

# Skills Audit

Current and Future Skill Requirements  
on the Mid North Coast of NSW

# 2017



An Australian Government Initiative



A NSW Government Initiative



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Enquiries about the document should be referred to:  
 Kerry Grace, CEO, Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast  
 PO Box 2537 Port Macquarie NSW 2444 Australia  
 02 5525 1500 | [ceo@rdamnc.org.au](mailto:ceo@rdamnc.org.au) | [www.rdamnc.org.au](http://www.rdamnc.org.au)

## Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and Elders past and present. Research for this report was conducted on the land of the Gumbayngirr nations to the North spanning Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Nambucca, Dughutti Nations in the Macleay, Birpai Nations in the Hastings and Biripi Nations throughout Taree.

## Government Funding

The Mid North Coast Skills Audit was funded by the NSW State Government.

## List of Acronyms

RDA	Regional Development Australia
MNC	Mid North Coast
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ICT	Information and communication technologies
RDAMNC	Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast
FYA	Foundation for Young Australians
LGA	Local Government Area

## Project Team

Team Member	Role
Steve Montgomery, Project Officer, RDAMNC	Project design, survey design, stakeholder engagement writing
Dr. Jessica Tout-Lyon, Research Officer, RDAMNC	Project design, survey design, primary research analysis, writing
Kerry Grace, CEO Regional Development Australia, Mid North Coast, RDAMNC	Project design, project management, stakeholder engagement, writing and editing
Jenni Kew, Operations Manager, RDAMNC	Project design, editing
Russell Pell, Innovation Consultant, RDAMNC	Project design, survey design, stakeholder interviews, photography
Louise Lord, Executive Assistant, RDAMNC	Survey assistant
Diana Gibbs, Chairperson Regional Development Australia Orana	Research support, editing, methodology
Anna Fisher, Fisher Design + Architecture	Graphic design

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# Executive Summary

The Mid North Coast Skills Audit was undertaken between April and June 2017 to capture the current and future skill needs of business and industry within the Region. With a methodology that included an online survey (165 responses), face to face interviews, presentations at business and industry network forums, focus groups and case studies, the Skills Audit provides a rich evidence base that can contribute to forward economic development planning in the Region.

The study focuses on skills rather than jobs. The rationale is that specific jobs are subject to change, and that the range of actual occupations and employment opportunities in the Australian and Mid North Coast labour markets is large and diverse. Publications such as Australian Jobs 2017 (Australian Government, Department of Employment)<sup>1</sup> acknowledge that occupations can be clustered according to skill levels and skill types, which are portable to a range of occupations.

Similarly, the Foundation for Young Australians<sup>2</sup> has provided 'big data' analysis of some 2.7 million job advertisements to reveal 7 new portable skills 'clusters' in the Australian economy, where the required skills are more closely related and transferable than first thought. In its report The New Work Mindset<sup>3</sup>, the Foundation for Young Australians believes that it is time for a new, more dynamic mindset when considering the future workforce. Such a mindset is less about what jobs are disappearing or remaining, and more about what portable skills and capabilities are most useful for both employers and employees in the new economy.

With regard to the required skill sets needed for projected business and economic growth in the Mid North Coast Region over the next 5 years, industry-specific skills, management skills, marketing/sales skills and digital literacy/ICT skills appeared as those most required.

Businesses from the Region almost unanimously (93%) agreed that generic employability skills (soft skills) such as communication, team work, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology were also very important or essential to business growth over the next 5 years.

Interestingly, businesses also acknowledged the significance of portable skills 'clusters' as impacting on their growth potential. In particular, portable skill clusters

that include a high level of interpersonal interaction in retail, sales, hospitality and entertainment (the Generators cluster<sup>4</sup>), having a skilled understanding of digital technology (the Technologists cluster) and professional information, education and/or business services skills (the Informers cluster) were seen as very important or essential for business growth in the Mid North Coast Region over the next 5 years.

The Skills Audit also identified that access to a suitably skilled workforce, a perceived lack of available skills in the Region and competition from outside the Region were all constraints to business growth over the next 5 years. Drawing upon a small population base, location, attitudes towards employment and concerns about employment preparation undertaken with young people were also raised as constraints to economic growth. Over 50% of respondents indicated that they were experiencing skill shortages in their workforce right now. Significantly, the skill shortages were widespread across 16 of the 19 industry sectors represented in the Region.

Despite these constraints, some 70% of respondents indicated confidence in their business turnover over the next 5 years, which points to a positive economic outlook for the Region. Small and micro-businesses employing 10 people or less had the least confident outlook.

A strong education and training culture exists in the Region, with 70% of respondents providing training for existing staff. In house training is a popular method used by business and industry (33%), but a range of education and training methods were used, including a combination of methods. Nonetheless, some 20% of respondents indicated that a lack of relevant training availability in the Region was a constraint to future business growth.

The Skills Audit shows that business and industry in the Region is forward focused, with more than 50% of businesses indicating that the ability to innovate and be responsive to customer needs was likely to impact on their business growth potential over the next 5 years, as was an ability to use technology effectively (46%).

In addition, more than 76% of businesses indicated that they would be introducing new products, new or improved methods or processes and marketing or organisational innovation as well as innovating in-house and/or collaborating with others over the next 10 years.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Jobs 2017. Australian Government, Department of Employment.  
<https://docs.employment.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/australianjobs2017.pdf>

<sup>2-4</sup> Foundation for Young Australians (2016) The New Work Mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order.

<sup>5-6</sup> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (Planning & Environment, NSW State Government March 2017)  
[http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~/\\_media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/north-coast-2036-regional-plan-2017.ashx](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~/_media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/north-coast-2036-regional-plan-2017.ashx)

# 1. Introduction

The Mid North Coast skills audit has been designed to identify the current and future skill sets required on the Mid North Coast (MNC) with a particular focus on the skills required to manage and generate future growth in the region.

The Mid North Coast Skills Audit was funded by the State Government and delivered by Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast (RDAMNC).

The audit highlights the current constraints which operate to restrict access to the skills required, as well as the techniques currently used to address skills shortage. The skills audit provides an analysis of industry sectors, their projected workforce numbers and required skills within the next 5 to 10 years. The audit also identifies the education and training techniques likely to be used in the future to deliver the skills required.

Previously, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Far South Coast and Central West in NSW have undertaken skills audit of their region and particular industry sectors. RDAMNC has utilised this research to form the basis of our work.

RDAMNC has also referred to the State Government's Northern Strategy<sup>5</sup> throughout the document, in particular to form an understanding of key industries into the future.

The findings of the skills audit will provide evidence to inform the development of strategies to improve and grow the skills required in the region.

The following report provides analysis of the research in two distinct sections (1) information related to every industry across the region and (2) information related to key selected industry sectors as highlighted in the North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (Planning & Environment, NSW Government, March 2017)<sup>6</sup>, which include:

- Health care & social assistance
- Retail trade
- Hospitality
- Education & training
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, gas, water & waste services
- Construction

Image courtesy of Bellingen Shire Council





## 1.2 Mid North Coast population

### 1.2.1 Population characteristics

**Table 1 – Mid North Coast population characteristics**

AREA (BY LGA)	COFFS HARBOUR	BELLINGEN	NAMBUCCA	KEMPSEY	PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS	TAREE	LORD HOWE ISLAND
Population <sup>7</sup>	72937	12648	19230	28896	78531	48791	385
Median age <sup>8</sup>	43.6	46.9	50.7	46.5	47.6	47.9	43.4
Indigenous people <sup>9</sup>	3643	448	1464	3343	3175	3329	4
Unemployment rate (2017) <sup>10</sup>	5.8%	5.9%	7.4%	7.3%	4.4%	n/a	n/a





## 1.2.2 The MNC economy

The MNC supports a diverse economy which generates an annual Gross Regional Product of \$13 Billion<sup>11</sup>. Key drivers of the MNC economy in terms of regional exports, employment, value added and local expenditure in 2017 include the following<sup>12</sup>:

- Electricity, gas, water & waste services
- Construction
- Retail trade
- Health Care and social assistance
- Manufacturing
- Hospitality

In the MNC, total employment is estimated at 79,038 jobs, generating a total of \$12.5 Billion in value added by the industry sectors<sup>13</sup>.

Annual total exports comprise \$ 5.4 Billion, while total imports equate to \$5.2 Billion and local sales generate \$7.5 Billion dollars annually<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2.3 MNC Industry characteristics

The Health care and social assistance sector is both the largest employer on the MNC and also the largest contributor to total value added, employing 17.2% of the total workforce and generating a total of 10.5% of value added (Fig. 1 and 2)<sup>15</sup>.

The retail trade sector is the next largest employer at 14.6% and generates a total of 7.2% of the region's total value added (Fig. 1)<sup>16</sup>.

The next largest employers are the hospitality sector at 9.7% of the workforce, while 9.4% are employed in the education and training sector, and manufacturing contributes to 6.6% of all total employment (Fig. 1)<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, the electricity, gas, water and waste services sector generates 6.9% of the total value added, followed by 6.8% for construction (Fig. 2)<sup>18</sup>.

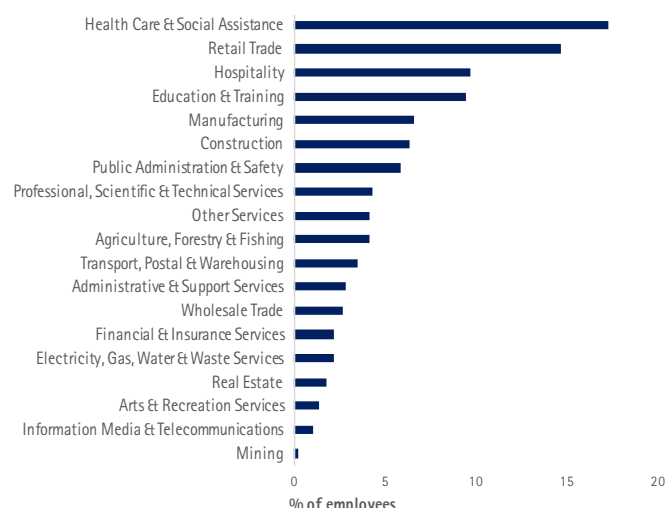


Figure 1 — Total employment by sector on the Mid North Coast of NSW as a percentage of total employees (REMPAN Economy profile, Dec 2016)

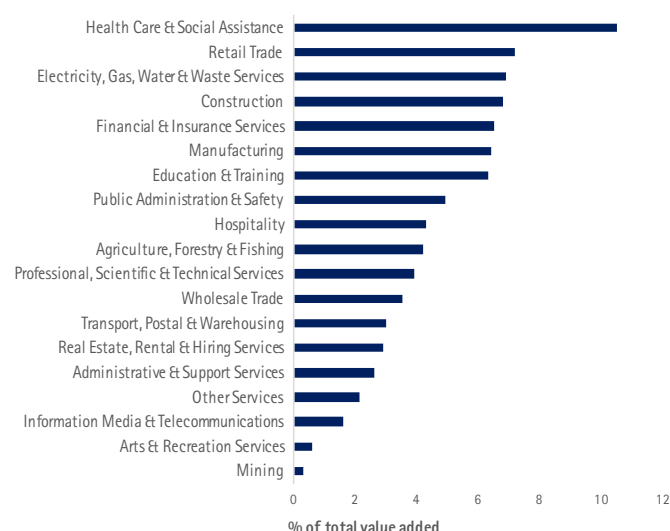


Figure 2 — Total value added by sector on the Mid North Coast of NSW as a percentage of total value added (REMPAN Economy profile, Dec 2016)

<sup>7</sup> 2016 ABS Census data – Place of usual residence – People

<sup>8</sup> 2015 ABS ERP, Median Age, Usual Residents, Persons ERP, June 30

<sup>9</sup> 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing, REMPLAN v3 Community Population – Indigenous Status, Place of usual residence

<sup>10</sup> 2017 ABS Labour Force Survey LGA Data Tables small area labour market, March 2017

<sup>11</sup> REMPLAN v3 (December 2016) Economy and Community profiles. (ABS 2011 Census JTW Employment, ABS 2013/2014 National Input Output Tables, ABS June 2016 Gross State Product).

<sup>12</sup> REMPLAN v3 (December 2016) Economy profile. DEC 2016 (ABS 2011 Census JTW Employment, ABS 2013/2014 National Input Output Tables, ABS June 2016 Gross State Product).

<sup>13</sup> - <sup>18</sup> As above

## 1.3 The Foundation for Young Australians – The New Work Mindset

A new approach to the classification of jobs (and therefore skills required) has been proposed in a recent report produced by The Foundation of Young Australians<sup>19</sup>. This report suggests that there are “7 new job clusters” in Australia, as a result of redefining the types of jobs, careers and work). The 7 new job clusters essentially provide a paradigm shift, focusing on the skills required rather than one “job” or “career”. This re-classification of jobs reveals that many skills are transferable not only across various jobs or careers but within these new job clusters. We have included the FYA approach to jobs in this report to provide a basis for consideration of the future requirement of skills on the MNC.

The 7 new job clusters are<sup>20</sup>:

- **The Generators:** This cluster comprises jobs that require a high level of interpersonal interaction in retail, sales, hospitality and entertainment.
- **The Artisans:** This cluster requires skills in manual tasks related to construction, production, maintenance or technical customer services.
- **The Designers:** This cluster includes jobs that involve deploying skills and knowledge of science, mathematics and design to construct or engineer products or buildings
- **The Technologists:** This cluster comprises jobs which require skilled understanding and manipulation of digital technology
- **The Carers:** This cluster included jobs that seek to improve the mental or physical health or well-being of others, including medical care and personal support services.
- **The Informers:** This cluster includes jobs that involve professionals providing information, education or business services.
- **The Coordinators:** This cluster comprises jobs that involve repetitive administrative and behind-the-scenes process or service tasks.

This classification is considered to more closely match the description of jobs (and thus skills required by MNC businesses) into the future, and so has been used as the basis for the later discussion of future skills needs in the region.



Figure 3 – Foundation for Young Australians (2016) New Work Mindset<sup>21</sup>

The need for focus on skills rather than jobs is also demonstrated in the **World Economic Forum 2016 report – The Future of Jobs; Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the fourth Industrial Revolution**.<sup>22</sup>

“In many industries and countries, the most in-demand occupations or specialties did not exist 10 or even five years ago, and the pace of change is set to accelerate. By one popular estimate, 65% of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don't yet exist.<sup>1</sup> In such a rapidly evolving employment landscape, the ability to anticipate and prepare for future skills requirements, job content and the aggregate effect on employment is increasingly critical for businesses, governments and individuals in order to fully seize the opportunities presented by these trends—and to mitigate undesirable outcomes.”<sup>23</sup>

The World Economic Forum<sup>24</sup> anticipates key skills needed for 2020 will include; Complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision making, service orientation, negotiation and cognitive flexibility.

<sup>19-21</sup> Foundation for Young Australians (2016) The New Work Mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order. Accessed at: <https://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-New-Work-Mindset.pdf>

<sup>22-24</sup> World Economic Forum. The Future of Jobs; Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the fourth Industrial Revolution. January 2016. Available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf)



## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Online survey

The online survey (Appendix 1) comprised 28 questions – with a mix of multiple choice, Likert scale, free text options and was distributed via the online platform Survey Monkey. The survey also included a question relating to the “7 new job clusters in Australia” as outlined in section 1.2<sup>25</sup>. The online survey was widely distributed throughout the MNC through email, phone and face-to-face meetings. The survey was also completed by via business and industry network events including local Chamber of Commerce Events. The survey results were collated in total, and then across the different industry sectors based on REMPLAN definitions<sup>26</sup> on the MNC to form the survey findings.

### 2.2 Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held within the region, one at Port Macquarie and one at Coffs Harbour. The purpose of the focus groups was to gain further insight by applying a qualitative questioning technique.

### 2.3 Case studies

People were interviewed for the case studies and their audio responses were recorded using an iPhone. Their responses were then transcribed and collated to gather further qualitative data.

## 3. Results and responses

### 3.1 Responses received

Of the 405 businesses and industries contacted and 41 face-to-face meetings on the MNC to complete the online survey, a total of 166 respondents completed the online survey, resulting in a success rate of 41%. Additionally, 7 people attended the focus groups, while 5 people were interviewed for case studies.

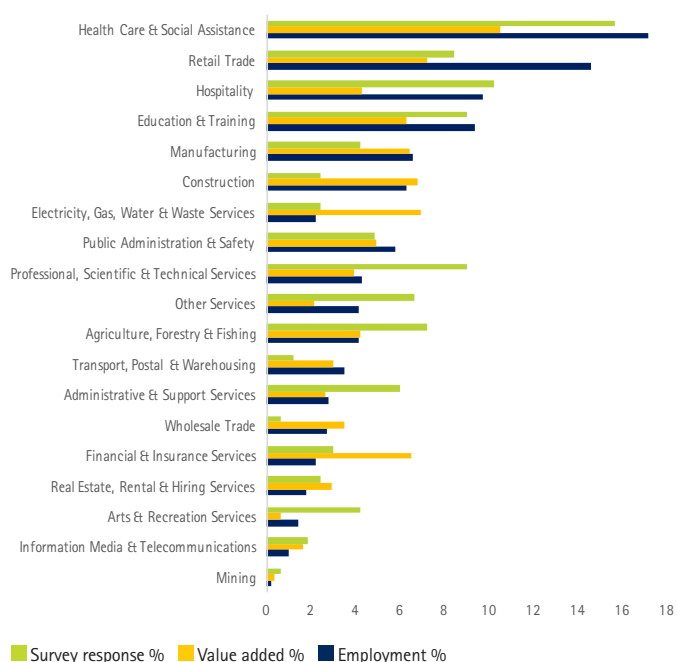
### 3.2 Survey responses received by industry sector

Industry sectors within the MNC economy are categorised according to ABS category definitions used by REMPLAN<sup>27</sup>. Survey responses were then grouped into these categories. The sectors selected to be the primary focus of this report were those considered “important” to the MNC economy, via their contributions to total employment and value added (Fig.1) as mentioned in the Introduction, section 1.1. These “focus” sectors are:

- **Health care & social assistance** – contribution to both employment & value added
- **Retail trade** – contribution to both employment & value added
- **Hospitality** – contribution to employment
- **Education & Training** – contribution to employment
- **Manufacturing** – contribution to employment
- **Electricity, gas, water & waste services** – contribution to value added
- **Construction** – contribution to value added

<sup>25</sup> Foundation for Young Australians (2016) The New Work Mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order.

<sup>26-27</sup> REMPLAN v3 (December 2016) Economy profile.



**Figure 4 – Total survey responses received, employment and value added by sector (%) on the Mid North Coast of NSW**

The greatest response received by a sector was from the health care and social assistance sector (15.2% of responses) (Fig. 4). This is considered to reflect the importance of this sector within the MNC economy, contributing 17.2% of employment and 10.5% of value-added. Figure 4 lists the proportion of survey responses received from this and other sectors, together with the contribution of each sector to employment and value-adding in the region.

Overall, the percentage of responses received from the top four sectors (based on employment on the MNC) was reflective of the total employees of each sector. The retail sector however was under-represented based on responses received when compared to employment, yet was reflective of the proportion contributed to total value added. The electricity, gas, water & waste services and the construction sectors were both under-represented in responses received when compared to contributions made to total regional value added.

### 3.3 Survey responses by LGA

(Note, there may be a margin of error related to businesses which may have their office located in an area that is different to operational location/s)

Table 2 – Survey responses by LGA		
LGA / COMMUNITY	AMOUNT OF RESPONSES	% OF TOTAL RESPONSES
Bellingen	13	8%
Coffs Harbour	60	36%
Kempsey	23	14%
Nambucca	13	8%
Port Macquarie-Hastings	36	22%
Taree	12	7%
No response	9	5%



## 4. Understanding our skill shortages

### 4.1 Skill shortages across the MNC

- 51% of surveyed respondents stated that they were experiencing skills shortages (unfulfilled skills) in their workforce (Fig. 5),
- 48% did not experience skills shortages

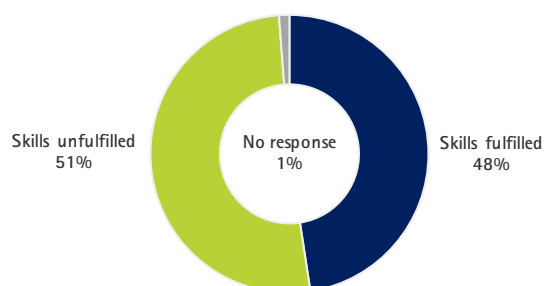


Figure 5 – Total percentage of surveyed respondents who identified if skills required were fulfilled or unfulfilled within their workforce on the Mid North Coast of NSW

#### 4.1.1 Skill shortages experienced by industry sectors

- 100% of respondents within the transport, postal and warehousing sector reported that their required skills were not currently met (Fig. 6).
- Furthermore, 75% of respondents from the construction sector reported that skills were not met (Fig. 6).
- While the retail trade (64.2%), manufacturing (57.1%), health care & social assistance (54%), education & training (53.3%), electricity, gas, water & waste services (50%) and hospitality (47.0%) also reported skills shortages (Fig.6).
- The responses received from the real estate services and the wholesale trade sectors did not indicate a skills shortage (Fig. 6).

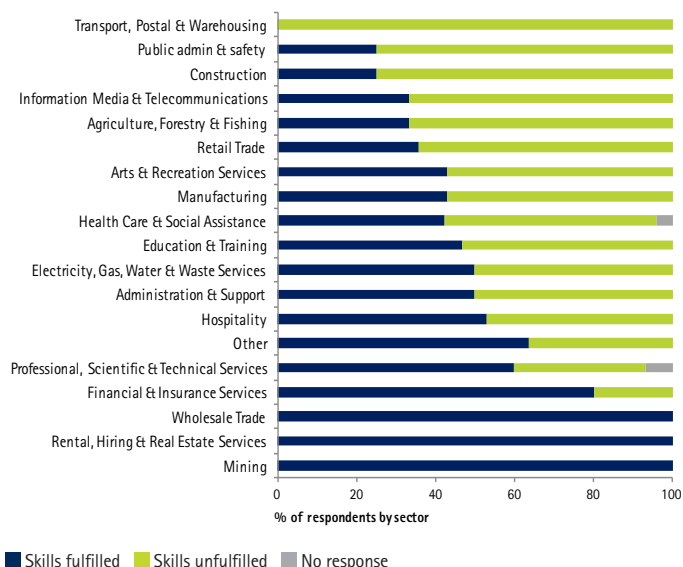


Figure 6 – Current fulfilment of the skills required by sector on the Mid North Coast of NSW

Findings from the focus groups provide examples of the specific skills currently required in the following sectors across the MNC (Table 4).

#### 4.1.2 Identifying specific skill shortages

Table 3 – Anticipated skill shortages in the next 5–10 years

INDUSTRY	IDENTIFIED SKILL SHORTAGE
Health care & social assistance	Allied health, physiotherapy, leadership, increased ability of Donor Services Nursing Assistants (DSNA's) to step into roles of higher responsibility, practice management, doctor
Retail trade	Sales and customer service, computer, digital, support for business owner
Hospitality	Business planning, digital marketing, social media, community involvement, digital technology for innovation and marketing, property manager
Education & Training	Marketing, IT Optimisation, entrepreneur and innovation specialists, early childhood teachers, technology skills, upskilling to higher qualifications
Manufacturing	Community engagement, advanced electronic and computer programming skills, small machine mechanic
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	Level 2 licence

NB – the abovementioned information was collected as part of the primary data. There are only a small amount of responses for each question. Further research would be useful to gain deeper insight by industry.

**Table 4 – Comments from focus group questions regarding specific skills required**

HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & SAFETY SECTOR	EDUCATION & TRAINING SECTOR
Physiotherapists & allied health Registered nurses Senior clinical managers	Internal procedures Ongoing training – sales skills, business development	Compliance Communications & marketing Training Administration Business accounting

#### 4.1.3 Selected “focus” industry sectors

Of the selected industry sectors (Fig. 6, Table 5) 100% of skills required were either unfulfilled (transport, postal & warehousing) or fulfilled (Wholesale trade and Real estate) (Fig. 6, Table 5) were selected in addition to the focus industry sectors identified in section 3.2. Furthermore, the transport, postal & warehousing sector and the wholesale trade sector were both under-represented by the number of responses received from each sector in relation to overall employment and value added on the MNC (Fig. 4)

The focus sectors were then categorised according to total employment and value added on the MNC in addition to the results from Section 4.1.1 and Figure 6: “skills unfulfilled” (Construction) and “skills fulfilled : unfulfilled” (Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Education & Training, Manufacturing and lastly, Hospitality) (Fig. 6, Table 5). None of the focus sectors that contribute to total employment and value added on the MNC aligned to the “skills fulfilled” category (Fig. 6, Table 5).

**Table 5 – Urgency of skill shortages by industry across MNC**

MNC ECONOMY	FULFILMENT OF SKILLS	INDUSTRY SECTOR
Industry sector makes significant contribution to overall value added & employment on MNC	Skills are neither fulfilled or unfulfilled across industry sector	Health care & social assistance Retail trade Education & training Hospitality • Construction Manufacturing Electricity, gas, water & waste services
Industry sector not dominant across overall employment or value added on MNC	Skills are unfulfilled across 100 % of industry sector	Transport, postal & warehousing
Industry sector not dominant across overall employment or value added on MNC	Skills are fulfilled across 100 % of industry sector	Wholesale trade Real estate services

■ Importance of sector in MNC economy context

■ Progress is required to improve skill fulfilment

■ Urgent action is required to address the lack of skill fulfilment

■ Continue with techniques currently used to fulfil skill requirements



## 4.2 Current challenges to obtaining skills required on the MNC

42.2% of people surveyed said the lack of available skills in the region was the largest challenge in obtaining the skills needed to run a workplace on the MNC. (Fig. 7)

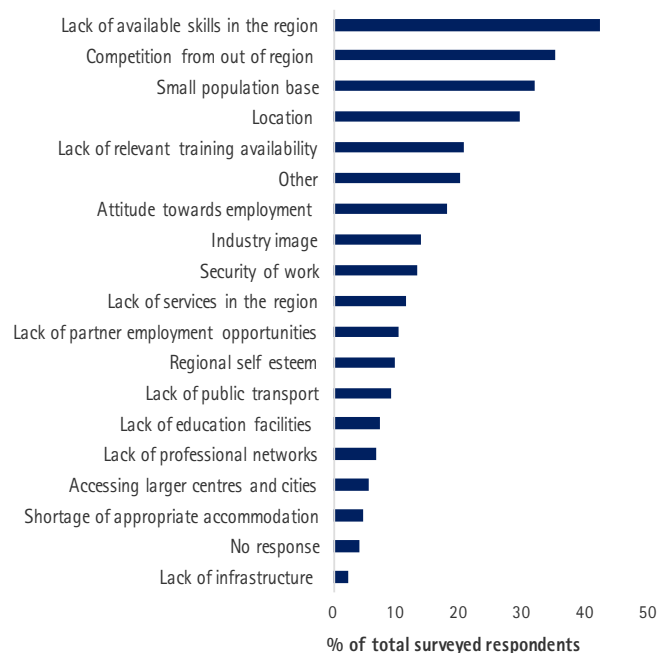


Figure 7 —The challenges to obtaining the skills required on the Mid North Coast of NSW

## 4.3 The lack of available skills on the MNC is a challenge to obtaining skills required

To explore the challenge to obtaining skills required in greater detail we assessed the responses from the focus sectors further:

- All people surveyed from within the transport & warehousing sector indicated that the lack of available skills in the region was a challenge to obtaining skills required (Fig. 8), with 100% of this sector also indicating a skills shortage (Fig. 6)
- 50% of responses from within the real estate services sector, the construction sector and the electricity, gas, water and waste sector identified that the lack of skills in the region were a challenge to obtaining skills (Fig. 8)
- 50% or less of the respondents from within the remaining sectors all indicated that the lack of skills to be a challenge to obtaining the skills required on the MNC (Fig. 8).
- Respondents from within the wholesale trade sector did not answer this question.



Figure 8 — The challenge of obtaining skills required due to a lack of available skills on the Mid North Coast of NSW.  
\*People from the wholesale trade sector did not respond to this question.

The largest employer and contributor to value added on the MNC, the health care and social assistance sector nominated the lack of available skills in the region to be their greatest challenge to obtaining the skills required. Overall, while the lack of skills within the region was identified as being the greatest challenge to obtaining skills across all industry sectors on the MNC, at an individual industry level, not all sectors nominated this to be the greatest challenge. Despite this, the lack of available skills within the region was consistently ranked within the top 4 challenges across the focus sectors.

These findings may indicate that the challenges to obtaining skills required by each sector, whether they currently experience skills shortages or not, is unique to each sector. The presence of skills shortages within a sector may also be due to other factors beyond skill availabilities within the region. For example, while 75% of people surveyed from the construction sector currently experience skills shortages (Fig. 6), the sector identified that a small population base and the lack of relevant training availability to be the greatest challenge to obtaining the skills required (Appendix 2). The challenges facing the construction sector is in contrast to the sector with the largest skills shortages in the region, the transport, postal and warehousing sector whereby the greatest challenge facing this sector is due to a lack of available skills in the region (Fig. 8). This same challenge is also apparent in the real estate services sector, which is not currently experiencing a skills shortage (Fig. 6), yet, 50% of the sector identified that a lack of available skills within the region is a challenge to obtaining the skills required.

## 5. Addressing our skills shortages

- To overcome these skills shortages on the MNC, 70% of work places currently provide training for existing staff (Fig. 9),
- 61.4% provide mentoring (Fig. 9) and
- Approximately 40% of respondents indicated they would hire new staff (Fig. 9).

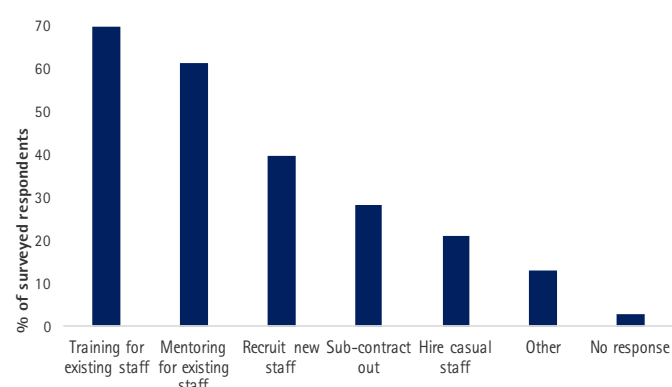


Figure 9 – The techniques used to currently address skills shortages on the Mid North Coast of NSW (Multiple answers were allowed)

Furthermore, when observing the breakdown of techniques used across the focus sectors there are similar patterns across sectors where training for existing staff dominates (Fig. 9):

- Given the real estate sector currently does not experience skills shortages, the techniques used to address skills shortages may be successful within that sector.
- However, as the remaining focus sectors experience skills shortages, this may indicate that the different types of training or mentoring currently offered or implemented may not be effective to address all skills gaps.

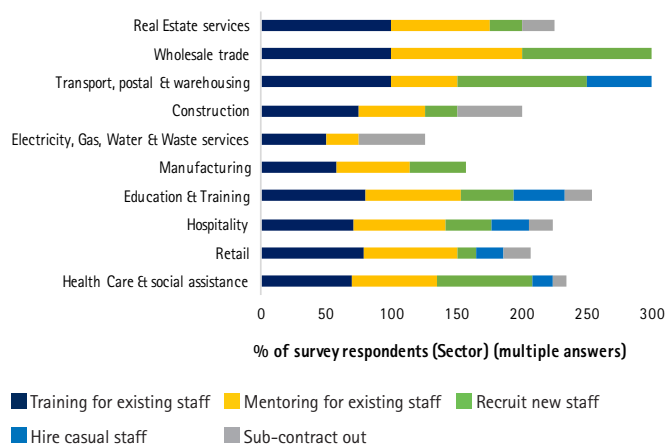


Figure 10 – The techniques used by sector to currently address skills shortages on the Mid North Coast of NSW (More than one response allowed)

## 5.1 Training

- To explore the types of education and training provided to ensure both the current and future workforce skills need are met, we found that over 33% of people surveyed indicated that in-house training to be most useful (Fig. 11),
- Followed by a combination of techniques at 23%, and 13% use the apprenticeships or traineeships scheme (Fig. 11)

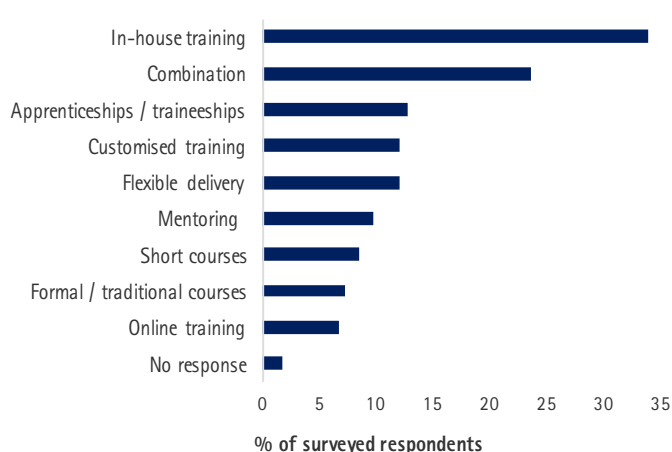


Figure 11 – The training and education techniques used to address current and future skill requirements on the Mid North Coast of NSW

To explore this further, all of the focus sectors, except the wholesale trade sector and the transport, postal and warehousing sector indicated they use a suite of training techniques to overcome their current skills requirements and will continue to do so in the future (Fig. 12).

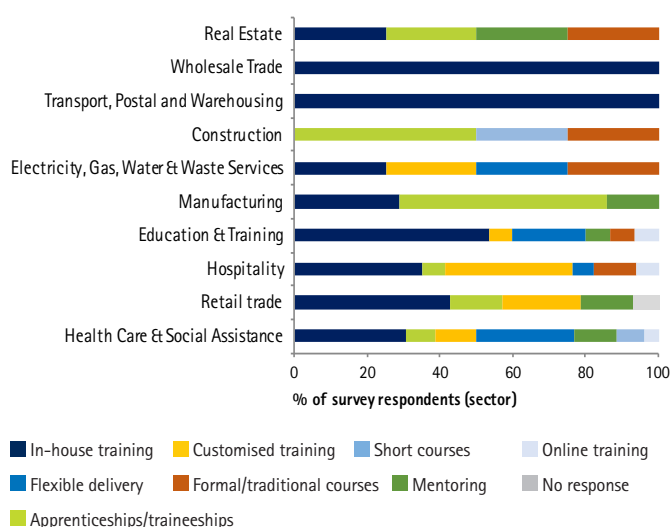


Figure 12 – The education and training techniques used by sector to address current and future skill requirements on the Mid North Coast of NSW



**These findings indicate that in-house training is relied upon to overcome both current and future skills required, whereby the additional combination of training techniques used by a sector is generally unique to that sector.**

The findings show that there is not one technique or a suite of techniques which address skills shortages on the MNC (Fig. 12). Training techniques vary between the sectors with no current skills shortages, where the real estate service sector uses a suite of training techniques, while the wholesale trade sector only uses in-house training (Fig. 12).

Furthermore, the findings identify that the training techniques used by one sector may not be sufficient or appropriate to address the skills required by another sector. For example, the sectors currently experiencing skills shortages (transport, postal and warehousing) use the same techniques as those sectors which do not have a skills shortage (wholesale trade) (Fig. 12). This implies that what is beneficial to address skill requirements for one sector may not be for all sectors. The sectors currently experiencing skills shortages may need to re-evaluate the effectiveness of the types of training techniques currently used and to implement a system which will successfully address the skills required.

These findings highlight that the way in which workplaces aim to address skills required in the future are similar to how they currently address them, by providing in-house training. Other training techniques are also implemented including apprenticeships or traineeships in the real estate sector, the hospitality sector, the construction sector, the manufacturing sector and the health care and social assistance sector (Fig. 12). Additionally, the types of training techniques used must have a flexible delivery or are able to be customised which is specifically required by the electricity, gas, water and waste sector, the education and training sector, the hospitality sector, the retail trade sector and the health care and social assistance sector to fulfil current and future skills requirements (Fig. 12). Interestingly, the proportion of online training used as an education and training technique was less than 7% of people surveyed across these sectors (Fig. 12). This indicates that in the future, these sectors will continue to mainly rely on internal training, external training and education providers on the MNC to ensure that the workforce is appropriately skilled.

Given that 20% of total people surveyed indicated the lack of relevant training availability in the region to be a challenge when obtaining the skills required (Fig. 7), the provision of future training, the course content and how the training is delivered must align to what the sectors require to be improved upon where it currently is today, in particular, ensuring a customised and flexibly delivery.

Furthermore, 70% of total people surveyed already train existing staff to overcome skills shortages, yet skills shortages still remain widespread on the MNC. This highlights that the types of training techniques provided in-house may need to be re-evaluated and their success measured to ensure that skills shortages are fulfilled in the future, especially if sectors are not dramatically adjusting training techniques accordingly. Additionally, there may be a requirement for employers that currently experience skills shortages and wish to continue to provide in-house training, to participate in training themselves which focuses on the different types and benefits of training and education techniques used to overcome the skills shortages within their workforce.

## 5.2 Recruitment

To recruit new staff, 30.0% of survey participants utilise word of mouth, a further 26.6% advertise through media and 25.3% utilise other methods which include a mix of all of the survey options. Only 4.2% of participants indicated they would use local employment services, and a further 3.9% would use a commercial recruiter.

## 6. Future outlook for businesses on the MNC

### 6.1 Business turnover

- On the MNC, 39% of people surveyed indicated they are confident their organisation's turnover will increase over the next 5 years, while 31% were very confident, highlighting a positive outlook for future growth (Fig. 13).

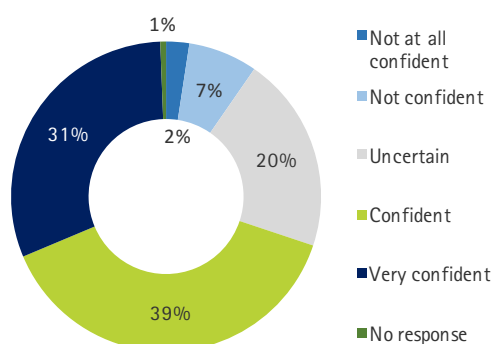


Figure 13 – The confidence that turnover will increase in the next 5 years among people surveyed on the Mid North Coast of NSW

### 6.2 Growth in Employees

- In next 10 years, 7% of people surveyed indicated that businesses employing 11 to 50 people have the greatest projected increase in number of people employed (Fig. 14),
- Followed by 6% of people surveyed projecting employment increase for businesses employing more than 100 people (Fig. 14),
- Despite this, 13% of surveyed respondents indicated the number of people employed in small businesses with less than 10 employees is set to decrease 10 years (Fig. 14),
- Lastly, businesses that employ 51 to 100 employees were projected to remain the same (Fig. 14).

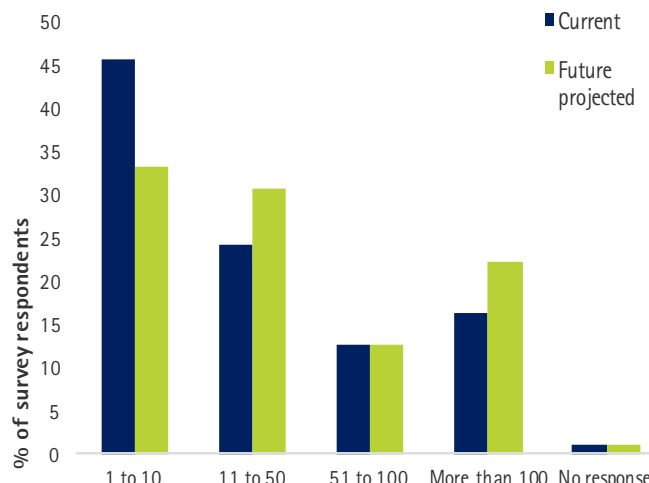


Figure 14 – The current size of the workforce and the future projected size among people surveyed on the Mid North Coast of NSW

### 6.3 Introducing change

- Over the next 10 years, 76 – 94% of people surveyed indicated their workforce would be introducing changes such as new products, new or improved methods and processes including marketing and organisational innovation, while also collaborating with other businesses and innovating in-house (Fig. 15).

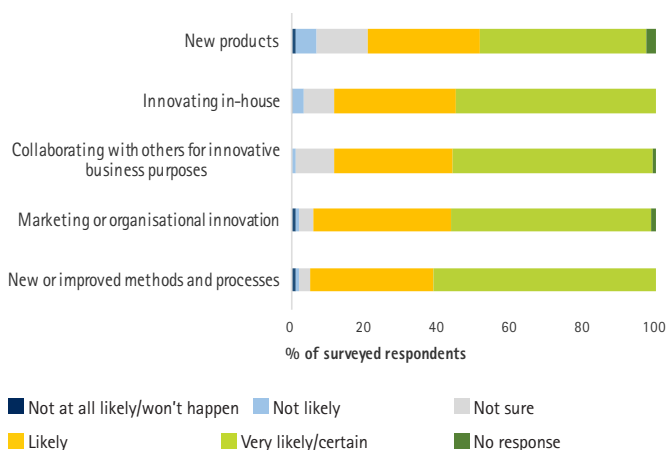


Figure 15 – The likelihood of people surveyed introducing changes to their workforce over the next 10 years

## 6.4 Impacts on businesses in the future

- Approximately 52% of people surveyed identified having a suitably skilled workforce to be the greatest impact on their business within the next 5 years (Fig. 16)
- The second largest impact among surveyed respondents was the cost of impacting on profitability followed by the ability to innovate and be responsive to customer needs at 51%, while the ability to use technology effectively at 46% was the 4th largest impact (Fig. 16).



Figure 16 – The factors likely to impact businesses within the next 5 years

## 6.5 The impact of having a suitably skilled workforce by sector

The greatest response from a focus sector that is currently experiencing skills shortages and nominated having a suitably skilled workforce in the future to be the largest impact on their business was from the health care and social assistance sector at 61% (Fig. 17). Currently 42% of the skills required in this sector are fulfilled.

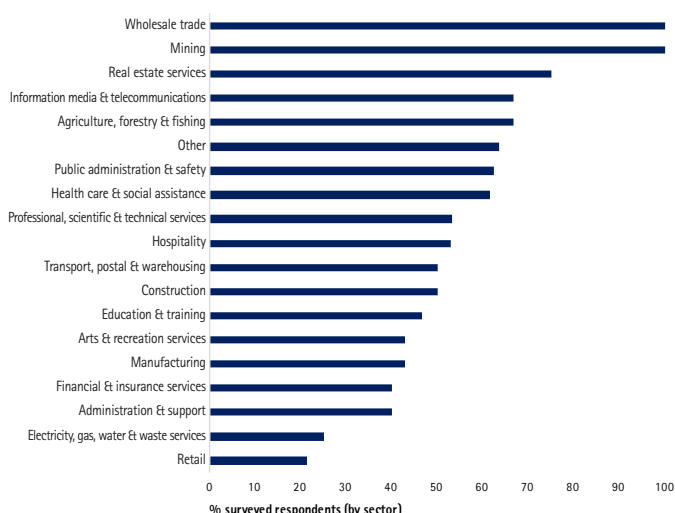


Figure 17 – The impact of having a suitably skilled workforce within the next 5 years across sectors on the Mid North Coast of NSW

Businesses on the MNC have a positive future outlook where turnover increases, there is growth in employees and new changes will be introduced to their business operations. Overall, the greatest impact on businesses across all sectors on the MNC in the future will be having a suitably skilled workforce. The ability to innovate and respond to customer needs and use technology effectively were also impacts across the focus sectors, highlighting that specific skills surrounding innovation and technology are going to be important in the future. The health care and social assistance sector was the only sector with current skills shortages to indicate that having suitable skills in the future to be the greatest impact. This highlights that ensuring the improvement of fulfilling the skills required will be imperative to the health care and social assistance sector on the MNC.

While sectors currently experiencing no skills shortages on the MNC (the real estate services sector and wholesale trade) indicate that having a suitably skilled workforce in the future will be the greatest impact on their business, sectors currently experiencing greater skills shortages nominated other factors to have greater impacts over the next five years, in particular, cost impacting on profitability, the ability to innovate and respond to customer needs and the ability to use technology effectively. These sectors included the education and training sector, the hospitality sector and the electricity, gas, water and waste sector. The retail and the construction sectors are both major contributor to the regions value added and total employment and currently experience 64% and 75% skills shortages respectively. Despite this, these sectors indicated that cost impacting on profitability will be the greatest impact to these businesses on the MNC. This may indicate that not all sectors currently experiencing skills shortages are reliant on fulfilling those skill needs to successfully continue operations and may point to larger, more important concerns within the sectors which need addressing before skills shortages.

100% of respondents from the transport sector currently have unfulfilled skills and nominate having the ability to use technology effectively to be the greatest impact in the future. This indicates that a focused approach is required to addressing the technological skills required within this sector over the next five years.



## 7. Skills into the future

### 7.1 Skills required in the future on the MNC

#### 7.1.1 "Industry-specific" skills

- The top three skills categories identified to be very important to the respondents surveyed within the next 5 years were industry specific skills (56%), management skills and marketing/sales skills (both 52.4%) (Fig. 18).
- While 31.3% of the respondents surveyed indicated that general labouring skills were not at all important or irrelevant (Fig. 18), it is important to note that the number of respondents surveyed from the construction industry is under-represented in the results compared to the population employed by the construction sector on the MNC (Fig. 4). This could indicate that people surveyed may under-estimate the value of general labouring skills to the local economy and the high proportion of employment of people with these skills generated by the construction sector.

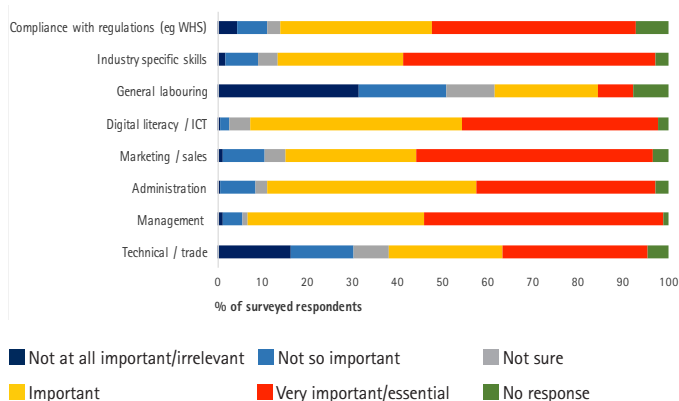


Figure 18 — The importance of industry-specific skills to all people surveyed on the Mid North Coast of NSW

#### 7.1.2 "Soft" skills

- 93 – 96% of all respondents rate all of the soft skills – communication, team work, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology to be very important/essential to their workforce in the next 5 years (Fig. 19).

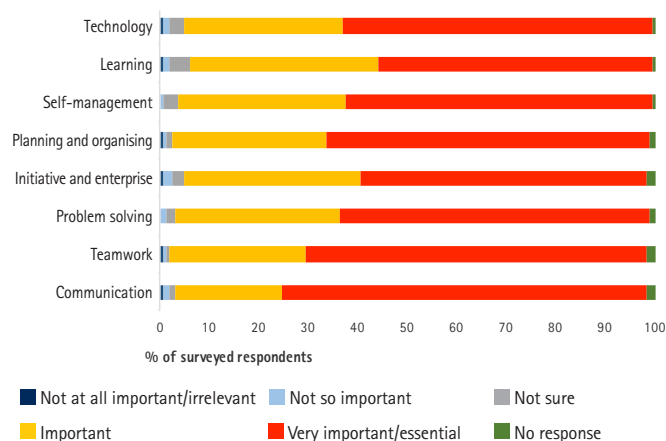


Figure 19 — The importance of soft skills to all people surveyed on the Mid North Coast of NSW

### 7.1.3 Future cluster skills on the MNC



#### The 7 new job clusters in Australia – Foundation for Young Australians (2016) New Work Mindset <sup>28</sup>

- The Generators cluster (having a high level of interpersonal interaction in retail, sales, hospitality and entertainment) had the largest very important or essential response across all people surveyed at 38% (Fig. 20).
- The Technologists cluster (having the required skilled understanding of digital technology) was the next very important or essential cluster at 37% of people (Fig. 20).
- 25% of all sectors surveyed indicated that the Informers cluster (jobs that involve professionals providing information, education or business services) to be very important or essential (Fig. 20).

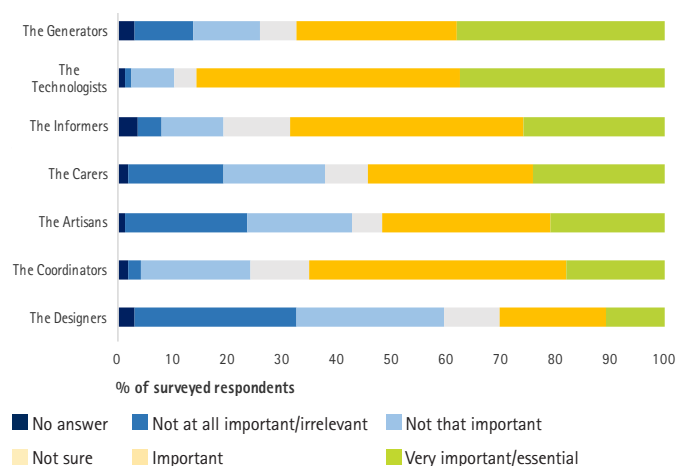


Figure 20 – The importance of future-workplace clusters across all people surveyed on the Mid North Coast of NSW

The importance of the Generators cluster in the future on the MNC aligns to our findings indicating that "soft-skills" will be very important to all sectors across the MNC in the future (Fig. 19). These findings also demonstrate that these skills are essential and also relevant to our largest employing sectors – the health care and social assistance sector, the retail sector, the education and training sectors and the hospitality sector (Fig. 1). The importance of the Technologists cluster aligns to our findings indicating that 46% of all people surveyed indicated that the ability to use technology effectively will impact upon their business in the next 5 years (Fig. 16), particularly in those sectors currently experiencing 100% skills shortages such as the transport, postal and warehousing sector (Fig. 6). The Informers cluster will also be important in the future given that some of the largest employers on the MNC are service driven such as the education and training sector and the health care and social assistance sector (Fig. 1). The Designers cluster comprises jobs that deploy skills and knowledge of science, mathematics and design to construct, engineer products or buildings and was identified to be the least important cluster to all people surveyed (Fig. 20). These findings may indicate a perceived lack of understanding surrounding the importance of these skills across various sectors on the MNC such as the construction sector and the professional, technical and scientific sector. This may highlight potential future skills gaps or even changes in the types of sectors present in the future.

<sup>28</sup> Foundation for Young Australians (2016) The New Work Mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order.

## 8. Conclusions

Overall, close to half (51%) of the people surveyed indicated skills are currently unfulfilled across all sectors on the MNC. However, discrepancies become more apparent when assessing skills shortages within individual sectors. Importantly, some of the sectors which are the largest employers within the region and generate the largest contributions towards total value added have mixed experiences when attempting to find the skills required for their business. These sectors include the following:

- **Health care & social assistance**
- **Retail trade**
- **Hospitality**
- **Education & Training**
- **Manufacturing**
- **Electricity, gas, water & waste services**
- **Construction**

The findings also highlight the sectors not currently experiencing skills shortages such as:

- **Wholesale trade**
- **Real Estate services**
- **Mining**

It was also noted that 100% of survey respondents from the Transport, postal and warehousing sector indicated a skills shortage.

Skills shortages are widespread throughout 16 of the 19 industry sectors present on the MNC and the challenges to obtaining the skills required are unique across all the different sectors. The challenge of obtaining the skills required can largely be attributed to an overall lack of available skills in the region as well as the lack of relevant training available, even among the sectors which currently do not experience a skills shortage. This indicates that some sectors on the MNC have successfully addressed the lack of available skills in the region, so that they are not currently experiencing a lack of the skills required to run their business such as the real estate sector.

70% of people surveyed on the MNC currently address skills shortages by providing training for existing staff and plan to continue to do so in the future by utilising a suite of different training techniques that are unique to each sector. This can provide a suite of benefits to the employer

by minimising costs associated with external training, by ensuring there is a direct alignment of requirements and content delivered, by potentially maximising return on investment for the training provided and by providing further opportunities for those employees trained within the company. Furthermore, the techniques currently implemented by sectors without skills shortages are also different. It is important to note that the training techniques currently used by one sector may not be sufficient or appropriate to address the skills required by another sector. For example, the sectors currently experiencing skills shortages (transport, postal and warehousing) use the same techniques as those sectors which do not have a skills shortage (wholesale trade). This implies that what is beneficial in addressing skill requirements for one sector may not be successful for all sectors.

The most common training technique to be used now and in the future across all sectors is in-house training, followed by apprenticeships or traineeships. People surveyed highlighted that courses need to be able to be customised and have a flexible delivery to suit their needs, while only a small proportion of people indicated they would use online training tools.

For the future, businesses on the MNC appear to have a positive outlook. They anticipate turnover increases, growth in the number of employees across both medium sized and larger companies, and the introduction of new processes and activities to their business operations. It is important to note that over half of people surveyed indicated that having a suitably skilled workforce is likely to be the most significant factor impacting on their business in the future. Other impacts related to specific skills such as having the ability to use technology effectively, to innovate, and to respond to customer needs were also identified to impact businesses.

Future skill requirements on the MNC are unique to each sector, although, managerial skills, marketing, technical and trade skills were common among the focus sectors. Future soft skills such as communication, team work and technological skills were also the most important to the focus sectors. The "future-workplace" skills which are going to be important across all sectors on the MNC in the future include the Technologists, The Informers and the Generators. Furthermore, the Generators, the Carers and the Artisans dominate the focus sectors, which aptly reflect the skills required in those sectors but may indicate a narrowing of skills available on the MNC in the future, or the increased specialisation of sectors reliant upon these



skills. These findings do however highlight that skills from the Designers cluster are not regarded as highly important for the future by people surveyed on the MNC. This may indicate a current lack of understanding surrounding the future importance of these skills to major sectors on the MNC such as the construction sector and the professional, technical and scientific sector. The lack of importance associated with the Designers cluster may reveal potential future scenarios of skills gaps within this cluster on the MNC, or potentially may even change the structure of sectors present.

## 9. Future directions and recommendations

### Creation of an Employment-oriented Framework for Future Regional Growth

The Skills Audit offers an important contribution towards the creation of an employment-oriented framework for future economic growth in the Mid North Coast Region – especially based upon the workforce skill needs of business and industry. As a current reflection of the voice, attitudes and approaches of business and industry across the Region, the Skills Audit offers an evidence-base to inform forward economic growth strategies that will allow the Region's business and industry sectors to thrive and positively adapt to changing local and global conditions.

The fact that 70% of participants indicated confidence in their business turnover over the next 5 years points towards positive forward economic impact from further investment in employment-oriented strategies.

Small, medium and large enterprises employing 11 people or more within the Region provided the most positive outlook for employment growth, which confirms the potential benefits of forward investment to support these businesses to grow, prosper and employ people from the Region.

Small and micro-businesses were the least confident in their projections for forward growth, which equally provides a compelling case for ongoing support as part of a future-focused Employment-oriented Framework that may see start-up and micro-businesses in the region prosper and develop their potential to transition into small to medium/large enterprises with an enhanced ability to employ local people into the future.

**Recommendation 1: That an Employment-oriented Framework be developed to guide future economic and business growth in the Mid North Coast Region**

### Addressing the Future Skill Needs of Business and Industry

The main skill sets identified by business as being important for business growth in the next 5 years are industry-specific skills, management skills, marketing/sales skills and digital literacy/ICT skills.

In addition, over 93% of respondents indicated that generic employability skills (soft skills) such as communication, team work, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology were all very important or essential to business growth over the next 5 years.

Portable skill set 'clusters' were also viewed by respondents as important or essential for business growth over the next 5 years. This view supports the Foundation for Young Australians report The New Work Mindset, which highlights the need for a shift from jobs to skills 'clusters' to prepare people for work into the future. In particular, portable skill clusters that include a high level of interpersonal interaction in retail, sales, hospitality and entertainment (the Generators cluster), having a skilled understanding of digital technology (the Technologists cluster) and professional information, education and/or business services skills (the Informers cluster) were seen as very important or essential for business growth in the Mid North Coast Region over the next 5 years.

**Recommendation 2: Address the projected Regional skill needs of business and industry, by identifying them as key drivers for strategies and modelling within the Employment-oriented Framework**

### Addressing the Education and Training Needs of Business and Industry

The Skills Audit demonstrated that a training culture is dominant within the Region with 70% of respondents currently providing training for existing staff, along with mentoring support (61%).

In house training was a popular method (33%), but a range of training methods was identified as being useful – including the use of a combination of training methods. Other popular education and training methods used by business in the Region included customised training, apprenticeships and traineeships, flexible delivery, short courses, formal/traditional courses and online training.

Despite this, some 20% of respondents indicated that lack of relevant training availability in the Region was a

constraint to projected business growth over the next 5 years. As a result, it would appear that greater effort in aligning relevant course content and training delivery methods to the needs of business and industry in the Region has the potential to reap economic benefits for the Region.

Whilst addressing industry-specific skill needs is a core requirement, as identified by respondents as important for business growth over the next 5 years, the Skills Audit also shows that it would be beneficial for Regional business to be able to access relevant education and training that addresses management skills, marketing/sales skills and digital literacy/ICT skills over the next 5 years.

The ability of education and training systems to deliver enhanced employability skills (soft skills) and to address the portable skill 'clusters' identified by business as very important or essential for business growth would also seem to be key future drivers for education and training in the Region.

**Recommendation 3: That further industry-specific research be undertaken, in collaboration with education and training providers, to address the future education and training needs of each industry sector**

## **Addressing Economic and Business Growth Constraints**

Access to a suitably skilled workforce, combined with a perceived lack of available skills within the region and competition from outside the region, appear as the major challenges towards forward economic and business growth in the region.

More than 50% of respondents indicated that having a suitably skilled workforce was the factor most likely to impact on their business growth potential over the next 5 years. The Skills Audit showed that this picture is complex however, with the challenges to having a suitably skilled workforce being unique to particular industry sectors.

Having a small population base to draw upon and location were also identified as related challenges for the Region's businesses to access the skilled workforce they require. Attitudes towards employment from employees and/or prospective employees was an added concern that was echoed through business responses in focus groups attached to the study. This included concerns about the preparation for employment undertaken with young

people at high school, especially as employers consider their workforce skill needs over the next 5 to 10 years.

**Recommendation 4: That further industry-specific research be undertaken to identify and address the particular constraints faced by Regional industry sectors in accessing a suitably skilled future workforce**

## **Support for Regional Business and Industry to Develop Strategies around Technology, Innovation and the Knowledge-based Economy**

More than 50% of businesses indicated that the ability to innovate and be responsive to customer needs was likely to impact on their business growth potential over the next 5 years, as was an ability to use technology effectively (46%).

In addition, more than 76% of businesses indicated that they would be introducing new products, new or improved methods or processes and marketing or organisational innovation as well as innovating in-house and/or collaborating with others over the next 10 years.

The Skills Audit shows that business and industry in the Mid North Coast Region is very much forward-focused, with innovation and technology as key factors impacting on forward business growth strategies. Combined with business' analysis of changing customer needs as a driving factor impacting on forward growth, the Skills Audit provides a Regional context and evidence of a shift in thinking from traditional economic practices to a forward-thinking knowledge-based economy, driven by innovation and the effective use of technology as a driving force for forward economic growth and productivity.

**Recommendation 5: That forward strategies be developed, together with targeted support that enable business and industry to incorporate innovation, technology and knowledge-economy factors as key forward economic drivers in the Mid North Coast Region**

# Appendix A – Survey

## Survey page 1

Survey closes Thursday 25 May. Privacy includes secure storage, responders not identified.

### 1. Your Details

**Business / Organisation name**

**Business Post Code**

**Your Name**

**Mobile Number**

**Email**

**Position**

**Significant qualification or training held in regards to position**

### 2. What is the approximate annual turnover of your business? (optional)

- ☐ Zero to less than \$50k  
☐ \$50k to less than \$100k  
☐ \$100k to less than \$200k  
☐ \$200k to less than \$500k  
☐ \$500k to less than \$2m  
☐ \$2m or more

## Survey page 2

### 3. Which of the following best describes the industry sector you work in?

- ☐ Accommodation and Food Services  
☐ Administrative and Support Services  
☐ Aged Care  
☐ Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry and Fishing  
☐ Allied Health  
☐ Arts / Recreation  
☐ Construction  
☐ Community Services  
☐ Disabilities  
☐ Education / Training  
☐ Electricity / Gas / Water / Waste  
☐ Financial and Insurance Services  
☐ Fisheries / Maritime  
☐ Government  
☐ Health  
☐ Information, Media and Telecommunications  
☐ Manufacturing  
☐ Mining  
☐ Professional, Scientific and Technical Services  
☐ Public Administration and Safety  
☐ Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services  
☐ Retail  
☐ Technology / ICT  
☐ Tourism / Hospitality  
☐ Transport / Postal / Warehousing  
☐ Wholesale Trade  
☐ Other (please specify)



## Survey page 3

4. Specifically, what is the main service provided by your business/organisation? (eg accounting, dairy farming)

5. Where are most of your customers located? (Tick all that apply).

- ☐ Local area  
☐ Interstate / national  
☐ International

6. How do you usually access your existing / new customers? (Please tick all that apply).

- ☐ In person  
☐ Through technology (eg website, app, online sales)  
☐ Social media  
☐ Business / industry networks and associations  
☐ Other (please specify)

7. When is your work at its busiest? (Please tick all that apply).

- ☐ Summer  
☐ Autumn  
☐ Winter  
☐ Spring  
☐ All year  
☐ Other (please specify)

8. How many employees does your business/organisation have?

- ☐ 1 to 10  
☐ 11 to 50  
☐ 51 to 100  
☐ More than 100

## Survey page 4

9. What percentage of your current workforce includes part-time and/or casual staff?

- ☐ Zero  
☐ 1 to 10%  
☐ 11 to 50%  
☐ 51 to 99%  
☐ 100%

10. Do you access volunteers to assist your work?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Please comment:

11. How do you find your current workforce? (Indicate your main approach)

- ☐ Word of mouth  
☐ Advertise through media  
☐ Social media  
☐ Recruitment agency  
☐ Directly from training provider  
☐ Local employment services  
☐ From within the industry sector  
☐ Networking  
☐ Other (please specify)

12. What percentage of your workforce has been sourced from the local area?

- ☐ 0%  
☐ 1 to 5%  
☐ 6 to 10%  
☐ 11 to 20%  
☐ 21 to 50%  
☐ 51 to 100%

## Survey page 5

13. Are all of your skill needs met within your current workforce?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

14. When thinking about all of the skills needed to run your workplace, what are the challenges to obtaining these skills? (Tick all that apply).

- ☐ Location (remoteness/isolation)  
☐ Small population base  
☐ Shortage of appropriate accommodation  
☐ Lack of services in the region  
☐ Competition from out of region (wages, social and career prospects)  
☐ Lack of partner employment opportunities  
☐ Lack of professional networks  
☐ Industry image  
☐ Security of work  
☐ Lack of public transport  
☐ Difficulty in accessing larger population centres and cities  
☐ Lack of infrastructure / construction activity  
☐ Attitude towards employment from employees / prospective employees  
☐ Regional self esteem  
☐ Lack of education facilities (eg secondary, tertiary)  
☐ Lack of relevant training availability  
☐ Lack of available skills in the region  
☐ Other (please specify)

## Survey page 6

15. How do you overcome the skills gaps needed to run your workplace? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Training for existing staff  
☐ Mentoring for existing staff  
☐ Recruit new staff  
☐ Hire casual staff  
☐ Sub-contract out  
☐ Other (please specify)

16. How confident are you that your turnover will increase over the next 5 years?

- ☐ Not at all confident  
☐ Not confident  
☐ Uncertain  
☐ Confident  
☐ Very confident

Comments:

17. What factors are likely to impact on your business in the next 5 years? (please tick all that apply).

- ☐ Having a suitably skilled workforce  
☐ An ability to use technology effectively  
☐ An ability to access relevant and effective training  
☐ Globalisation  
☐ An ability to innovate and be responsive to customer needs  
☐ Cost impacting on profitability  
☐ Becoming redundant or obsolete  
☐ Access to funding  
☐ Other (please specify)

18. How important are the following skills likely to be for your business in the next 5 years?

	Not at all important/irrelevant	Not so important	Not sure	Important	Very important/essential
Technical / trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing / sales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital literacy / ICT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General labouring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industry specific skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compliance with regulations (eg WHS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

19. How important are the following 'soft skills' likely to be for your business in the next 5 years?

	Not at all important/irrelevant	Not so important	Not sure	Important	Very important/essential
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiative and enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and organising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. How important are the following likely to be for your business in the next 5 years?

	Not at all important/irrelevant	Not that important	Not sure	Important	Very important/essential
High level of interpersonal interaction in retail, sales, hospitality and entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills in manual tasks related to construction, production, maintenance or technical customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the mental or physical health or wellbeing of others, including medical, care and personal support services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repetitive administration and behind-the-scenes process or service tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deploying skills and knowledge of science, mathematics and design to construct or engineer products or building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engaging professionals providing relevant information, education or business services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Require skilled understanding of digital technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



21. Assuming an ideal scenario, how likely are you to employ the following groups of people in the next 5 years (including your existing workforce)?

	Not at all likely/won't happen	Not that likely	Not sure	Likely	Very likely/certain
Young people (15 to 25 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People from diverse cultural backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People with a disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recent immigrants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People from other jobs or industries who can demonstrate a portable and relevant skillset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

22. Assuming an ideal scenario, what do you believe your future workforce numbers will need to be in 10 years?

- ☐ 1 to 10 employees  
☐ 11 to 50 employees  
☐ 51 to 100 employees  
☐ More than 100 employees

23. How likely are you to introduce the following over the next 10 years?

	Not at all likely/won't happen	Not likely	Not sure	Likely	Very likely/certain
New or improved methods and processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing or organisational innovation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborating with others for innovative business purposes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovating in-house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Which of the following education and training options would be most useful to ensure that your current and future workforce/workplace skill needs are met?

- ☐ In-house training  
☐ Mentoring  
☐ Short courses  
☐ Formal / traditional courses  
☐ Online training  
☐ Flexible delivery  
☐ Apprenticeships / traineeships  
☐ Customised training

Other (please specify)

25. Is there a new skill (or skills) you see the need for in your business over the next 10 years?

26. Is there a new occupation (or occupations) you intend to introduce to your business over the next 10 years?

27. What future public infrastructure development would enhance the viability of your business?

28. Do you have anything else you would like to add to this survey?

Appendix B – Findings by Industry sector					
	HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	RETAIL TRADE	HOSPITALITY	EDUCATION & TRAINING	ELECTRICITY, GAS, WATER & WASTE SERVICES
Importance on the MNC	Largest employer & largest contributor to value added	2nd largest employer & 2nd largest contributor to value added	3rd largest employer	4th largest employer	3rd largest contributor to value added
% of surveyed respondents	15.6	8.4	10.2	9	2.4
% of employees MNC	17.2	14.2	9.7	9.4	2.2
% Value Added MNC	10.5	7.2	4.3	6.3	6.9
% with skills gaps	53	64.2	47	53.3	50
% with skills gaps due to lack of available skills in the region	46	14.3	35.3	33.3	50
% of sector having a suitably skilled workforce to be an impact in the future	62	21.4	53	47	25
Top 3 techniques used to overcome skills shortages	Recruit new staff, train existing staff, mentoring	Train existing staff, mentoring, hire casuals	Train existing staff, mentoring, recruit new staff	Train existing staff, mentoring, recruit new staff	Train existing staff, subcontract, mentoring
Very important "industry-specific skills"	Industry specific & management	Management	Management	Management	Technical & trade
Very important "soft skills"	Communication & learning	Communication & technology	Communication & self-management	Problem solving & communication	Technology
Very important "future-workplace" skills	The Carers	The Generators	The Generators	The Generators & the Informers	The Artisans
Techniques used to meet current & future skill requirements	In-house training & flexible delivery	In-house training & customised training	In-house training & customised training	In-house training & flexible delivery	Combination of 4 techniques
Employee Growth based on employee numbers	11 to 50 employees More than 100	11 to 50	Remains the same	51 to 100 More than 100	11 to 50
Proposed new skills or occupations in the future	Reflective practices/learning, digital literacy, expansion of online access, physiotherapists, psychologists, dietitians, expansion into home care, behaviour support coordinators, day support coordinators, clinical coders, medical practitioners, senior occupational therapists, child psychologists, mental health nurses, renal nurses, psychiatrists, geneticists, foot specialists & jobs that keep people independent as they age	Digital & innovation skills, technology based service skills, workflow, multi skilled, supervision skills, online management	Technology savvy skills, property management, accommodation management, improved computing skills, tourism guide, interpersonal skills, marketing and social media skills, technology skills, accounting skills, chef skills, business management with technology expertise, communication skills, knowledge of wine, food and sustainable food production	Digital & technology skills, language teachers, financial expertise, admin expertise, casual tutors, business management / workforce resilience, marketing and promotion using technology, it trainer/assessor, entrepreneur and innovation specialists, greater negotiation skills and business strategists to represent the region in national and global forums, early childhood teachers, upskilling to higher level qualifications.	Level 2 license, increased fabrication and machinery skills incorporating more computer-driven manufacturing, web-based training and support – multi language

Appendix B – Findings by Industry sector					
	CONSTRUCTION	MANUFACTURING	TRANSPORT, POSTAL & WAREHOUSING	WHOLESALE TRADE	REAL ESTATE SERVICES
Importance on the MNC	4th largest contributor to value added, 6th largest employer	5th largest employer, 6th largest contributor to value added	100% skills shortages	100% skills fulfilled	100% skills fulfilled
% of surveyed respondents	2.4	7	1.2	0.6	2.4
% of employees MNC	6.3	6.6	3.5	2.7	1.8
% Value Added MNC	6.8	4.2	3	3.5	2.9
% with skills gaps	75	57	100	0	0
% with skills gaps due to lack of available skills in the region	50	43	100	no response	50
% of sector having a suitably skilled workforce to be an impact in the future	50	43	50	100	75
Top 3 techniques used to overcome skills shortages	Train existing staff, mentoring, subcontract,	Training existing staff	Train existing staff, recruit new staff, mentoring	Train existing staff, mentoring, recruit new staff	Train existing staff, mentoring, recruit new staff
Very important "industry-specific skills"	Technical & trade	Industry specific	Compliance with regulations & digital literacy	Admin & compliance with regulations	Digital & Marketing
Very important "soft skills"	Team work, communication, problem solving, planning & organising	Communication	A variety of skills	A variety of skills	A variety of skills
Very important "future-workplace" skills	The Artisans	The Generators & the Artisans	The Technologists	The Technologists, Coordinators, Carers, Artisans & Generators	The Technologists, Generators
Techniques used to meet current & future skill requirements	Apprenticeships & traineeships	Apprenticeships & traineeships	In-house training	In-house training	Combination of 4 techniques
Employee Growth based on employee numbers	More than 100	51 to 100	Remains the same	Remains the same	11 to 50 51 to 100
Proposed new skills or occupations in the future	Building information Modelling (BIM), Material Hoist operator & public relations	Community engagement, media skills, retail space design, food production skills, administration, advanced electronic and computer programming skills, recreational vehicle manufacturer, apprenticeship in brewing, brewer's apprentice, IT and marketing	Innovation – skills needed to enhance an ability to deliver on our vision, capability to change	Computer skills	Technological skills

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# Skills Audit 2017

Current and Future Skill Requirements  
on the Mid North Coast of NSW

Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast  
PO Box 2537 Port Macquarie NSW 2444 Australia  
02 5525 1500 | [www.rdamnc.org.au](http://www.rdamnc.org.au)

Image courtesy of Bellingen Shire Council

