



**Jobs
Queensland**
Future skills. Future workforce.

Cairns

Labour Market Profile

compiled for
Cairns Regional Jobs Committee

Current as at 3 February 2022



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DISCLAIMER

While every care has been taken in preparing this publication, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within. To the best of our knowledge, the content was correct at the time of publishing.

Introduction

Regional Jobs Committees (RJC) are a part of the Queensland Government's plan to work within the community and local industry to create more jobs, improve training pathways and drive economic activity across the state. They are collaboratively supported by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) and Jobs Queensland (JQ).

The Cairns Labour Market Profile provides a snapshot of the region as of 1 February 2022, including key indicators such as workforce composition, employment and unemployment, business figures, and education and training pathways.

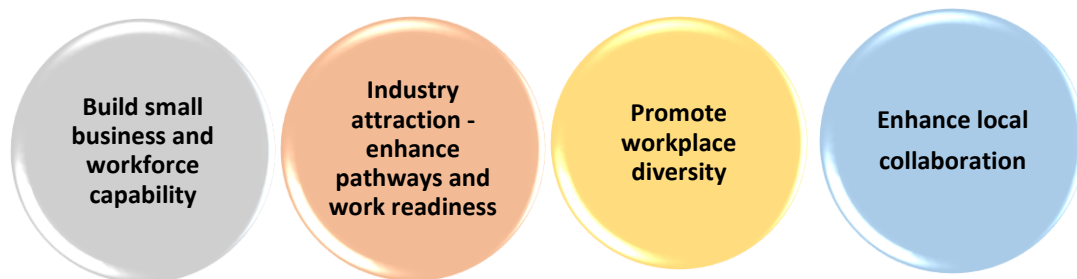
The data contained in this report refers to the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA) and the Cairns Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4). Comparison of areas may assist the RJC to better understand existing supply and demand constraints, with a view to planning future actions, in the context of neighbouring LGAs (Douglas, Mareeba, Tablelands, Cassowary Coast and Yarrabah) competing to attract workforce participation from the same labour pool.

Much of the information stems from the most recent Census data (2016). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) intends to release 2021 Census data in a staged approach throughout 2022 and 2023.

In the interim, to provide the most up-to-date statistics, where available, data has been provided from other sources including the ABS quarterly Labour Force Survey. It is important to note that this document should not be read in isolation. Rather, it should be considered jointly, and in the context of, other economic research and publications.

This report also contains an overview of the region's anticipated growth industries that will drive future jobs demand and skills needs locally.

Key observations and potential future opportunities have emerged from the data and align to four common themes:



The information contained in this report is provided for the RJC's consideration for the purpose of driving conversation and may support the development and delivery of the Jobs Cairns RJC Action Plan.

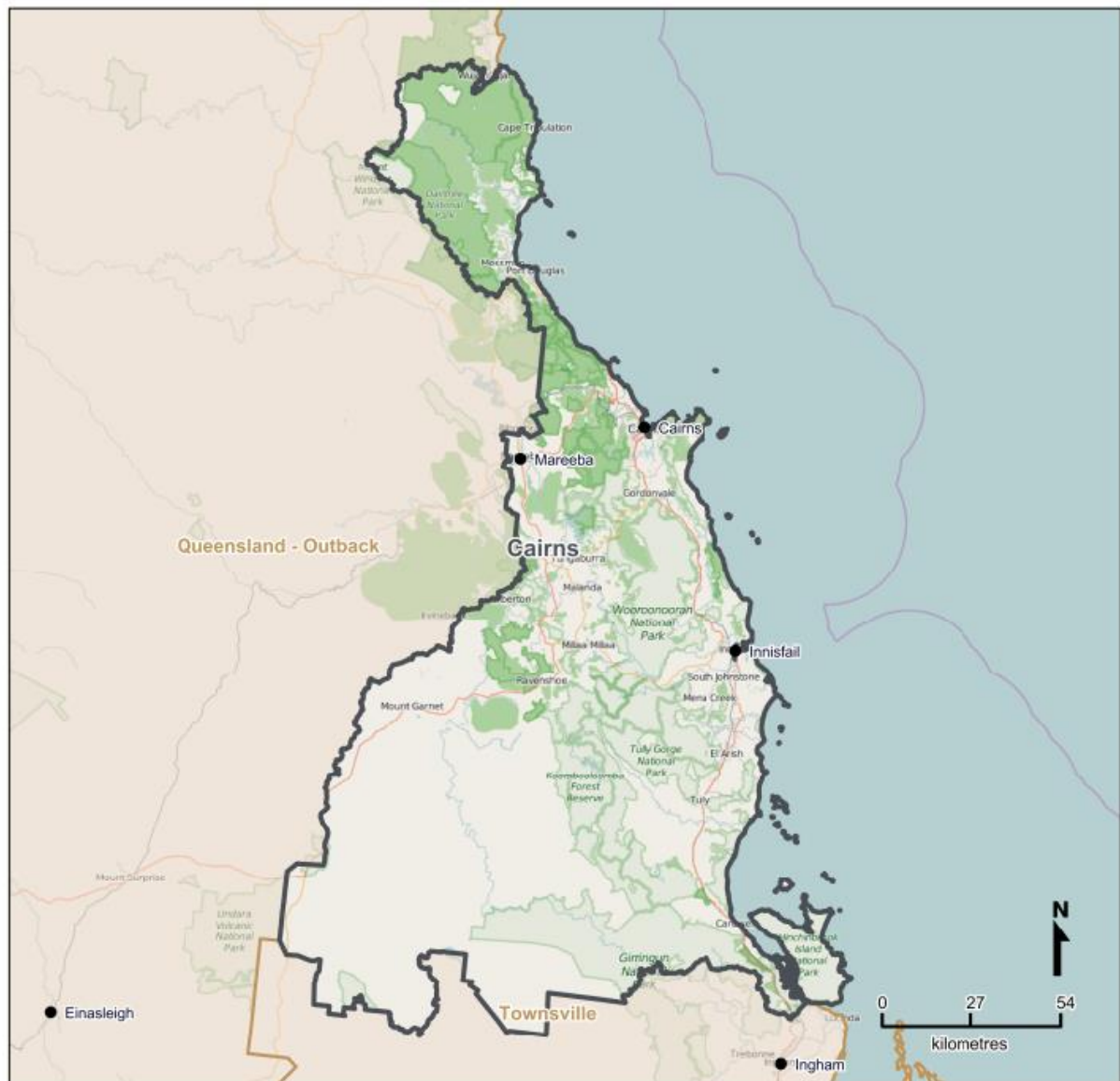
Cairns SA4 Regional Overview

Cairns SA4 has a total land area of 21,338.0 km² and is comprised of five SA3s of Cairns - North, Cairns - South, Innisfail – Cassowary Coast, Port Douglas - Daintree and Tablelands (East) - Kuranda.

SA4s are geographical areas built from whole SA3s and have been designed to represent the labour markets of Australia's largest regional cities, of which Townsville is one.

Labour force data encapsulates both labour supply (where people live) and labour demand (where people work), with SA4 labour markets reflecting the highest possible degree of interconnectivity between the two.

Queensland Statistical Areas, Level 4 (SA4), 2016 - Cairns (ASGS Code 306)



Snapshot

LGA Population¹ 168,449	40.5% aged 45 and over	9.0% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	21.5% born overseas	4.4% have profound or severe disability	Growth of 19,987 persons (2016-2026)
SA4 workforce and labour market composition²					
Employed persons 130,823		Total unemployment rate 4.7%		Youth unemployment rate 11.2 %	
Jobs held by gender		Female 65,412 (50.0%)		Male 65,411 (50.0%)	
Top 5 employing industries (Females)		Sector		Full-time	Part-time
		Health Care and Social Assistance		9,884	6,748
		Retail		2,130	7,522
		Education and Training		4,953	3,002
		Accommodation and Food		2,150	4,796
		Public Administration and Safety		5,273	430
Top 5 employing industries (Males)		Sector		Full-time	Part-time
		Construction		9,059	282
		Accommodation and Food Services		3,974	2,614
		Retail		4,269	2,211
		Public Administration and Safety		5,946	242
		Transport, Postal and Warehousing		4,645	444
New jobs by 2024³			11,271 (8.0% growth)		
Top 5 growth industries (% change in new jobs by 2024-25) ⁴			Accommodation and Food Services (24.8%) Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (12.6%) Arts and Recreation Services (11.8%) Financial and Insurance Services (11.4%) Health Care and Social Assistance (10.6%)		
Total registered businesses 13,800⁵					
Small		Medium		Large	
Non-employing	7,507 (54.4%)	20-199 employees	397 (2.9%)	200+ employees	10 (0.1%)
1-4 employees	4,280 (31.0%)				
5-19 employees	1,608 (11.7%)				

¹ Cairns LGA as at 30 June 2020. Queensland Government Statisticians Office, *Queensland Regional Profiles, Resident Profile*, Cairns (R) LGA [Accessed 1 February 2022]

² Cairns SA4 as at December 2021. ABS. *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, various editions. Released 27 January 2022 [Accessed 1 February 2022].
















³ Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills*. Cairns SA4 region. Projections are based on an unpublished economic model that is subject to revision and is not for public distribution. Previous iterations of projections can be explored at www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cairns LGA as at 30 June 2020. ABS 8165.0, *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits*, various editions.

Industries and Occupations of Interest

The industries below were identified as focus for the development of this Labour Market Profile Report.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 	Health Care and Social Assistance 	Building and Construction 
% total of Cairns SA4 workforce  4.6%	% total of Cairns SA4 workforce  16.4%	% total of Cairns SA4 workforce  8.0%
% of females employed  20.2%	% of females employed  77.6%	% of females employed  11.0%
% of males employed  79.8%	% of males employed  22.4%	% of males employed  89.0%
Registered businesses Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Cairns SA4  5.9% (5,863)	Registered businesses Health Care and Social Assistance Cairns SA4  14% (13,898)	Registered businesses Building and Construction Cairns SA4  6.3% (6,249)

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2016*, and ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*, various editions. Released 23 December 2021.

In addition to the industries above, it was identified that the occupations of Marine and Airport Maintenance as a particular focus for this report. It is important to note that these occupations may be across various industries, and as such the statistics are difficult to quantify.

To inform the RJC, please see below Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills* projections for the Cairns SA4 region⁶, which most closely align to the industry classes of 2394 – Aircraft Manufacturing, and Repair Services, and 2391 – Shipbuilding and Repair Services.



Boat Builders and Shipwrights
Projected jobs growth 2021 to 2025 - 8



Aircraft Maintenance Engineers
Projected jobs growth 2021 to 2025 - 19

⁶ Jobs Queensland, *Anticipating Future Skills*. Cairns SA4 region. Projections are based on an unpublished economic model that is subject to revision and is not for public distribution. Previous iterations of projections can be explored at www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs.

Your labour markets - Key SA4 indicators⁷

- With a resident population of 256,039, almost 167,000 people comprise the Cairns SA4 working age labour force
- **The Cairns unemployment rate was 5.0%**, a decrease of 1.1% over the year, in comparison to the Queensland unemployment rate of 4.7%.
- **Cairns SA4 youth unemployment was 11.2%** as at December 2021, decreasing from 13% in December 2020. The state average was 11.2%, decreasing from 15.8% for the same period.
- Table 1 below provides a breakdown of 12-month averages by age group across key labour market indicators.

Table 1. Labour force indicators by Age (12-month averages), Cairns SA4 region.

Year to December 2021		Age Group (years)					
		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Civilian population aged 15 years and over ('000)		29.6	35.6	34.8	33.0	33.9	38.8
Employed Total ('000)		16.5	27.2	29.1	27.5	23.5	6.6
Employed full-time ('000)		6.4	20.1	22.6	22.4	16.6	2.4
Employed part-time ('000)		10.1	7.1	6.5	5.1	6.9	4.2
Employment to population rate (%)		55.8	76.6	83.5	83.4	69.4	16.9
Unemployment rate (%)		10.9	6.6	3.5	1.5	4.9	1.9
Labour force total ('000)		18.6	29.1	30.1	28.0	24.8	6.7
Not in the labour force (NILF) ('000)		11.0	6.5	4.6	5.1	9.1	32.1
Participation rate (%)	Cairns	62.8	82.0	86.6	84.7	73.1	17.2
	Queensland	75.1	85.4	85.9	83.9	70.1	14.6

Employment by industry⁸

According to the most recently published Census, the top five industries of employment for Cairns LGA (by proportion of employed persons) were:



Health Care and Social Assistance
14.4%



Retail Trade
10.6%



Accommodation and Food Services
10.0%



Education and Training
9.0%



Public Administration and Safety
8.0%

⁷ Cairns SA4. ABS. Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, various editions [Accessed 1 February 2022].

⁸ Cairns LGA ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, General Community Profile - G51 and unpublished data.






Vacancies⁹

The Internet Vacancy Index, compiled by the Labour Market Information Portal (LMIP), is based on a count of online job advertisements newly lodged on SEEK, CareerOne and Australian JobSearch during each month. The LMIP uses different regions to those of the Australian Bureau of Statistics to provide online vacancies data across the country. While not available at LGA or SA4 levels, comparable data is available for Far North Queensland.

The region's highest number of online vacancies as at December 2021 was seen in Medical Practitioners and Nurses (715), followed by Education Professionals (567), and Health and Diagnostic Therapy (556.5). Although a slight dip in trend is seen, it is important to note 3 of the top 5 vacancies for December 2021 were in the Health and Allied Services.

Of further note is the upward trend for Education Professionals, ANZSCO sub-major group 24 (School and Tertiary Education Teachers and Miscellaneous Education Professionals). Miscellaneous Education Professionals include Education Advisers, Private Tutors and Teachers, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages¹⁰

Table 2. Top five online vacancies by occupation as at December 2021, Far North Queensland region (including Cairns).

Occupation group	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Trendline
Medical Practitioners and Nurses	444.9	412.1	498.0	546.9	604.9	602.1	619.5	641.9	674.7	689.4	757.1	715.9	
Education Professionals	411.4	315.5	349.5	317.5	359.5	335.5	331.5	353.5	373.5	455.3	523.2	567.2	
Health Diagnostic and Therapy Professionals	437.2	419.4	454.1	458.6	498.6	526.2	551.2	541.4	559.2	571.7	609.9	556.5	
Health, Education, ICT and Other Managers	215.5	208.3	290.6	276.1	302.7	251.9	295.5	295.5	327.0	319.7	346.3	331.8	
Machine and Stationary Plant Operators	196.4	197.1	206.7	208.2	221.4	246.4	289.8	317.0	356.0	360.4	364.9	309.0	

⁹ Labour Market Information Portal, Internet Vacancy Index – December 2021, Far North Queensland region.

¹⁰ ABS, 1220.0 - ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, First Edition, Revision 1. MINOR GROUP 249 MISCELLANEOUS EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

Your future workforce

Jobs Queensland's *Anticipating Future Skills Series* provides employment projections through to 2024 for the State's industries, regions (SA4-level), occupations and qualifications. The following projections are based on an unpublished economic model that is subject to revision and is currently undergoing further updating for period 2020 - 2025. Previous iterations of the AFS project can be explored at www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs. The industries highlighted are those where the Cairns SA4 has a greater growth rate than Queensland as a whole.

Cairns SA4 by 2024-25

11,271 new jobs

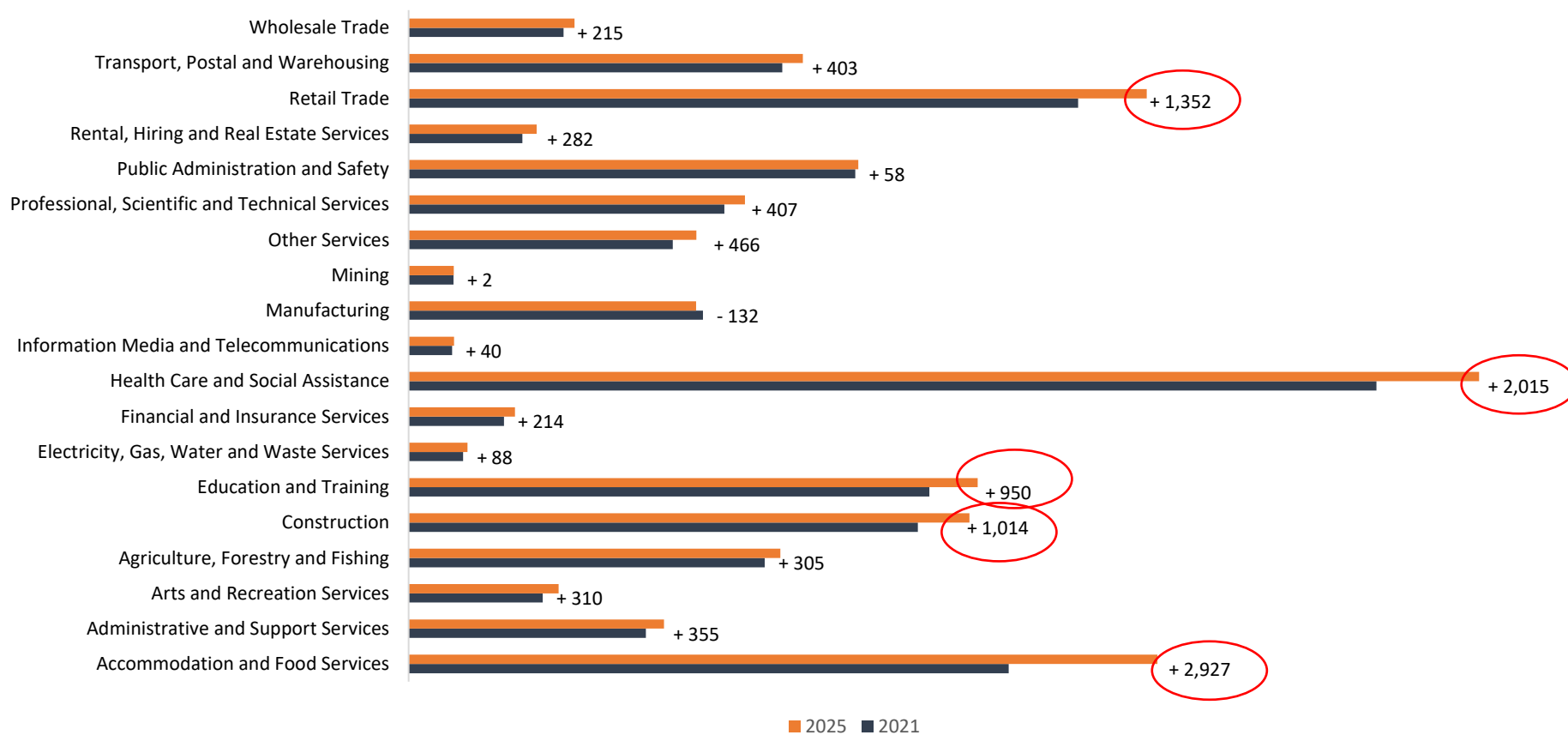
8.0% growth

Industry	Cairns SA4 new jobs			Queensland new jobs		
	2020-21	2024-25	Change	2020-21	2024-25	Change
Accommodation and Food Services	11,795	14,722	24.8%	190,632	233,803	22.6%
Administrative and Support Services	4,665	5,020	7.6%	83,619	88,212	5.5%
Arts and Recreation Services	2,636	2,946	11.8%	46,036	52,964	15.0%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	7,003	7,308	4.4%	82,601	85,520	3.5%
Construction	10,010	11,024	10.1%	134,446	142,769	6.2%
Education and Training	10,239	11,189	9.3%	102,279	110,260	7.8%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1,072	1,160	8.2%	217,051	239,345	10.3%
Financial and Insurance Services	1,877	2,091	11.4%	375,085	419,998	12.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	19,028	21,043	10.6%	70,874	79,061	11.6%
Information Media and Telecommunications	854	894	4.7%	27,908	29,343	5.1%
Manufacturing	5,786	5,654	-2.3%	173,234	167,894	-3.1%
Mining	885	887	0.2%	72,023	71,449	-0.8%
Other Services	5,193	5,659	9.0%	190,538	204,381	7.3%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	6,205	6,612	6.6%	237,590	254,542	7.1%
Public Administration and Safety	8,782	8,840	0.7%	164,403	167,698	2.0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	2,234	2,516	12.6%	50,330	55,513	10.3%
Retail Trade	13,159	14,511	10.3%	255,634	282,876	10.7%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	7,346	7,749	5.5%	76,395	81,779	7.0%
Wholesale Trade	3,048	3,263	7.1%	30,030	32,311	7.6%
Totals	121,817	133,088	8.0%	2,580,708	2,799,718	8.5%

Employment (jobs) change by industry¹¹

The top 5 Jobs Queensland's *Anticipating Future Skills Series 2020-2025* projected jobs growth by industry are:

Cairns SA4, 2020-21 to 2024-25



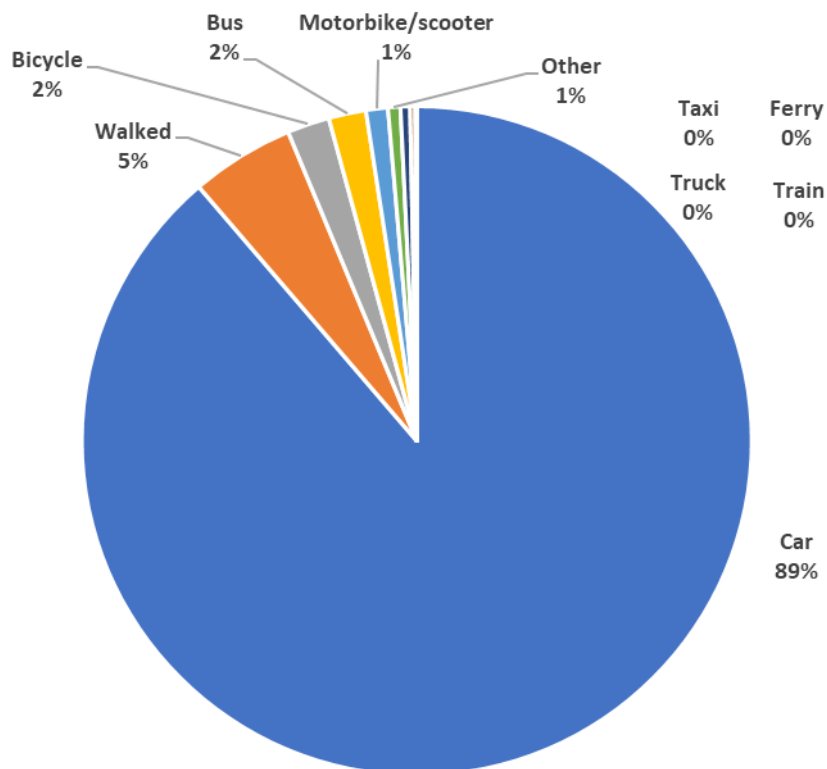
¹¹ Jobs Queensland, Anticipating Future Skills. Cairns SA4 region. Projections are based on an unpublished economic model that is subject to revision and is not for public distribution. Previous iterations of projections can be explored at www.jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au/afs. See Your future workforce on page 17 for a detailed breakdown of employment projections by industry.

Travel to Work

During the 2016 Census, 88.7 per cent of workers within the Cairns LGA reported travelling by car as their only form of transport to work in comparison to 69.6 per cent of the Queensland population reporting the same. It is worth noting that 5 per cent walked and 2.0 per cent used a bicycle to travel to work.

Public transport (Train, Bus or Ferry) was not heavily utilised, with only 1.6 per cent of the workforce using this method to travel to work. Further investigation into the regions public transport infrastructure may be warranted to understand if any limitations are impacting workforce participation from lower socio-economic groups, and/or outer lying areas.

Figure 1. Method of travel to work, Cairns LGA, 2016¹²



Journey to work data has been derived from unpublished 2016 Census of Population and Housing data and records the usual residence of a person and where they worked. This topic looks at those working in Cairns (R) LGA and the top five places of residence where these people have travelled from.

A total of 67,365 people travelled into the Cairns LGA¹³ with 8.9 per cent of workers commuting from Trinity Beach - Smithfield, 8.6 per cent from Redlynch, 7.1 per cent from Cairns City, 6.6 per cent from Clifton Beach – Kewarra Beach and 6.2 per cent from Edmonton.

The largest proportion (62.9 per cent) were residence of “other” areas which includes all other SA2s within Australia.

¹² ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, Working Population Profile - W22 (place of work)

¹³ Townsville LGA as at 2016. ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, unpublished data and Queensland Treasury estimates.

Schooling and non-school qualifications

At the time of the 2016 Census, 70,485 persons (or 58.9%) within the Cairns LGA had year 11 or 12 (or equivalent) highest level of schooling, matching that of Queensland as a whole. The table below provides a breakdown of other school level year attainments, comparative to Queensland.

Table 3. Highest level of schooling completed, Cairns (R) LGA and Queensland, 2016¹⁴

	Did not go to school or Year 8 or below (%)	Year 9 or 10 or Equivalent (%)	Year 11 or 12 or Equivalent (%)
Cairns	4.7	24.9	58.9
Queensland	5.4	26.5	58.9

Table 4. Non-school qualifications by level of education, Cairns and Queensland, 2016¹⁵

	Bachelor degree or higher (%)	Advanced diploma or diploma (%)	Certificate (%)	Persons with a qualification (%)
Cairns	16.2	9.2	23.0	61.6
Queensland	18.3	8.7	21.3	59.1

According to the 2016 Census, the largest non-school qualification field of study for the Cairns SA4 was Engineering and Related Technologies (15.7%). Other fields of study for Cairns were Management and Commerce (15.5%), Society and Culture (10.45), Health (10.2%) and Education (7.5%). Updated data will be available following the release of the 2021 Census data, anticipated to occur in mid-2022.

¹⁴ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, General Community Profile - G16

¹⁵ Townsville LGA as at 2016. ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, General Community Profile - G40 and G46.

Vocational education and training and employment pathways¹⁶

The figures below represent education and training enrolments and outcomes, comparing the combined North and South Cairns SA3s against the Cairns SA4.

Figure 2. Top 5 VET program enrolments (program name), 2020, Cairns SA3 and SA4.

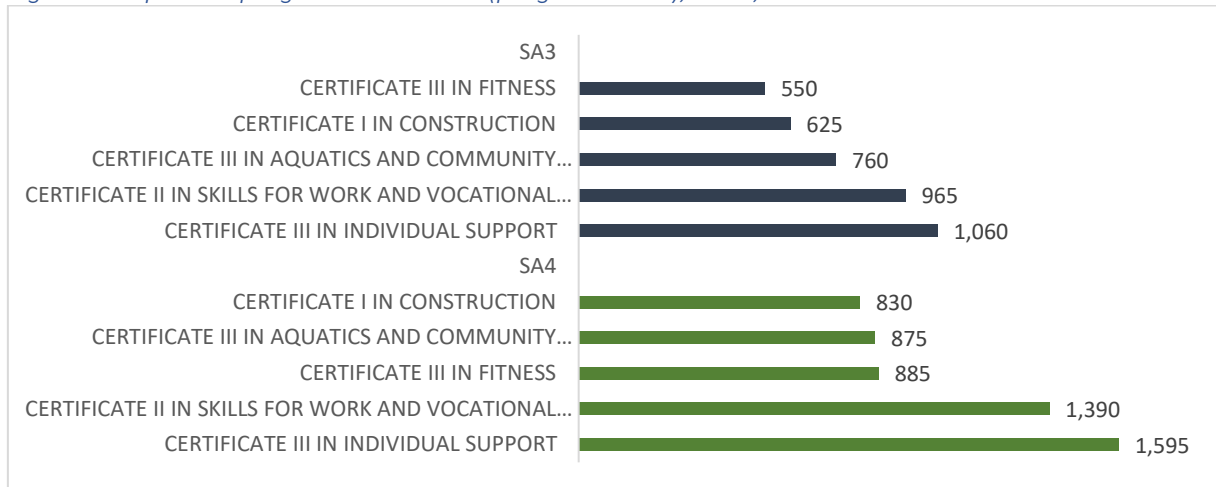


Figure 3. Top 5 VET program completions (parent training package), 2020, Cairns SA3 and SA4.

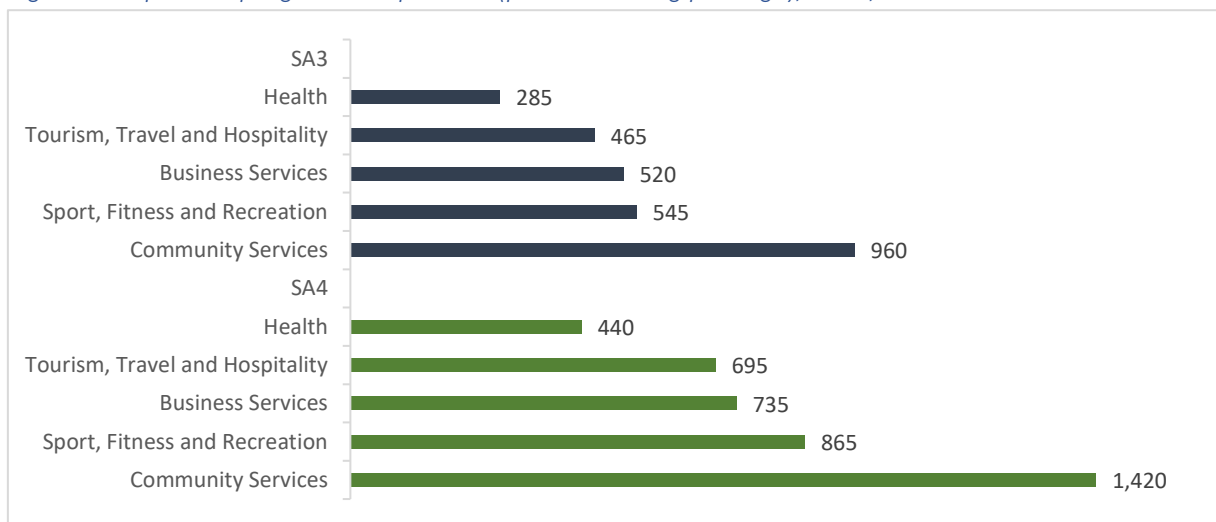
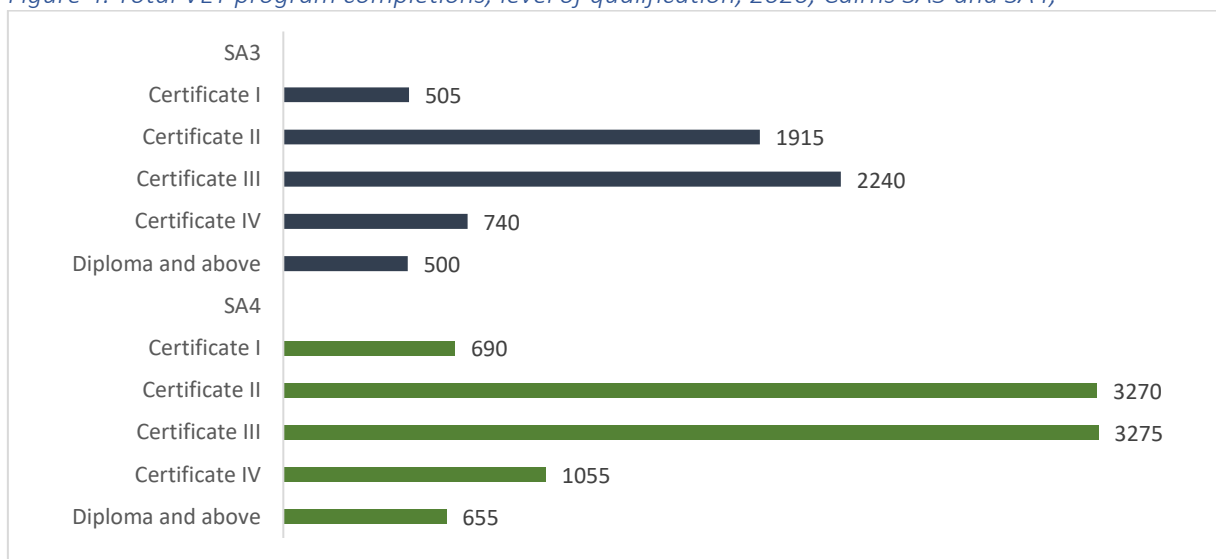


Figure 4. Total VET program completions, level of qualification, 2020, Cairns SA3 and SA4,



¹⁶ National Centre for Vocational Education and Research. Data visualisation gallery, Atlas of total VET. Accessed 1 February 2022.

Queensland Training Summary¹⁷

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) provides training data for the state and regions as they are defined by the Department. The Far North Queensland region encompasses Cairns and is provided below.

Table 5. Government funded VET outcomes, DESBT Far North Queensland region, 2019-20 to 2020-21.

	Far North Queensland		
	2019-20	2020-21	Change
Certificate I and II	1,907	2,734	43.4% ↑
Certificate III	2,660	2,756	3.6% ↑
Certificate IV	408	525	28.7% ↑
Diploma and higher	257	287	11.7% ↑
Completed qualifications (Certificate I+)	5,232	6,302	20.4% ↑
15-19 year-old students	1,602	2,089	30.4% ↑
First Nations students	1,202	1,282	6.7% ↑
Students with a disability	209	223	6.7% ↑

Table 6. Apprentice and trainee activity, DESBT Far North Queensland region, 2019-20 to 2020-21.

	Far North Queensland		
	2019-20	2020-21	Change
Total new commencements	1,562	2,808	79.8% ↑
Total school-based new commencements	304	569	87.2% ↑
Total in-training	3,245	4,271	31.6% ↑
Total completions	993	958	-3.5% ↓
Total school-based completions	140	184	31.4% ↑

¹⁷ Data not for publication. Queensland Training Summary as at November 2021, Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships – Cairns SA4¹⁸

Apprenticeship and traineeship commencements for the year ending 30 June 2021 totalled 625 – a 257% increase on the previous twelve-month period. The level of impact the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns have had on commencement rates during the comparative periods remains unclear.

The top five industries for apprenticeship and traineeship commencements are pictured adjacent.

The top five training commencements by occupation were Technicians and Trade Workers, Community and Personal Service Workers, Clerical and Administrative Workers, Sales Workers, and Machinery Operators and Drivers.

Completions of apprenticeships and traineeships for the year ending 31 June 2021 decreased marginally by 3.4% compared to the previous year.

The top five training completions by occupation were Technicians and Trade Workers, Clerical and Administrative Workers, Community and Personal Service Workers, Sales Workers, and Machinery Operators and Drivers.

The figure below charts completions by industry (figures) for the Cairns SA4 for the twelve months to 31 June 2021.

Top 5 industries – Apprenticeships and Traineeships commencements, year ending 30 June 2021



Agriculture



Mining



Manufacturing

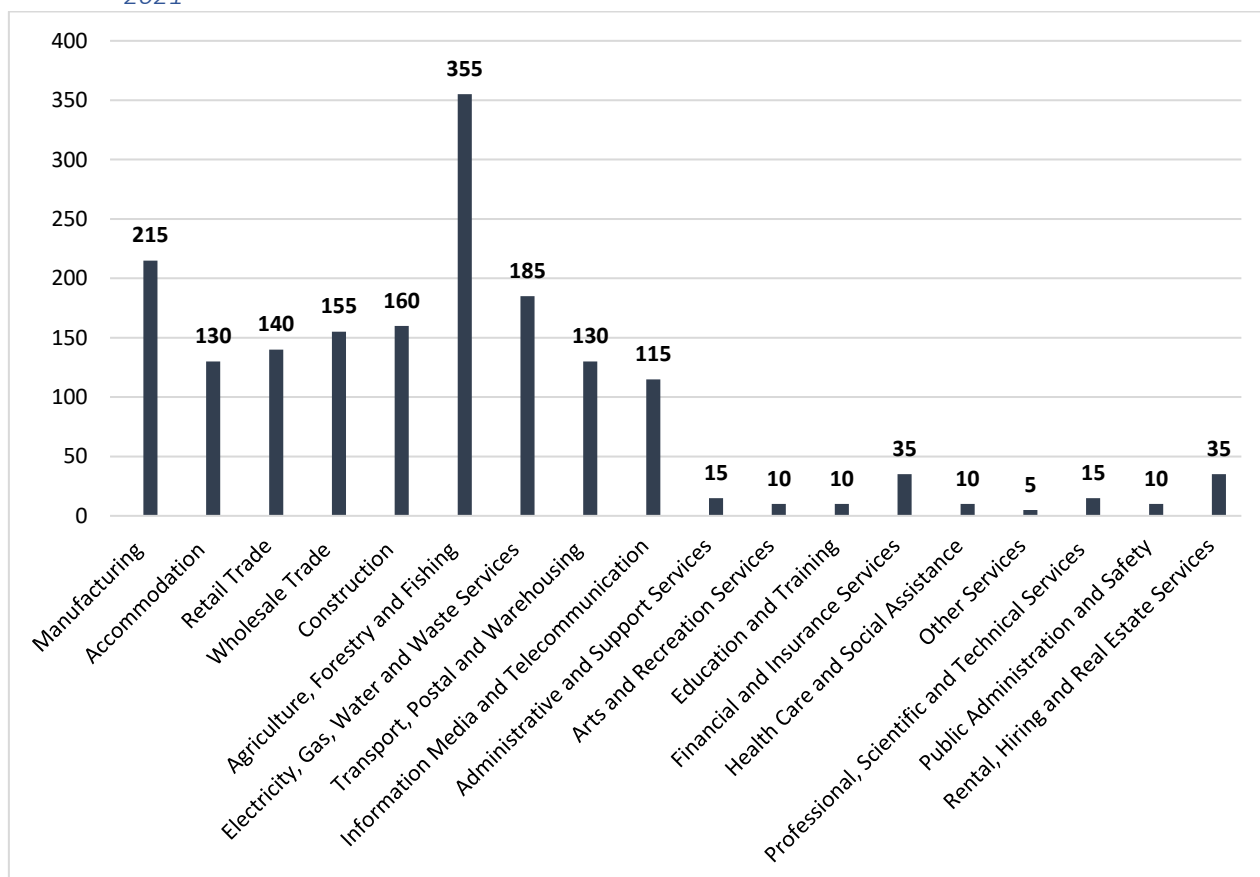


Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste



Construction

Figure 5. Apprenticeship and traineeship completions by industry, Cairns SA4, 12 months to 31 June 2021



¹⁸ NCVER 2021, Apprentices and trainees 2021: June quarter DataBuilder, Contract status, Workplace statistical area 4, Employer industry 1-digit, Occupation 1-digit, by 12 months ending 31 June.

Your businesses

- **Construction** – the sector has a high representation of full-time workers, and demand will continue to be driven primarily need for new residential construction, major infrastructure projects. Construction represents 18.1% of Cairns LGA businesses (2,503) with 160 apprenticeship or traineeship completions in the 12 months to June 2021. Improving this workforce pipeline will be key to meeting future demand.
- **Agriculture** – Agriculture and the supporting supply chain are an important employment segment for the broader SA4 region. The workforce supply has greatly diminished, primarily influenced by the restricted movement of seasonal workers and backpackers. There is also a growing demand for technical and scientific support skills for the sector.
- **Manufacturing (marine and aviation maintenance)** - opportunities across the broader region will continue to drive employment options. Skills demand is already building and will continue as major marine infrastructure projects are implemented. Improving this workforce pipeline will be key to meeting future demand.
- **Healthcare and Social Assistance** – As evidenced in the most recent vacancy data, there is an increasing demand for health-related skills and qualifications in the region. Clinical and allied health skills and qualifications are increasingly in demand, both in hospitals and throughout the community. Demand for skills and qualifications in the Healthcare and Social Assistance sector, including allied health, are also driven by NDIS and the presence of a diverse range of smaller employers.

The highlighted industries in table 7 below are those where the Cairns LGA has a greater proportion of businesses than Queensland as a whole.

Table 7. Registered businesses by industry, LGA, SA4 and Queensland, 30 June 2021.¹⁹

Industry	Cairns LGA		Cairns SA4		QLD
	No.	%	No.	%	% only
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	698	5.1	3,104	13.8	8.9
Mining	51	0.4	110	0.5	0.4
Manufacturing	496	3.6	813	3.6	3.7
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	42	0.3	72	0.3	0.3
Construction	2,503	18.1	3,851	17.1	17.2
Wholesale Trade	323	2.3	491	2.2	3.0
Retail Trade	823	6.0	1,360	6.1	6.0
Accommodation and Food Services	792	5.7	1,238	5.5	4.0
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	1,258	9.1	1,696	7.5	7.5
Information Media and Telecommunications	1.5	0.8	143	0.6	0.8
Financial and Insurance Services	465	3.4	631	2.8	4.0
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1,698	12.3	2,567	11.4	11.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1,511	10.9	2,033	9.0	12.3
Administrative and Support Services	746	5.4	1,073	4.8	4.5
Public Administration and Safety	40	0.3	57	0.3	0.3
Education and Training	217	1.6	305	1.4	1.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,020	7.4	1,325	5.9	6.9

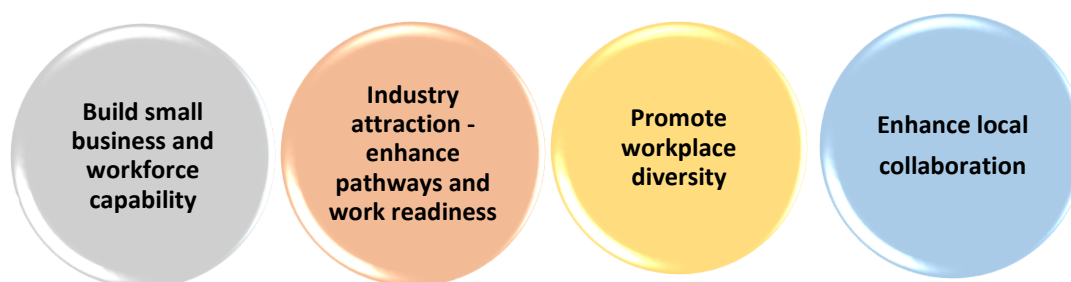
¹⁹ ABS 8165.0, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, various editions.

Arts and Recreation Services	172	1.2	290	1.3	1.3
Other Services	813	5.9	1,278	5.7	5.3
Not classified	28	0.2	34	0.2	0.1
Totals	13,800		22,471		

In addition to the focus industries identified, the Regional Jobs Committee may consider other sectors that have a higher proportion of businesses, compared to Queensland, as well as those that employ higher ratio of staff. These may form planned future actions and initiatives that will support longer-term regional business and economic recovery, resilience, and growth.

Future opportunities for RJC consideration

Future opportunities for Cairns align with four common themes:



1. Build small business and workforce capability

Workforce planning positions businesses to respond to workforce needs now and into the future. It helps businesses think ahead, manage change and leverage workforce opportunities as they emerge. Workforce Planning Connect is a suite of user-friendly resources designed to introduce small and medium-sized businesses to workforce planning and to enable them to undertake the process, regardless of their knowledge or experience. By building capability locally, businesses are best placed to respond to and manage change as it occurs. Upskilling RJC members and the local Chamber of Commerce in this area may support promotion and uptake rates of forward planning. JQ will support capability building through delivery a series of webinars and workshops, including workforce planning, and data sourcing and analysis.

Future opportunity	Existing resources
<p>Promote benefits of workforce planning with local businesses and encourage them to engage in capability building, particularly those businesses in the Agriculture, Health and Social Assistance, and Manufacturing (including marine and aviation maintenance). This may include collaboration with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chambers of Commerce• Local Government• DESBT and Jobs Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Planning Connect, Jobs Queensland• Workforce Planning Connect Toolkit for the Disability Sector - Workability Qld

Through research and consultation, Jobs Queensland found that the ongoing development of digital skills and capabilities is considered essential for all small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to ensure their ongoing sustainability and competitiveness. SMEs that have advanced levels of digital engagement are 50 per cent more likely to be growing revenue, earning 60 per cent more revenue per employee when compared to similar businesses with basic levels of digital engagement.²⁰ Small businesses that are not already engaging with digital technologies to deliver their products and services are at a significant risk of being left behind. By supporting small business owners to continue their learning journey and promoting a lifelong learning mindset, SMEs are more likely to engage with the training system and engage in skills development at both the organisational and employee levels.

Continuous learning and knowledge sharing is essential to the ongoing competitiveness of the labour market and broader business economic feasibility. Staff should be encouraged to seek and share knowledge across the region.

²⁰ Jobs Queensland, 2021. *Future work for small business*. Ipswich

Building transferrable skills to support career transitioning through locally based contextualised and flexible training options may increase participation rates and progression through the broader labour market.

Future opportunity	Existing resources
Promote a lifelong learning culture Champion lifelong learning encourage professional development discussions with local employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong Learning: The Foundation of Future Work

2. Industry attraction - enhance pathways and work readiness

School pathway programs:

The Gateway to Industry Schools Program (GISP) builds partnerships between schools and industry to enable young people to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes to pursue careers and employment in the Cairns regional economy. Students participating in the program are exposed to a range of learning experiences to assist them in their career choices and pathways to employment. With RJC supporting industry and education connections, local schools may enhance their participation in the program and connect with local industry to provide targeted training solutions for workforce issues.

Group Training Organisation pre-apprenticeship support program.

An existing program that has a current allocation of \$15.3M over two calendar years. The objective is to generate apprentices who are productive from Day 1 and have a greater likelihood of completing their apprenticeship.

Future opportunity	Existing resources
Support more local high schools to participate in the Gateway to Industry Schools Program (GISP) may provide valuable linkages to industry and pathways for students. This is particularly relevant to Programs connected to industries with high business representation across the region such as Agriculture, and Building and Construction, as well as those projected to experience significant jobs growth in the region (Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade; both of which form a large portion of Tourism as a composite industry).	Gateway to Industry Schools Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Community Services • Advanced Manufacturing • Agribusiness • Building and Construction • Aerospace
Understand and promote Pre-Apprenticeship pathways to assist participants with better industry comprehension and job-ready skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE QLD pre-apprenticeship courses • Skill360 • Australian Training Works
Work with DESBT to create a targetted campaign to increase uptake of Apprenticeships and Traineeships in growth industries, with a focus on underutilised cohorts in language and imagery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship and Traineeship system

Other industry initiatives that align with identified regional focus.	Resources include (not an exhaustive list)
Marine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Barrier Reef International Marine College
Health Care and Social Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workability Micro-Credentials • Choose Your Own Health Career - Vocational Education (cyohealthcareer.com.au)

Building and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSQ Trade Start
Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairns Aviation Skills Centre
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QAWN
Other/general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilling Queenslanders for Work • Back to Work • Female Founders Empower Program

3. Promote workplace diversity

By targeting organisations in larger employing industries and those anticipated to experience growth, the region may benefit from focusing on increasing the workforce participation of job seekers from underutilised cohorts, including people returning to work after undertaking family caring responsibilities, migrants, partners of defence force personnel, older workers and younger people. Strategies and actions should also support employers to better engage with and appeal to a broader pool of job seekers. This may include collaboration with DESBT, Jobs Queensland, Chamber of Commerce, and key local community organisations.

Future opportunity	Existing resources
<p>Targeted strategies and actions for to appeal to underrepresented cohorts, understand their barriers and increase their participation in the workforce, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging local stakeholders to better understand the unique needs of underutilised cohorts • identifying local advocates to champion the benefits of increasing workforce representation and diversity • changing imagery and language of employment promotional material to help job seekers identify with opportunities. • Review and advocate for change of gendered descriptors in advertisements and courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DESBT Regional Office • DESBT Apprenticeship and Traineeship promotional materials • Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026 • Choose Your Own Health Career - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner • Choose Your Own Health Career - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker

Cairns would benefit from improved employment outcomes for their youth and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both now and in the future. Programs need to be co-designed and with the commitment of community organisations, government at all levels and community members.

Future opportunity	Existing resources
<p>Host a forum to discuss employment barriers for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples locally and develop a strategy to address the issues collaboratively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organisations • All levels of Government • Elders

4. Enhance local collaboration

Better understanding of existing resources to leverage partnerships and collaboration, and to avoid duplication of work is beneficial for all stakeholders.

Future opportunity	Existing resources (not an exhaustive list)
Development of targeted workforce strategies and actions to support business and economic recovery, resilience, and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairns Regional Council - Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026 • Small Business Friendly Program • Small Business Financial Counselling NQ
There are varied characteristics of economic diversity and employment opportunities in each of Queensland's regions. Workforce planning activities would assist the RJC in developing future strategies to support local business and economic recovery, diversity, resilience, and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Planning Connect • Region and industry workforce planning

A list of potential stakeholders (not exhaustive).

Stakeholder	Stakeholder	Stakeholder
Cairns Regional Council	Workforce North	Advance Cairns
Cairns Chamber of Commerce	Cairns Alliance of Social Services	Master Builders Qld (FNQ)
Cairns Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce	AiGroup	Small Business Financial Counselling
Industry Skills Advisors	Regional Development Australia	AusIndustry
Queensland Small Business Commissioner	Workability	Cairns Manufacturing Hub
State and Federal Government Departments		
Employment, Small Business and Training	Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water	
State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning	Tourism, Innovation and Sport	
Agriculture and Fisheries	Transport and Main Roads	
Education, Skills and Employment (Federal)	Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (Federal)	

Established RJC's Initiatives

RJCs across Queensland have developed innovative solutions to assist them in overcoming local barriers to employment. These include:

Barrier	Initiative	Innovative RJC
Promoting the RJC	Jobs Fraser Coast website , Facebook and Instagram	Jobs Fraser Coast (and others)
Uncertain education pathways	Educate to Employ report	Springfield
Awareness of employment opportunities	Championing Redlands Coast Jobs Portal, Futures Forum and Major Projects Pipeline	Redlands
	Employ Toowoomba Future of Jobs Forum 7 Sep 2021	Toowoomba
Roadmap/ Pathway forward	Greater Whitsunday Future Skills Roadmap (2021)	Mackay: Greater Whitsunday Alliance
Promote regions economic strengths	COVID-19 Economic Tool (2021)	Jobs Fraser Coast
	Economic research summary	Redlands

Government initiatives

Program	Description	Relevance to Cairns
Mentoring for Growth	Mentoring for Growth (M4G) offers eligible businesses free access to volunteer business experts who provide insights, options and suggestions relating to challenges and opportunities they are experiencing in their business.	101 Mentoring for Growth ²¹ sessions have been conducted in Cairns between 1 July 2016 and January 2022.
Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS)	\$9M initiative supporting selected regional communities to identify current and emerging jobs in key industries and ensure there is a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand.	Industry intelligence gained during the life of this project could be leveraged rather than duplicated.
Back to Work (BTW)	Up to \$140M over four years for a revitalised BTW program to employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment.	378 Cairns employers have participated in the program between 1 July 2016 and 10 January 2022, supporting a total of 592 people. ²²
VET investment programs	\$500M annual funding for subsidies to support Queenslanders to access affordable training places in priority industries, including apprenticeships and traineeships.	A total of 9,040 people in Cairns have been supported through VET investment programs. ²³
Skilling Queenslanders for Work	Skilling Queenslanders for Work funds training and support for unemployed or underemployed people, with a focus on young people (including those in and transitioned from out-of-home care), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, mature-age jobseekers, women re-entering the workforce, veterans and ex-service personnel, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	A total of 1,495 jobs have been supported through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative in Cairns LGA. ²⁴
Gateway to Industry Schools program	Led by industry organisations which develop and implement tailored school engagement activities in line with their industry's key skills and workforce priorities.	There is opportunity for Cairns schools to increase engagement levels with industry through this program, particularly in Health and Social Assistance.

²¹ Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. CRM. Last updated 10.1.22

²² QGrants. Ongoing count of data by payment type since 1 July 2016 to 10 January 2022. Employer totals represent the total unique number of employers.

²³ Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. TPAY system. Counts the number of people who have commenced a new course, module, or competency and who are eligible to access support under free TAFE (User Choice), Free Apprenticeships for Under 21s and free TAFE (C3G). Last updated 21.02.2022

²⁴ Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. Regional Profile dashboard. Data supplied by SQW team. Last updated December 2021.

Relevant Jobs Queensland reports

There are several bodies of work published by Jobs Queensland that may be of assistance once the RJC is established and a way forward is confirmed.

Document	Description	Relevance to Cairns
Tropical North Queensland Regional Tourism Workforce Plan	The Regional Tourism Workforce Plans provide more specific advice and actions at a regional level. They have been tailored to individual regional needs ensuring regional differences are adequately reflected, and that recommended actions provide practical solutions to local issues.	This report was developed through consultation with Tourism stakeholders within the Cairns Region.
Anticipating Future Skills	In consultation with stakeholders across the state, Jobs Queensland devised three future scenarios, which are useful tools for dealing with complexity and uncertainty. Grounded in existing data and trends, scenarios do not generate predictions but depict plausible futures. Read the AFS report summary.	The RJC may wish to take a deeper dive in to JQ's Anticipating Future Skills data to complement the summary provided in this Labour Market Profile.
Future work, future jobs	While change to the composition of employment in Queensland has been happening for decades, the speed and extent of change in increasing. Opportunities for new and different work are emerging. <i>Future work, future jobs</i> examines this transition and provides a roadmap to the future. Collaboration and planning are essential. Read the summary of the key findings.	The future of work will impact all regions.
Supporting workforces during industry transition	Transition is a continual event in an industry's life cycle and the impact of industry transitions can be challenging. However, transitions can also bring about positive change in situations where an industry grows rapidly or where there is industry renewal. Both of these experiences have been amplified as a result of recent economic disruption. This research identified eight key elements that can influence a successful transition strategy for industries and regions. Read the report summary	The findings of this report may prove useful as Australia pursues Net Zero by 2050. New industries will emerge and compete for skilled labour.
Region and Industry Workforce Planning Guide	The guide recognises that Queensland's regions are varied and characterised by economic diversity and varied employment opportunities and challenges. Each region requires a highly skilled workforce that aligns with the unique and natural advantages of their region. Read the guide.	A guide to support development of a Cairns Workforce Plan if required.
Social Enterprise	Jobs Queensland facilitated research to understand appropriate roles for government to help support social enterprise activity to deliver economic and social outcomes for Queensland. Read the research overview. As discussed, Jobs Queensland's work informed the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy that was released in September 2019.	Supporting social enterprise offer work readiness programs locally increases opportunities for underrepresented cohorts to enter the labour market.



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