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MID NORTH COAST

Media Release

RDAMNC's Skills Audit Highlights Key Workforce Challenges and Recommendations for the MNC

March 2025

A new study commissioned by [Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast \(RDAMNC\)](#) and undertaken by [Charles Sturt University \(CSU\)](#) reveals that the region is facing significant labour and skills shortages, presenting a barrier to economic growth. The **2024 Skills Audit** identifies key challenges: labour shortages, skills shortages, skills gaps, infrastructure challenges, housing affordability and access to early childcare education and care, all of which demand targeted solutions.

According to the study, the Mid North Coast (MNC) has a lower proportion of working-age individuals than the state average, exacerbating the region's struggle to find sufficient workers. At the same time, there is a significant outflow of skilled individuals, especially in critical sectors such as healthcare, aged care, and construction.

The report also highlights the limited access to vocational training in the region, forcing many potential workers to travel to larger cities for education. Further compounding these challenges are issues related to housing affordability, limited childcare services, and inadequate infrastructure such as transport and digital connectivity, which make it difficult for both workers and businesses to thrive.

The study presents several actionable recommendations to address these challenges, including:

- A **cohesive regional housing strategy** that aligns with workforce planning to attract and retain workers.
- The development of **universal Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)** access to support workforce participation, particularly for women.
- Strengthening the **regional skills ecosystem** by fostering closer collaboration between employers, training providers, and community services.
- Enhancing **infrastructure** to improve transport, housing, and digital connectivity across the region.

A summary of the report, as well as the full text can be found on the RDAMNC website [\[https://rdamnc.org.au/projects/maulskins-audit/\]](https://rdamnc.org.au/projects/maulskins-audit/).

"We are grateful to the 160 people who participated in some form in this study. The results are clear and are a clarion call to the region to keep working together to bridge the gaps between education and industry. There are big opportunities to improve skills availability by working together. RDA Mid North Coast will be continuing to work with the region to identify initiatives that can relieve the pressure"

"Many of the barriers for regional Australia are significant infrastructure issues that are squeezing the skills system. We continue to advocate for action of on these big levers, but we need to seize the opportunities in our gift which are about program responses and collaboration. We'll not stop working on the big matters, but the more proactive we are locally the better our outcomes are going to be".

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