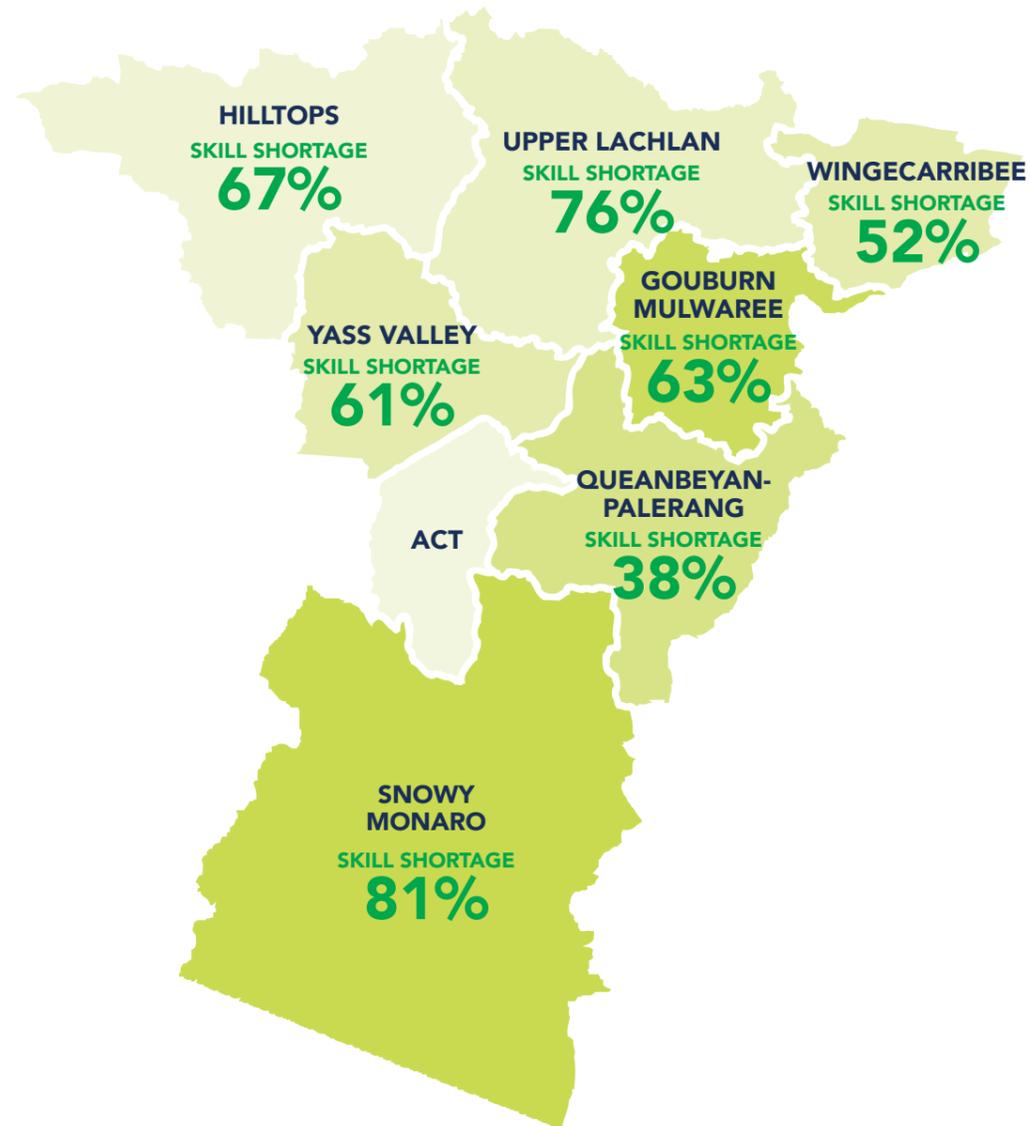


# SOUTHERN INLAND NSW

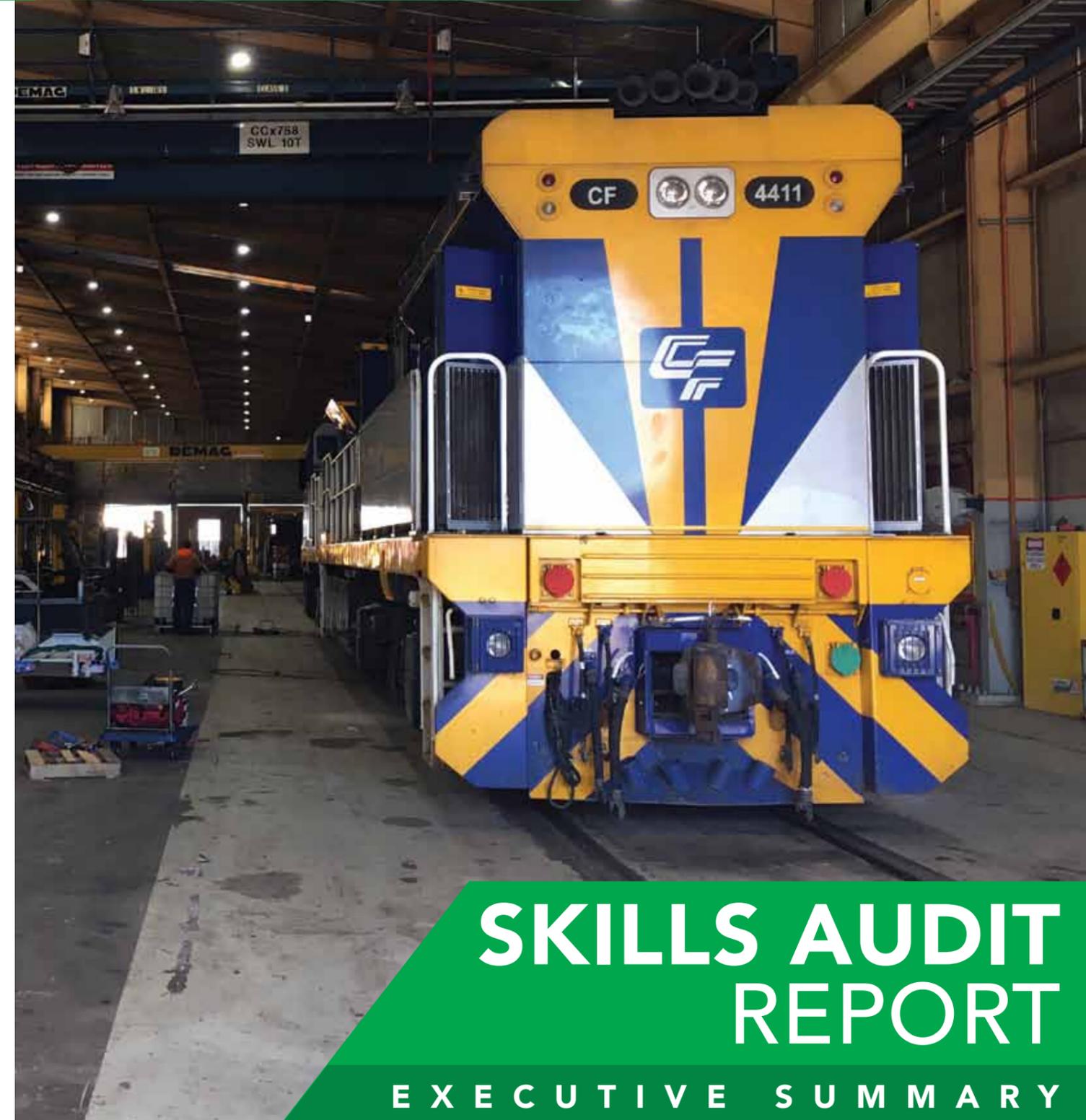


## CONTACT US

Phone (02) 4822 6397

[www.rdasi.org.au](http://www.rdasi.org.au)

Shop 5, 158-162 Auburn St, Goulburn, NSW, 2580



# SKILLS AUDIT REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE STUDY

Skills shortages are a significant issue confronting regional Australia, with workforce numbers not growing fast enough to keep up with the demand for skilled labour. The availability of skilled workers in the right areas is critical to the economic future of our region.

Regional Development Australia Southern Inland (RDASI) aims to be the main facilitator between industry, business, government and the broader community to facilitate growth and development. As part of this role, RDASI have developed, and undertaken, a skills audit of businesses in the Southern Inland region to identify and explore skills gaps to understand the local workforce and training needs.

The study was undertaken through a 15-minute online survey with businesses in the Southern Inland region. Business owners and senior managers were targeted across a range of industries.

The survey was conducted in order to

- Identify and address skills shortages in the region
- Identify opportunities to align education and training with industry requirements
- Help increase the prosperity of the Southern Inland Region through developing, attracting and retaining skills in the region
- Update RDASI's skills in demand database for our visa migration program
- Assist RDASI to better meet the needs of businesses in our region.

## FINDINGS

# 1

### THREE IN FIVE BUSINESSES IDENTIFIED A SKILLS SHORTAGE IN THEIR BUSINESS

62% of businesses in the Southern Inland region believe that their business has a skills shortage, i.e. they have struggled to recruit new staff in the past or currently have unfilled vacancies. Businesses in the Snowy Monaro reported the most significant skills shortages (81%), followed by Upper Lachlan (76%) and Hilltops (67%). Just 38% of businesses in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Shire believe their business has a skills shortage, suggesting their proximity to Canberra provides them with a larger pool of candidates.

# 2

### REASONS FOR SKILLS SHORTAGES CENTRE AROUND LOCATION AND A LACK OF SUITABILITY AMONGST CANDIDATES

Remoteness of the area and a lack of technical skills and experience amongst candidates are the top three reasons for skills shortages. Education and training is a key issue that needs to be addressed within the Southern Inland region, with almost one in two businesses stating that local training of employees and greater investment into the TAFE and University sector would assist them in attracting and recruiting employees in the future. According to a recent report from The Regional Australia Institute, one third of students in regional and rural areas do not finish year 12 and only 18% will go on to complete a university degree<sup>1</sup>. Positively, the introduction of Country Universities Centre in Goulburn, and the already established Cooma Centre, will assist in improving access and delivering the right courses. However, a greater investment in TAFE and local training is also perceived to be needed to ensure skills related to trades, for example, are developed.

<sup>1</sup> Bourne, K., Nash, A., Houghton, K. (2017) *Pillars of communities: Service delivery professionals in small Australian towns 1981 – 2011*. The Regional Australia Institute.

# 3

### BLUE COLLAR INDUSTRIES REPORT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SKILLS SHORTAGES

100% of businesses in the manufacturing sector and 89% in the motor trades and engineering sector state that they have a skills shortage. Skills shortages include; qualified welders, mechanics, engineers and metal fabrication.

# 4

### DESPITE SKILLS SHORTAGES, BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IS HIGH

Despite the significant skills shortages in the Southern Inland Region, business confidence amongst local businesses is high. 64% of businesses plan to grow their business locally in the next five years, whilst 70% expect their revenue to be much or somewhat stronger in the next three - five years. Whilst business confidence is high, business growth in the region will ultimately mean higher demand for skilled workers.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

We believe that the critical skills issue must be addressed through a coordinated approach amongst relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholders including education and training providers, Councils, Business Chambers and RDASI must work together to develop coordinated strategies to fill the skills gaps present in the region.

At the heart of a skills strategy should be education – rejuvenating the TAFE system and ensuring that people have the appropriate skills and knowledge to meet skill demands in the Southern Inland region.

# “

**REGIONAL TAFE<sub>s</sub> SHOULD FORM ALLIANCES OR A BRIDGING ORGANISATION WITH KEY REGIONAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.**

**KNOWLEDGEABLE COURSE MANAGERS SHOULD THEN BUILD AND ALIGN SYLLABUS ON REGIONAL NEEDS.**

Tourism & Hospitality, Wingecarribee

# “

**TRADE STUDIES SHOULD BE PROMOTED IN SCHOOLS WITH LOCAL TRADE PERSONS PRESENTING THE BENEFITS OF TRADES QUALIFICATIONS AND THE DIRECTIONS THOSE QUALIFICATIONS CAN TAKE THEM.**

Building and Construction, Goulburn

**“EMPLOYERS ARE NOT HAPPY AND FEEL THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTED ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION FOR THEIR STAFF.”**

Tourism & Hospitality, Wingecarribee

