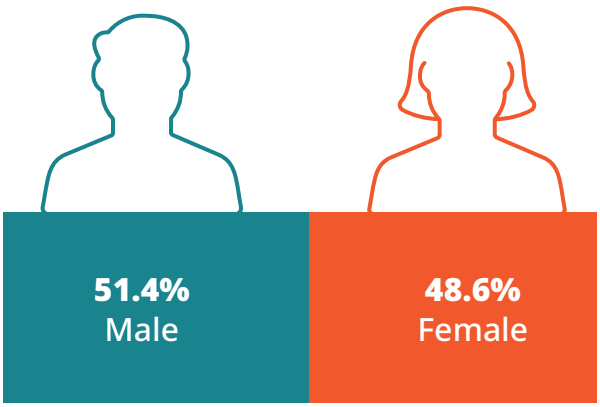
Employment characteristics

Maranoa provides 7321 jobs but has only 6463 employed residents, creating more jobs than available local workers.[5] Around 18.5 per cent of workers commute from outside the region, reflecting reliance on fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) arrangements, while 4.6 per cent of residents travel elsewhere for work.[6]

The region experiences a very high employment rate at 97.6 per cent[7], with mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing and health care and social assistance accounting for 39.2 per cent of the total workforce.[8] Job vacancies are also high, particularly for highly qualified roles for professionals, followed by technicians and trades workers.[9]

Workforce demographics are shifting, there are fewer workers aged 25-49, more aged over 55 and a declining number of males. Notably, 42.9 per cent of male workers work more than 50 hours per week, raising concerns around workforce fatigue, work-life balance and succession planning.[10]

PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS BY GENDER



97.6%
Total employed

67.1%
Full-time workers

23.8%
Part-Time workers

4.1%
Employed away from work

2.5%
Total unemployed

1.5%
Seeking full-time work

0.9%
Seeking part-time work

6625 responses

5 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

6 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

7 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

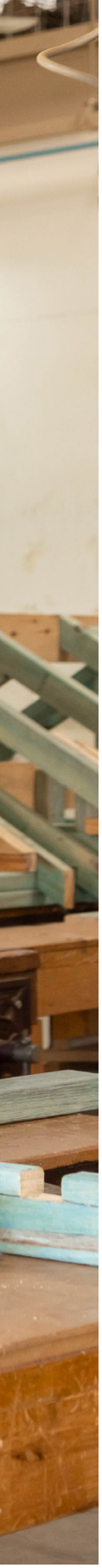
8 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Working Population Profile. 2021 Census Community Profile.* Canberra: Australian Government. https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area

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

10 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



FOCUS INDUSTRIES



Mining, manufacturing and construction

The mining industry will remain a cornerstone of the Maranoa economy, supported by major projects including gas field developments, renewable energy and transmission line infrastructure.

The Surat Basin is one of Queensland's most significant Coal Seam Gas (CSG) production regions, with Maranoa and Western Downs LGAs accounting for over 80 per cent of the state's CSG activity. According to the *Major Projects Pipeline 2023* report, Queensland is forecast to deliver $92 billion in civil construction and engineering projects over the next five years, with the Darling Downs – Maranoa region contributing $3.5 billion.[11] [12]

Mining is the most productive industry in the region, generating $729,488 per worker and employing a large workforce.[13] However, reliance on fly-in-fly-out workers is significant, of the 1239 mining roles, only 362 are filled by local residents. The mining workforce is dominated by technicians, tradespeople and machinery operators.[14]

The Maranoa region is also a trade services hub, with more than 450 Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) licensed trade contractors supplying services to local industries and western communities.[15] Workforce capability in construction and manufacturing directly influences the ability of local businesses and project developers to source services locally.

Construction activity is closely linked to energy and resources developments, with local heavy and civil engineering contractors often subcontracted for specialist work. Outside major projects, the local construction industry focuses on housing, community facilities and rural property upgrades.

The manufacturing industry, strongly aligned with the gas extraction operations, supports energy and resources through plant infrastructure, gas pipelines, machinery maintenance and emergency services. Broader activity includes agricultural equipment manufacturing, meat processing, metal fabrication, baked goods and timber milling.

Potential contractions in construction and manufacturing may affect entry-level and trade-based roles, particularly in areas tied to major projects and processing industries.[16] This highlights the importance of targeted reskilling and upskilling to support worker transition into high demand occupations.

* Skills shortages in trades, technicians and machinery operators present a critical risk to sustaining local industry productivity and meeting project delivery requirements.
* Local employment opportunities could be strengthened by expanding trade apprenticeship pathways and improving promotion and awareness of these opportunities.
* High reliance on FIFO workers in mining highlights the need to enhance local workforce attraction and retention, alongside addressing housing availability.
* Investment in skills for energy, renewables and advanced manufacturing will support workforce diversification and resilience, enabling the region to adapt to changing industry demands.

11 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/

12 Ibid.

13 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

14 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

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

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

Retail trade, accommodation and food services

The retail trade and accommodation and food services industries remain steady, supported by international brand stores, new builds in fuel and retail and a growing mix of restaurants, cafes, pubs, accommodation providers and function centres. Together these industries account for 11.5 per cent of regional employment.[17]

They provide both an economic base and important liveability factor, ensuring goods and services are available locally while creating employment opportunities across the region. Unlike mining, the retail workforce is almost entirely resident-based, with 100 per cent of jobs filled by locals. This anchors the industries as vital contributors to regional economic sustainability and community wellbeing.

While retail trade and accommodation and food services face ongoing structural change that may disproportionately affect younger and part-time workers, these industries remain priorities for the region.[18] [19] Maintaining essential services across these industries is critical to supporting community liveability and sustaining the broader regional economy. Although employment projections indicate a contraction across most industries, including mining, they continue to underpin local economic activity and workforce participation, particularly in smaller towns where they provide stable, locally based jobs.

Workforce planning and development implications:

- The retail industry is a major entry point for young workers; career pathways and skills development programs can enhance retention and progression.
- Hospitality and food services are exposed to high turnover due to casualised and entry-level roles; flexible work arrangements and training in customer service, digital tools and compliance can strengthen workforce stability.
- The strong local participation rate, combined with the high accessibility of casual and part-time roles, presents opportunities to expand employment for underrepresented groups such as youth, women returning to work and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while providing transferable skills for career progression.

Health care and social assistance

Roma is the regional health hub, strengthened by the new hospital and expanded availability of specialist services. The South West Hospital and Health Service delivers hospital, community and allied health services, including home and community care to Roma and surrounding towns.

Health care and social assistance is one of the fastest-growing industries in the Darling Downs – Maranoa region, with projected job growth in residential care, allied health and social assistance.[20] Looking ahead, Maranoa's ageing population will increase demand for health and care services, presenting opportunities for training and career development in aged care, disability services and allied health.

Workforce planning and development implications:

- Increased demand for health professionals, aged care workers and allied health practitioners requires strengthened training pipelines.
- Rural and remote location challenges necessitate targeted attraction strategies, including housing, professional support networks and career development opportunities.
- Upskilling existing workers in mental health, disability support and aged care is critical to service delivery.
- Collaboration between health providers, training organisations and government will be essential to meet future workforce needs.

17 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

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

19 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

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

Current workforce strategies of focus industries

Workforce planning for the Maranoa region has been informed by key state-based industry strategies, which provide insights into sector-specific challenges, opportunities and future skills needs. While no region-specific workforce plans currently exist (except in health care and social assistance), alignment with these broader strategies ensures the Maranoa Workforce Development Plan reflects Queensland's strategic priorities while responding to local workforce realities.

These focus industries are defined according to Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) categories (see Appendix 1 for detailed groupings and data sources).

Mining: The *Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan* (2022), emphasises building a safe and resilient workforce, supported by stronger training pathways and future skills planning. For Maranoa, this highlights opportunities to increase local participation in mining jobs that are currently filled by non-resident workers.[21]

Manufacturing: The *Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance Workforce Plan 2024* and *Queensland's Skills Implementation Plan for Advanced Manufacturing* (2019) both stress the need to strengthen apprenticeship pipelines, diversify the talent pool and address emerging skills.[22, 23] For Maranoa, this means building a skilled local workforce to support transition into advanced manufacturing.

Construction: Construction Skills Queensland's (CSQ) *Industry Outlook 2024-2025* and *Training Plan* prioritise pathways for new entrants, business capability and workforce wellbeing.[24] These align with Maranoa's need to attract and retain skilled construction workers to support regional development.

Retail trade: The *Shaping Tomorrow Retail Sector, 2024 Workforce Planning Report* identifies challenges in workforce retention and training. For Maranoa, sustaining a skilled retail workforce will be critical to supporting both the local economy and growing tourism industry.[25]

Accommodation and food services: The *Shaping Tomorrow Hospitality Sector, 2024 Workforce Planning Report* highlights workforce shortages, retention challenges and training gaps.[26] In Maranoa, this aligns directly with the need to support the regions tourism and hospitality growth.

Health care and social assistance: *The Queensland Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032* and the *South West Hospital and Health Service Strategic Plan 2022-2026* focus on retention, attraction and innovative service delivery methods.[27] These strategies are especially relevant for Maranoa given the importance of health care and the challenges of servicing an ageing population.

Focus industries snapshot

The key attributes of the Maranoa LGA and focus industries have been summarised on the next page for the purposes of informing workforce strategies and determining priority areas and industries for action. The assessment is subjective and contextual, and considers the following key criteria:

Risk: What is the level of risk or threat to industry (high, medium, low)

Response need: How important is action to improve the current situation (high, medium, low)

Performance indicator: How does the industry rate compared to the region and other industries (high, medium, low)

21 (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

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

23 (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

24 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

25 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

26 Ibid.

27 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 1 Maranoa LGA focus industries snapshot

INDUSTRY	LGA	Mining	Manufacturing	Construction	Retail Trade	Accommodation and Food Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Total workers 2021[a]	7321	542	269	542	472	428	791
Resident workers 2021[a]	6463	227	260	459	459	348	757
Local workers living in the region[a]	91.7%	32.5%	95.2%	69.9%	98.5%	81.5%	93%
Resident workers employed in region[a]	81.4%	77.5%	98.5%	82.6%	99.1%	100%	97.2%
Change in resident workers 2016 to 2021[a]	-0.7%	+ 8.0%	+ 5.1%	+9.5%	+ 2.3%	+3.8%	+1.4%
Change in employment 23-24 to 27-28 (DD-M)[b]	-0.7%	- 2.2%	- 3.2%	- 4.9%	- 5.9%	- 2.8%	+ 4.3%
Income below $1,750 per week[a]	65%	27%	90%	62%	86%	92%	71%
Workforce with qualification 2021[c]	53.2%	66.8%	50.2%	63.7%	41.2%	45%	75.9%
Productivity per worker 2024[d]	$254,544	$729,488	$130,848	$153,799	$92,315	$89,206	$87,671
Small businesses (0-4 employees) 2024[e]	92%	88%	70%	90%	74%	63%	91%
Large businesses +$2million revenue[e]	189	0	11	25	20	7	0
Workforce aged 25-34 years[c]	19%	26%	21%	22%	18%	16%	22%
Workforce aged 55-64 years[c]	18%	14%	15%	18%	15%	14%	21%
Hours worked +50 hours - males[f]	43%	54%	27%	46%	31%	36%	17%
Hours worked +50 hours - females[f]	16%	23%	18%	14%	10%	15%	9%
Female[f]	44.5%	10.8%	34%	13.4%	63%	62.8%	83.5%
Born overseas[f]	11.7%	21.5%	9.2%	8%	9.9%	30.8%	16%
Indigenous[f]	6.4%	4.4%	10.3%	6.2%	8.4%	9.3%	7.1%

(DD-M) – Darling Downs-Maranoa area
(a) ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 – by journey to work and place of work
(b) Jobs Queensland, Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal
(c) ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, General Community Profile
(d) National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), National economics modelled series – Industry sector analysis
(e) ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, July 2020 – June 2024
(f) ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, Working Population Profile

The occupations as a portion of the local workforce for the Maranoa LGA and focus industries is represented below. The heatmap shows the distribution relative to the focus industries, with darker shades showing a higher portion of the workforce represented.

Table 2 Focus industries occupations snapshot

Occupations (number)	LGA Total	Mining	Manufacturing	Construction	Retail Trade	Accommodation and Food Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Total persons (Number)	7328	233	269	467	480	363	772
Focus industry (% total workers)	40%	4%	4%	7%	7%	6%	12%
Managers	22.5%	11%	16%	18%	17%	21%	7%
Professionals	12.9%	10%	4%	2%	2%	1%	35%
Technicians and Trades Workers	13.3%	39%	27%	34%	11%	10%	3%
Community and Personal Services	9%	0	0	0	1%	26%	31%
Clerical and Administrative	11.7%	9%	13%	11%	8%	6%	15%
Sales Workers	7.2%	0	6%	0	50%	13%	0
Machinery Operators and Drivers	8.1%	24%	10%	20%	3%	2%	0
Labourers	13.3%	5%	23%	15%	8%	23%	8%

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

The key attributes relating to occupations have been summarised below for the purposes of informing workforce strategies and determining priority areas and occupations for action.

Table 3 Maranoa LGA occupations snapshot

OCCUPATION	Managers	Professionals	Technicians and Trades	Community and Personal Services	Clerical and Admin	Sales	Machinery Operators and Drivers	Labourers
Occupations 2021 LGA residents[(a)]	1,451	831	858	582	756	468	524	858
Occupations 2021 Focus Industries[(b)]	432	399	663	359	296	299	311	368
Change in occupation 2016 to 2021[(c)]	-0.3%	4.3%	2%	6.5%	-0.7%	3%	-11.6%	4%
Online vacancies April 2025 (DD-M) [(d)]	84	183	110	120	64	78	114	218
Qualification diploma and higher 2021[(e)]	454	756	131	206	215	51	37	94
Qualification certificate level 2021[(e)]	375	80	789	167	234	115	249	204
Change in worker qualifications 23-24 to 27-28 (DD-M) [(f)]	-0.6%	3.7%	-4.0%	3.1%	-3.4%	-6.3%	-3.8%	-7.4%
Total VET enrolments 2023[(g)]	15	50	365	395	205	20	90	175
Apprentice and trainee enrolments 2023[(g)]	0	0	275	40	25	5	30	30
Apprentice and trainee completions 2023[(g)]	0	0	40	10	5	0	5	20

(DD-M) – Darling Downs-Maranoa area
(LGA) – Local Government Area
(a) ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T35
(b) ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G56
(c) ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021, Time Series Profile - T31
(d) Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, April 2025 data released in May 2025
(e) ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2021, Working Population Profile – W18
(f) Jobs Queensland, Anticipating Future Skills, Data portal
(g) NCVER. (2025). VOCSTATS. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.



MEGATRENDS

The Maranoa region and its key industries are being shaped by several global megatrends identified in CSIRO's Our Future World report.[28] These trends are influencing how businesses operate, the types of skills in demand and the long-term sustainability of the regional workforce. Understanding how these trends intersect with local strengths and challenges is essential for building a resilient and adaptive regional economy.

Climate change

Environmental and social governance

Transformative technology

Geopolitical impacts

Rising care economy

28 Naughtin C, Hajkowicz S, Schleiger E, Bratanova A, Cameron A, Zamin T, Dutta A (2022). *Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades.* Brisbane, Australia: CSIRO. https://www.csiro.au/en/research/technology-space/data/our-future-world

Climate change and environmental sustainability

Maranoa's industries, particularly agriculture, resources and construction are increasingly exposed to the impacts of extreme weather events such as drought, flooding and fire. These events can disrupt production, services and supply chains, affecting everything from livestock transport to infrastructure delivery. Reliable and affordable energy is also critical for regional businesses, with growing opportunities to improve energy efficiency and adopt renewable solutions that strengthen resilience and reduce operating costs.

Environmental and social governance

Consumer and investor expectations are shifting towards more sustainable and ethical goods and services. For Maranoa's producers, manufacturers and tourism operators, demonstrating transparency in sourcing, labour practices and resource use is becoming a competitive advantage. Businesses that embed strong environmental and social governance (ESG) practices are better positioned to access new markets, meet compliance standards and attract both customers and skilled workers who value sustainability.

Transformative technology

Digital technologies, including automation, robotics, artificial intelligence and data analytics are reshaping industries across Maranoa. Health care, manufacturing, construction and resources are already seeing changes in how work is performed, with opportunities to improve productivity, reduce costs and enhance service quality. Realising these benefits depends on investment in digital infrastructure and building workforce digital capability through training, upskilling and local access to technology.

Geopolitical impacts

Global political shifts and changing trade policies can influence the demand for Maranoa's key exports and inputs, from agricultural products to manufactured goods. Building supply chain diversity, strengthening regional logistics networks and fostering strategic partnerships will help local industries remain competitive and adaptable amid international uncertainty.

The rising care economy

An ageing population and growing focus on health and wellbeing are increasing demand for care services across the Maranoa region. Health care and social assistance are central to this trend, driving ongoing workforce needs in clinical and support roles. There are also flow-on opportunities for retail, accommodation and food services through wellness tourism, healthy dining options and age-friendly services that enhance community liveability.

Human capabilities

As technology and globalisation reshape industries, human skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration are becoming even more important. These capabilities underpin workforce adaptability across all sectors, from construction sites to health services and will be essential for attracting and retaining talent, fostering innovation and sustaining economic growth in Maranoa.

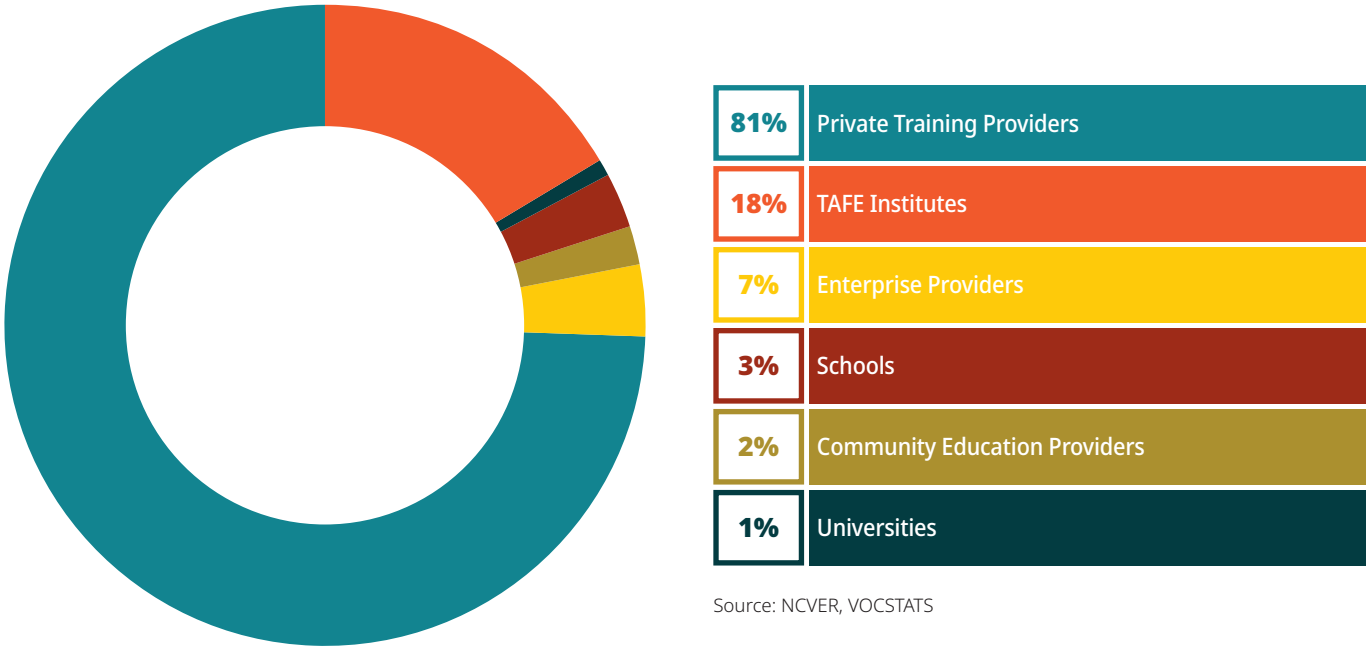


TRAINING PROFILE

The Maranoa region has a diverse education and training network that supports a wide range of pathways into training and employment. Local infrastructure includes a TAFE campus, private and public schools, a Country Universities Centre (CUC), community-based training providers and locally based registered training organisations and group training organisations.

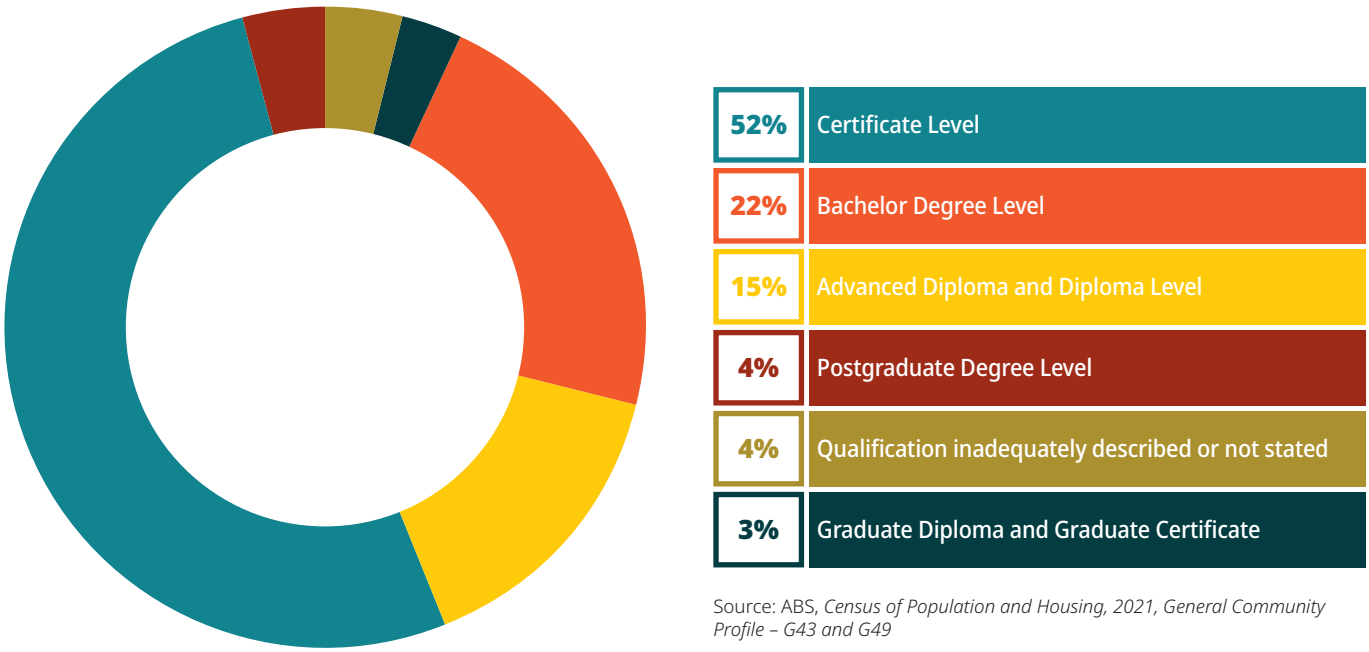
Collaboration between training providers, industries and employers creates opportunities to align training with regional workforce needs and strengthen pathways for residents to secure local employment.

Figure 2 Maranoa LGA VET student enrolments by provider type



Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Figure 3 Maranoa LGA VET student enrolments by provider type



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile – G43 and G49*

Focus industries training profile

The health care and social assistance industry has the most highly qualified workforce, with 58 workers holding postgraduate qualifications (39 per cent of persons with this level of qualification) and 205 people holding bachelor degrees (24 per cent of persons with this level of qualification).[29]

Construction and manufacturing rely heavily on vocational qualifications with 81 per cent of the construction workforce and 75 per cent of the manufacturing workforce holding a certificate level qualification as their highest non-school qualification.[30]

The most common fields of study across the Maranoa region workforce are:

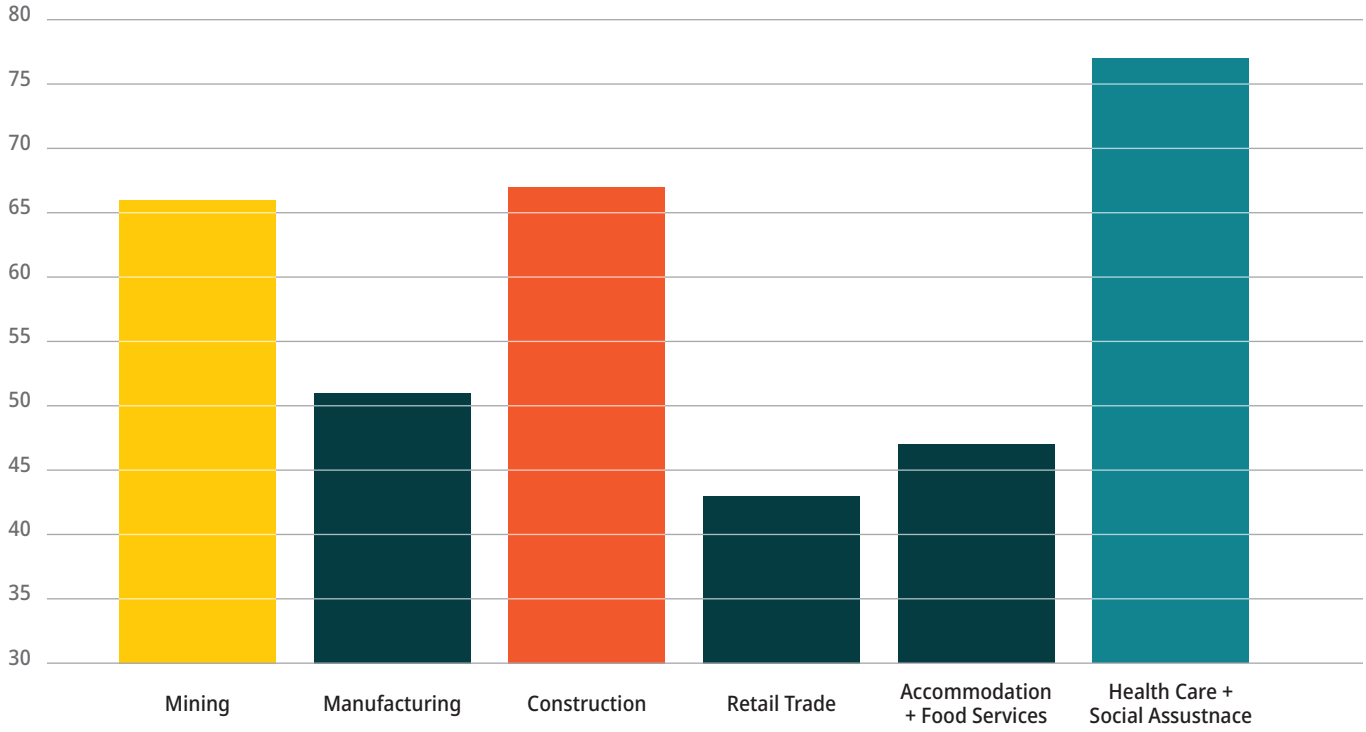
* Engineering and related technologies
* Management and commerce
* Health.[31]

VET enrolments have generally increased over the past four years, with 1760 enrolments in 2024, of which 11.3 per cent of students identified as First nations.[32]

Apprenticeships and traineeships are concentrated in industries such as manufacturing, construction and health care and social assistance. In 2021, there were 370 apprentices and trainees in training, 185 new commencements, 95 completions and 95 cancellations or withdrawals. A further 59 school-based apprenticeships and traineeships were active.[33]

However, completion rates remain a challenge. Barriers include the need for apprentices to travel to major centres for training blocks and the high cost to employers of bringing trainers into the region when student numbers are small. These issues contribute to high levels of cancellations and turnover, with increase costs for businesses and slow the development of a skilled local workforce.

Figure 4 Maranoa LGA focus industry percentage of workforce with qualifications



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021, General Community Profile - G51*

29 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
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats
33 NCVER. (2025). *VOCSTATS*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/vocstats



WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Building a diverse and inclusive workforce is essential to sustaining Maranoa's future labour supply and mitigating demographic shifts such as population ageing and youth outmigration. Workforce diversification is not only a social imperative but a practical strategy to strengthen local capability, innovation and business resilience. By improving access to skills development for women, young people, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, mature-age workers and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, the region can expand its available workforce and build a stronger foundation for future growth. Coordinated investment in training, regional employment initiatives and industry collaboration will be key to unlocking the full potential of Maranoa's workforce.

Women

In 2021, women represented 48.6 per cent of the labour force, with 54.9 per cent under 45 years of age.[34] Between 2016 to 2021, workforce decline among women under 49 was less pronounced then for men and labour force participation among women over 55 years is growing.[35] Females accounted for 20 per cent of the 170 apprentices and trainees in focus industry occupations.[36]

While women are generally well represented across the workforce, participation in some industries and trades remains limited. Flexible working and training arrangements that accommodate caring responsibilities, alongside supportive networks, mentorships and career development opportunities are critical to supporting women's participation and progression.

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 Ibid.

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



People with disability

In 2021, 64 people requiring assistance with core activities were recorded in the local labour force, with 22 employed full-time. No apprentices or trainees in focus industries identified as having a disability.

Barriers to employment include lack of accessible workplaces and limited tailored opportunities. Promoting inclusive workplace cultures, accessible infrastructure, flexible arrangements and tailored training support participation and retention of people with disability in both traditional and hybrid employment models.[37]

Mature-age workers

Older adults (55-64 years) comprised 17.8 per cent of the employed population, though participation declines as retirement approaches. Workers aged 65+ represent 8.5 per cent of employment.

Given their experience and knowledge, there is significant value in encouraging continued participation through flexible work, mentoring roles, consultancy and targeted upskilling opportunities designed for mature workers.

First Nations peoples

Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples accounted for 6.4 per cent of the workforce in 2021.[38] Representation was highest in administration and support services (19.8 per cent), with strong participation across manufacturing, accommodation and food services and retail trade.[39] Vocational Education and Training (VET) enrolments included 10.3 per cent First Nations students, with 15 apprentices and trainees engaged across construction, retail trade and health care.[40]

Cultural competency within businesses, inclusive workplaces and tailored pathways are critical to supporting participation, retention and progression of First Nations workers.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

The Maranoa welcomes a growing culturally diverse workforce, with residents from the Philippines, India, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, China, New Zealand, England, South Africa, Scotland and Canada.

Challenges faced by CALD workers include adapting to roles requiring advanced community and social skills. Targeted workplace integration initiatives, training and campaigns promoting accessible career pathways can strengthen participation and retention.

Broadening participation across all workforce groups will be critical to ensuring Maranoa has the skills, diversity and capacity required to meet future industry demand, strengthen local business capability and support the long-term sustainability of the regional economy.

37 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

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 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

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

BUSINESS PROFILE

The Maranoa region's economy is dominated by small enterprises, with 52.5 per cent of businesses recording an annual turnover of less than $200,000 and 71.9 per cent operating as non-employing businesses.[41] Larger enterprises are comparatively few, with only 32 businesses employing between 20 and 199 staff, and 27 businesses reporting an annual turnover of $10 million or more.[42]

While small businesses are the backbone of the Maranoa economy, their limited scale often constrains capacity for structured workforce planning and development, training investment and succession management. Many operate with lean staffing and rely on informal recruitment and on-the-job learning rather than long-term skills strategies. This can make it more difficult to attract and retain skilled workers, particularly in specialised or technical roles. Strengthening collaboration between small businesses, local training providers and regional workforce initiatives will be key to building workforce capability and supporting sustainable business growth across the region.

Businesses face several challenges, including persistent vacancies in skilled positions, a tight local labour market due to low unemployment and owner-operators working long hours to sustain operations.[43] [44] These factors place pressure in business sustainability and succession, while also highlighting the need for targeted workforce planning and development that supports recruitment, retention and succession pathways.

The six focus industries account for 22 per cent (577) of all businesses in the Maranoa LGA. In 2024, 43.6 per cent of the focus industry businesses reported an annual turnover between $200,000 and $2 million.[45] Accommodation and food services had the highest proportion in this range (70.2 per cent), while health care and social assistance businesses were more likely to report lower turnovers, with 68.8 per cent earning under $200,000 annually. Manufacturing and retail trade together accounted for 14.6 per cent of all businesses with turnovers between $2 million and $5 million.[46]

Business resilience, capability and workforce implications

Strengthening business capabilities, entrepreneurial skills and continuity planning will be essential for sustaining economic growth across the region. Given the high proportion of small and non-employing businesses, workforce planning and development activities needs to focus on:

* building recruitment pipelines that connect local jobseekers to small business opportunities
* supporting succession planning and leadership development to reduce owner-dependence
* enabling upskilling and reskilling to expand the capabilities of small workforces
* ensuring businesses can adapt to emerging opportunities through innovation and workforce flexibility.

By aligning business capability initiatives with workforce planning and development strategies, the region can strengthen economic resilience, improve productivity and support a more sustainable balance between business growth and workforce supply.

41 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

42 Ibid.

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

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

46 Ibid.



Building the business ecosystem

Enhancing the skills and capability of business owners and managers, particularly in leadership, planning and workforce development, is crucial to building the resilience, sustainability and growth potential of local industries. A tailored approach is required to ensure businesses can access the support they need to develop strategic workforce plans, with a strong focus on diversification, retention and long-term workforce sustainability.

Cross-industry collaboration to identify business growth strategies, industry development priorities and future project pipelines will help align workforce supply with emerging opportunities. Addressing key challenges such as high vacancies in skilled positions, low unemployment and the significant hours worked by business owners will require businesses to optimise workforce planning and strengthen operational resilience.

Strategic business planning establishes future goals, whether expanding operations, diversifying into new markets or maintaining niche specialisations, and provides the foundation for aligning workforce needs to these goals. It also ensures resources such are funding, technology and human capital are allocated effectively. Businesses with clear workforce and growth strategies are better positioned to seize opportunities, adapt to market shifts and sustain long-term competitiveness.

Leadership and management capability is central to this ecosystem. Training and mentoring can strengthen decision-making, strategic planning and team management, while also nurturing emerging leaders. Investing in career progression pathways, particularly into leadership and management roles, enhances employee retention and reinforces business resilience.

A clear organisation level workforce plan also underpins targeted investment in training and development. Skills assessments and gap analyses can identify priority training needs, support individual career progression and ensure alignment with business and industry goals. Businesses can expand workforce participation by offering tailored training and support for underrepresented groups, unlocking new sources of labour. Embedding a culture of continuous learning ensures employees remain current with industry trends, technology and best practice.

Industry-led collaboration, leadership and information sharing will be increasingly important to meet future demand for a skilled workforce. Growing competition for labour makes it difficult for small regional businesses to attract and retain talent, emphasising the need for “grow your own” strategies and retention initiatives. Strong business capability, supported by leadership and strategic planning, will underpin industry innovation, adaptation and resilience, ensuring the region’s economy is well positioned for sustainable growth.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Maranoa region faces a combination of structural workforce challenges and emerging opportunities that will shape local employment over the coming decades. An ageing population and rising demand for health care and social services are driving strong prospects for skills development and career growth in aged care, disability services and allied health. Conversely, contractions in sectors such as construction and manufacturing may disproportionately affect entry-level and trade-based workers but also create opportunities for targeted reskilling and upskilling into high-demand occupations.

Technicians, technical trade workers, machinery operators and drivers form a substantial portion of the workforce in mining, manufacturing and construction. These occupations also have the highest reliance on non-resident workers and are concentrated among men aged 25 to 34 years working extended hours. Declining local participation in this demographic represents a key risk to sustaining these industries.

Analysis of regional workforce data, industry projections, and employment trends highlights a clear imperative for Maranoa to "grow its own" workforce. Addressing high vacancy rates, declining workforce participation and projected population changes requires coordinated strategies that strengthen local capability, diversify participation and retain essential skills and knowledge.

Key workforce challenges include:

* Retention of workers aged 25 to 34 years
* Declining male participation in the local workforce
* High vacancies and on-going demand for qualified and skilled workers [47]
* Projected population and workforce decline, alongside industry growth in skilled occupations for health care and social assistance.[48]

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

48 Ibid.



Grow your own workforce opportunities:

* Improve apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates
* Build diverse and secure career pathways into industries with stable or growing demand
* Upskill and reskill resident workers, particularly in high-demand occupations with significant non-resident workforces (e.g. technicians, trade workers, machinery operators and drivers).

These insights directly inform the Maranoa Workforce Development Plan's Strategic Focus Areas, which are designed to translate workforce data and opportunities into actionable strategies. By categorising initiatives across People, Skills and Business, the plan ensures that workforce development is achievable, targeted and aligned with both industry needs and regional priorities. Broader influences, such as housing, transport, liveability and childcare, are acknowledged as important contextual factors but fall outside the scope of this plan.

Strategic focus areas

Meet future skills needs

* Strengthen local understanding of future work pipelines and organisational strategic planning.
* Increase participation and completion in training programs in priority areas aligned with projected demand.

Improve workforce attraction and retention

* Promote awareness of regional career pathways.
* Support workforce diversity and succession planning for an ageing workforce.
* Retain local workers and safeguard industry knowledge.
* Enhance attraction strategies to encourage locals to stay and work in the region.

Enhance training system engagement

* Expand access to local training options.
* Improve alignment of training with industry needs.
* Increase apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates.

Develop cross-sector work mobility

* Facilitate cross-sector mobility for local workers.
* Deliver targeted gap training to support industry transitions.

Build business capability

* Strengthen industry coordination and leadership.
* Support business planning and management capabilities.
* Position local businesses as employers of choice.

Maranoa Region Workforce

CHALLENGES	STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES
BUSINESS	
* High staff turnover and competition with larger centres and higher-paying industries * Limited lack of local coordination and collaboration to retain workers * Lack of digital capability and poor workplace culture * Heavy reliance on small enterprises, with owners working long hours	* Strengthen business support in culture, HR, staff retention, digital literacy, AI and cyber security * Build local management capability and leadership through mentoring and professional development * Promote cross-industry collaboration to secure local workers and offer cross-sector job security * Support businesses to undertake strategic organisation level workforce planning and align future demand * Build business capability to tender for or partner in local projects * Encourage automation and technology adoption to increase resilience
SKILLS	
* High vacancies and demand for qualified and skilled workers * Projected workforce decline despite growth in skilled occupations * Numeracy, literacy and digital literacy gaps * Limited local training providers in key trades and professions * Travel costs and time as barriers to vocational education and training * High apprenticeship and traineeship incompletion rates (~50 per cent) * Low enrolments in information technology fields	* Improve apprenticeship and traineeship completion and retention rates * Strengthen pathways into secure industries with stable or growing demand * Upskill or reskill resident workers in occupations with high reliance on non-resident workers * Increase local training delivery capability, supported by CUC Maranoa * Promote cadetships, work-integrated learning and transferable skill development * Foster collaboration between schools, training providers, universities and industry to improve pathways
PEOPLE	
* Projected population decline and fewer resident workers * More jobs than available residents; low unemployment limits growth * Decline of workers aged 25-34 years, particularly males * Ageing workforce and loss of skills * Low female participation in some industries * Non-resident workers offered more incentives	* Leverage diverse education and training networks to retain residents * Encourage flexible work options (remote, flexible hours, job sharing) * Promote liveability incentives for families and workers * Develop retention strategies targeted at young men leaving the region * Establish exit and transition strategies for ageing workers and business owners

Focus Industries Workforce

CHALLENGES	STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES
MINING, MANUFACTURING CONSTRUCTION	
* Competition for workers across mining, construction and manufacturing * Declining resident employment in skilled trades and labouring occupations * Heavy reliance on FIFO/non-resident workers * High vacancies for professionals, technicians, trades and labourers * Predominately male, long-hour workforce aged 25-34 years * Many small construction businesses with no employees	**Strengths** * Strong field of study in engineering and related technologies * Construction is a leading industry for apprenticeships and traineeships * Highest training activity in technicians and trades worker occupations **Opportunities** * Targeted reskilling and upskilling of resident workers in high-demand occupations * Cross-sector work security to allow trades and operators to transition across industries
RETAIL TRADE, ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES	
* Low earnings across retail roles * Expected decline in sales and recreation-related occupations * Workforce decline will disproportionately affect younger workers (15 – 19 years)	**Strengths** * Growing number of residents employed as sales workers * Strong enrolments in management and commerce fields of study **Opportunities** * Build secure career pathways for young workers through structured training and progression * Improve transferable skills such as digital customer service and management capability * Cross-sector work mobility to provide alternative pathways for young workers
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	
* Low earnings in some roles despite growing demand * High vacancies for professionals, community and personal services workers * Ageing workforce, with large proportion over 45 years	**Strengths** * Growing local workforce of health professionals * Strong apprenticeship and traineeship activity in the sector **Opportunities** * Expand skills development and career progression in aged care, disability and allied health * Leverage cross-sector workforce mobility for care-related roles * Support recruitment and retention through professional development and career promotion



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRATEGIES

The following table provides a visual summary of the priorites allocated to strategic areas and associated focus industries, and detailed further in the subsequent workforce development plan strategies. It is a subjective assessment of priorities, and considers consultation and input for the Industry Advisory Panel. The priorities are identified considering the level of risks or threats to the industry and need for action to overcome challenges and meet current and future workforce needs.

Strategic area priorities for focus industries summary

INDUSTRY	Mining	Manufacturing	Construction	Retail Trade	Accommodation & Food Services	Health Care & Social Assistance
01: Meet future skills needs						
Industry growth projection	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High
Future skills need	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High
Training ngagement	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High
02: Improve attraction and retention						
Workforce attraction	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High
Workforce retention	High	High	High	High	High	High
Diversity - *women*	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low
Diversity - *Indigenous*	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Diversity – *overseas*	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
03: Enhance training system engagement						
Training alignment	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Training accessibility	High	High	High	High	High	High
04: Develop cross-sector work mobility						
Cross-industry mobilization	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low
05: Build business capability						
Industry leadership	Low	High	High	High	Medium	Low
Business capability	Low	High	High	High	High	High

01 Meet future skills needs

GOAL: Meet increasing demand for professionals and trade workers

STRATEGY: Increase local understanding of future work pipelines and organisational strategic planning.

Medium Priority



Future work pipelines

* Host annual industry events to share opportunities and challenges, discuss organisation growth plans and explore future work pipelines
* Identify opportunities for collaboration between organisations
* Explore ways to mobilise workforces across local projects and industries

Focus industries

Health care and social services – businesses position workforces to align with demand for services

Mining, manufacturing, construction – cross-industry collaboration by businesses to tender for local projects and meet demand for workforce, goods and services

Retail, food and accommodation services – businesses are positioned to align services to growth

High Priority



Future focused planning

* Support local businesses to integrate strategic and workforce planning into recruitment and business planning activities
* Promote workforce planning and business planning tools and resources
* Deliver organisation level workforce planning sessions for local businesses
* Provide one-on-one support for organisation level workforce planning where needed

Focus industries

Mining, manufacturing, construction – build small business capability, especially in trades, to partner and collaborate on tenders

All industries – high proportion of industries are small businesses, and lack of strategic and workforce planning limits their capacity to build resilience to industry changes and respond to opportunities

Workforce implications

Improved foresight into future work pipelines will allow Maranoa region businesses to plan proactively for skills demand. Strengthening employer capability in organisation level workforce planning creates resilience, reduces reliance on reactive recruitment and enables alignment between regional training delivery and actual workforce needs.

STRATEGY: Increase training engagement in priority areas

Medium Priority



Collaboration and promotion

* Expand partnerships between education and training providers to develop tailored pathways and progression for future and existing workers, including apprentices in priority trades and disciplines
* Promote industry awareness in collaboration with training providers to highlight local career opportunities
* Showcase diverse career pathways across local industries to attract new entrants

Focus industries

Health care and social services – within the industry collaboration to promote career pathways and progression

Mining, manufacturing, construction – cross-industry collaboration to promote career pathways and progression with providers for priority trades and professions

All industries – cross-sector occupations such as managers, clerical and administration, machinery operators and drivers, technicians and trades

High Priority



Skills training

* Deliver skills training in the region in priority trades, disciplines and digital literacy
* Upskill local workers into high-demand occupations currently reliant on non-resident workers
* Establish strong partnerships between industry and training providers to address training gaps
* Upskill trainers to meet rising demand

Focus industries

All industries – digital literacy

All industries – cross-sector occupations such as managers, clerical and administration

Health care and social services, accommodation and food services – community and personal services

Mining, manufacturing, construction – non-resident occupations high for machinery operators and drivers, technicians and trades, and upskilling labourers

Workforce implications

Increasing participation in local training builds the skilled pipeline needed to meet employer demand and reduces reliance on FIFO and drive-in/drive-out (DIDO) labour. Stronger collaboration with training providers ensures that the workforce is responsive to emerging skills needs, while upskilling current trainers sustains regional capacity to deliver training.

02 Improve workforce attraction and retention

GOAL: Develop a sustainable and self-sufficient local workforce

STRATEGY: Increase awareness and promotion of career pathways

Medium Priority 

Promotion

* Showcase diverse career paths across local industries
* Promote career opportunities to students, jobseekers and existing workers
* Develop initiatives to provide practical exposure to professions, trades and industries

Focus industries

Priority occupations – community and personal services, professionals, technicians and trades

All industries – cross-sector occupations such as managers, clerical and administration

Health care and social services, accommodation and food services – community and personal services

Mining, manufacturing, construction – machinery operators and drivers, technicians and trades

Medium Priority 

Career progression

* Support local businesses to integrate career development into workforce planning
* Host sessions on career advancement opportunities in local industries
* Promote structured career development and progression pathways
* Encourage mentorship programs pairing experienced professionals with early-career workers

Focus industries

Health care and social services – business collaboration to develop career progression

Mining, manufacturing, construction – cross-industry business collaboration to develop career progression

Medium Priority 

Industry pathways

* Develop and deliver industry-specific pathway initiatives

Focus industries

All industries

Workforce implications

Promoting career pathways and career progression creates stronger talent pipelines and encourages workers to remain in the region. Clear pathways also enable businesses to align recruitment with long-term skills development, reducing turnover and strengthening regional workforce resilience.

STRATEGY: Improve workforce diversity and ageing workforce succession

Low Priority



Promotion

* Promote benefits of diverse workforces
* Develop strategies to attract underutilised groups (e.g. women, First Nations peoples, people with disability and CALD workers)
* Ensure diverse representation in workforce promotion campaigns

Focus industries

All industries – small businesses focus to fill workforce shortages

High Priority



Succession

* Recognise and value the skills of Priority industries
* All industries – retiring workers a high risk to small businesses
* Health care and social services, mining, manufacturing, construction – for priority occupations, upskill and train ageing workers as trainers and mentors to transfer skills and knowledge and transition to part-time trainer roles locally ageing workers
* Promote mentoring and training roles to support knowledge transfer
* Encourage workforce succession planning to prepare for retirements
* Explore transition strategies such as job redesign and phased retirement
* Support businesses to integrate succession planning into workforce planning

Focus industries

All industries – retiring workers a high risk to small businesses

Health care and social services, mining, manufacturing, construction – for priority occupations, upskill and train ageing workers as trainers and mentors to transfer skills and knowledge and transition to part-time trainer roles locally

Workforce implications

Leveraging underutilised groups and ageing workers expands the available workforce and supports succession planning. This ensures continuity of skills and knowledge, while promoting diversity increases resilience and innovation across industries.

02 Improve workforce attraction and retention

GOAL: Develop a sustainable and self-sufficient local workforce

STRATEGY: Improve retention of local workers and industry knowledge

High Priority



Retention

* Investigate why workers (particularly males and aged 25-34) leave the region
* Support businesses to implement career development initiatives
* Develop targeted strategies to encourage workers to remain in the region

Focus industries

All industries – high proportion of small businesses, impacted by turnover and loss of workforce from the region and retirement

All industries – high decrease in workers aged 25-34 years and increase across aging workforce

Mining – high decrease 25-34 years, increase in 55-64 years

Manufacturing – high decrease 45-54 years

Construction – high decrease 25-34 years, increase 65+ years

Retail – decrease under 54 years, and increase 55+ years

Health care and social services – decrease 45-54 years, increase 55+ years

High Priority



Local knowledge and experience

* Promote the value of worker mobility across local industries to retain skills in-region
* Identify candidates for mentoring and training roles
* Encourage phased retirement and advisory roles for experienced workers

Industry priorities

Health care and social services – within the industry collaboration to promote career progression

Mining, manufacturing, construction – cross-industry collaboration to promote career progression for priority trades and professions

All industries – cross-sector occupations such as managers, clerical and administration, machinery operators and drivers, technicians and trades

Ageing workforce in priority occupations across all industries for mentoring and training roles

High Priority



Incentives

* Promote financial and non-financial incentives (e.g. flexibility, development opportunities, liveability benefits)
* Support businesses to design retention strategies, especially in lower-paying industries
* Encourage businesses to retain apprentices and trainees post-qualification

Focus industries

All industries – high proportion of small businesses, impacted by turnover and loss of workforce from the region and retirement

Medium Priority



Flexibility

* Encourage flexible employment models, including part-time, job share and remote work
* Support job redesign to open pathways for diverse workforce participation

Focus industries

All industries – high proportion of small businesses, flexibility increases access to underutilised groups and promotes retention

Workforce implications

Retention is a critical lever for workforce sustainability. By addressing the reasons people leave, enhancing career development and embedding incentives, businesses can reduce turnover and keep industry knowledge within the region. Flexible work options also expand the pool of available workers.

02 Improve workforce attraction and retention

GOAL: Develop a sustainable and self-sufficient local workforce

STRATEGY: Improve attraction of local workers

Medium Priority 

Attraction

* Encourage businesses to offer competitive incentives (e.g. financial and non-financial)
* Identify strategies to convert non-resident workers (FIFO/DIDO) into local residents

Focus industries

All industries – high vacancies across all occupations

Mining, construction – high non-resident workforce and occupations in machinery operators and drivers, technicians and trades, and labourers

Medium Priority 

Liveability

* Promote regional liveability initiatives such as Welcome to Roma
* Host events to welcome and connect new resident with the community
* Encourage industry collaboration to provide employment opportunities for family members

Focus industries

All industries – collaborate for consistent promotions and employment referrals

Medium Priority 

Immigration

* Identify occupations suited to skilled migration pathways
* Support employers to integrate immigration into workforce planning
* Build employer capacity to be "immigration ready" (visa, legal, financial, culture readiness)
* Encourage pathways for migrant workers and families to settle permanently

Focus industries

All industries – referral to fill shortages

Mining, accommodation and food services – current high proportion of immigrant workers, referral opportunity to fill shortages

Manufacturing, construction, retail trade, health care and social assistance – moderate immigration, referral opportunity to fill shortages

Workforce implications

Attraction strategies must balance short-term skills needs with long-term settlement outcomes. Linking liveability and family support with business incentives ensures that workers are not only attracted but also retained, strengthening the regional labour market.

03 Improve workforce attraction and retention

GOAL: Ensure training is accessible, affordable and aligned with industry needs

STRATEGY: Increase local education and training options

High Priority



Local trainers

* Identify and support industry professionals to transition into training roles
* Prioritise local trainer development in high-demand trades and professions
* Offer incentives to build a sustainable pool of trainers
* Provide structured feedback to RTOs to improve quality of training delivery

Focus industries

Qualifications for priority occupations – community and personal services, professionals, technicians and trades, machinery operators and drivers

High Priority



Education and training providers

* Advocate providers to deliver affordable, flexible and industry-relevant education and training locally
* Offer incentives for providers to deliver courses in-region
* Strengthen partnerships with training providers to expand options

Focus industries

All industries – industry leaders collaboration with relevant providers

High Priority



Accessibility

* Promote available programs and support services
* Encourage collaboration across businesses to boost participation in local programs
* Identify and address barriers to participation such as travel, costs and digital access
* Facilitate access to suitable facilities

Focus industries

All industries – industry leaders collaboration with relevant providers and government agencies

Industry partnerships with providers to access suitable facilities

Workforce implications

Increasing local training delivery reduces barriers to participation, helps retain workers in the region while training, and strengthens the pipeline of skilled labour. Developing local trainers also ensures training capacity can grow alongside demand.

03 Improve workforce attraction and retention

GOAL: Ensure training is accessible, affordable and aligned with industry needs

STRATEGY: Align education and training with industry needs

High Priority



Needs

* Collaborate with industry to identify current and emerging skills requirements
* Ensure qualifications reflect local workforce demand
* Promote reskilling and upskilling for workers in industries experiencing change or decline

Focus industries

Priority occupations – community and personal services, professionals, technicians and trades, machinery operators and drivers

All industries – collaborate to identify local need for all qualifications and training requirements

Medium Priority



* Gaps

* Identify gaps in local training delivery across professions and trades
* Work with training providers to fill gaps with relevant local delivery

Focus industries

Priority occupations – community and personal services, professionals, technicians and trades, machinery operators and drivers

All industries – collaborate to identify local gaps for qualifications and training requirements

Workforce implications

Training alignment with industry needs ensures businesses have access to the right skills at the right time. It also supports workforce mobility by providing transferable skills, increasing regional resilience against industry downturns.

STRATEGY: Improve apprenticeship and traineeship completion

High Priority



Promotion

* Raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships and traineeships and cadetships among students, jobseekers and employers
* Promote industry opportunities through local career and job events

Focus industries

All industries – participate in initiatives and promote available positions

High Priority



Support

* Investigate causes of non-completion and address barriers
* Provide structured pre-trade programs and work experience to guide career decisions
* Establish industry mentors to support apprentices and trainees
* Expand literacy, numeracy and digital skills programs
* Provide financial and logistical support (e.g. travel, equipment, accommodation)
* Support businesses to be "recruit ready" for apprentices, from commencement through to completion
* Assist employers with succession planning for apprentices and trainees post-qualification

Focus industries

Technicians and trade workers cancellations are high for construction (15-20 per year), and moderate (5-10 per year) for manufacturing, retail trade, other services

Community and personal service workers cancellations are high (10-15 per year) for health care and social services

Clerical and administrative workers cancellations are moderate (5-10 per year) for accommodation and food services

All industries – high portion of small businesses highlights need for adequate support and progression plan after qualification completion

Workforce implications

Improving apprenticeship and traineeship completion strengthens the supply of locally trained workers, reduces reliance on non-resident labour and supports succession planning. Businesses that retain qualified apprentices also benefit from stronger loyalty and long-term workforce stability.

04 Develop cross-sector work mobility

GOAL: Retain workers locally by enabling smooth transition between industries and occupations

STRATEGY: Improve cross-sector mobility for local workers

High Priority



Collaboration

* Foster collaboration between industries to share workforce planning data
* Identify transferable skills and common occupational pathways across industries (e.g. machinery operators, trades, administration)
* Promote awareness of transferable skills to workers and employers

Focus industries

Mining, manufacturing, construction – transferable occupations include professionals, managers, technicians and trades workers, machinery operators and drivers

Occupations with transferable skills across industries – managers, clerical and administration workers, technicians and trade workers, labourers

Medium Priority



Labour market

* Develop a coordinated local labour distribution model to match workers with short-term or long-term needs
* Engage with local group training organisations, job service providers and industry groups to support mobility arrangements
* Create employer networks to facilitate shared employment opportunities and career progression pathways

Outcomes

Local businesses better able to share and retain skilled labour

Improved job security and continuity of employment for workers

More efficient distribution of skills across industries

Workforce implications

Cross-sector mobility reduces the loss of workers to other regions by providing alternative local employment opportunities during industry downturns. It also strengthens regional resilience by enabling workers to adapt to changing demand and by smoothing labour supply across industries.

STRATEGY: Deliver targeted cross-sector gap training

Medium Priority



Skilling

* Identify and promote common skill sets that are transferable between industries (e.g. digital literacy, project management, equipment operation, workplace health and safety)
* Work with training providers to design modular training and micro-credentials that support rapid reskilling
* Create short, targeted programs that allow workers to transition into growth industries
* Facilitate partnerships between industries to share training infrastructure and resources

Focus industries

Occupations with transferable skills across industries – managers, clerical and administration workers, technicians and trade workers, labourers

Mining, manufacturing, construction – transferable occupations include professionals, managers, technicians and trades workers, machinery operators and drivers

Health care and social services – within the industry collaboration to promote career progression

Workforce implications

Targeted gap training allows the region to quickly respond to labour market shifts by retraining existing workers instead of relying on attracting new ones. It also helps businesses retain staff during downturns, reducing turnover costs and building a workforce that is adaptable and future-ready.

05 Build business capability

GOAL: Strengthen businesses leadership, management and planning to support sustainable workforce development

STRATEGY: Build industry coordination and leadership

Medium Priority



Industry leadership

* Encourage industry-led leadership and collaboration, supported by local champions and associations
* Create regular forums for industries to share data, best practice and workforce planning and development strategies
* Strengthen advocacy to governments for industry-specific workforce needs and investment
* Support collection and analysis of local workforce data to inform decision making

Focus industries

Mining, health care and social assistance – have large organisations with industry representative capacity

Manufacturing, construction, retail trade, accommodation and food services – have large revenue and employing businesses with increased industry leadership capacity

All industries – high proportion of small businesses with lower leadership capability, making engagement with these businesses important

Workforce implications

Industry coordination helps align workforce development priorities, improves data-driven decision-making and reduces duplication of initiatives. Strong local leadership provides a platform for employers to address common workforce challenges collectively.

STRATEGY: Improve businesses planning and management capabilities

High Priority



Planning

* Provide tools and resources to help businesses integrate workforce planning into business planning
* Deliver workshops and advisory services on workforce forecasting, succession and talent management
* Encourage businesses to monitor workforce initiatives within their industries

Focus industries

All industries – high proportion of small businesses

High Priority



Capability

* Support business development programs focused on digital literacy, HR, workplace culture and emerging technologies (AI, automation, cyber security)
* Promote uptake of management and leadership training for business owners and managers
* Encourage businesses equipped to adopt innovation and respond to industry changes

Focus industries

All industries – high proportion of small businesses

Workforce implications

Better business planning ensures that workforce needs are considered early and systematically, preventing skills shortages and high turnover. Strong management capability supports retention, creates better workplaces and ensures businesses can compete for talent.

05 Build business capability

GOAL: Strengthen businesses leadership, management and planning to support sustainable workforce development

STRATEGY: Support businesses to be preferred employers

Low Priority



Diverse workforce

* Promote the benefits of workplace diversity and inclusion
* Encourage recruitment of underrepresented groups (women, youth, First Nations peoples, people with disability, CALD)
* Support businesses to upskill managers and staff in cultural awareness, inclusion and HR best practice

Focus industries

All industries – high proportion of small businesses, large businesses with higher capability to embrace diverse workforces

Medium Priority



Preferred workplaces

* Promote training for new employees and upskilling of existing staff
* Support businesses to offer incentives (flexibility, professional development, liveability initiatives) to retain workers
* Encourage businesses to strive for workplace excellence and recognition programss

Focus industries

All industries and businesses

Workforce implications

Workers from diverse backgrounds who feel welcomed and supported in the workplace, leads to increased retention and improved business and worker performance.

APPENDIX 1

The Industry Advisory Group highlighted the classifications listed below as directly impacting Maranoa region and focus industries.

NAME	ANZSIC GROUP
B Mining	070 Oil and Gas Extraction
	101 Exploration
	109 Other Mining Support Services
C 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
E 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
G 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
H Accommodation and Food Services	440 Accommodation
	451 Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services
	452 Pubs, Taverns and Bars
Q 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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS





Industry Advisory Group

Roma Commerce and Tourism Inc would like to acknowledge the support of the Industry Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG was established to support the delivery of this industry-led workforce plan as a blueprint for the Maranoa region and focus industries to address workforce challenges into the future.

The primary objective of the IAG was to provide RCAT and JQ with advice to help guide the project and provide industry endorsement of project deliverables to best meet industry's needs and expectations. The IAG provided RCAT and JQ with access to their networks, so consultation was maximised.

The IAG comprised of representatives from:

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

The IAG identified and endorsed the region of focus as the Maranoa Region Local Government Area (LGA) encompassing the Roma and Roma Surrounds Statistical Area 2 (SA2) and developed appendix 1 as a reflection of the focus industries.

We thank them for their time and industry expertise.

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