This South Coast Skills Audit 2016 has been developed by RDA Far South Coast NSW with assistance from GHD and funding from the NSW Department of Industry, Skills & Regional Development and remains the property of RDA FSC.

Published November 2016

Enquiries about the document or its content should be referred to:
Fiona Hatcher
Executive Officer
RDA Far South Coast
P O Box 1227
Nowra NSW 2541
Tel: 02 4422 9011
Fax: 02 4422 5080
E-mail: admin@rdafsc.com.au
Web: www.rdafsc.com.au
Regional Development Australia – Far South Coast

NSW South Coast Skills Audit 2016
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Overview

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between Australian, State, Territory and local governments to strengthen regional communities.

There is a national network of 55 RDA committees, Regional Development Australia – Far South Coast (RDA FSC) covers the LGAs of Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley on the NSW South Coast.

RDA FSC initiated the first Skills Audit of the NSW South Coast in 2012. In response to requests from local government, Chambers of Commerce, industry groups, employer groups, community groups, local agencies and other stakeholder groups RDA FSC developed this second Skills Audit.

While there is considerable detailed literature available on skills/job environments in Australia, NSW and the NSW SE Region there is little specific analysis of the situation on the NSW South Coast.

This audit provides a baseline of evidence from which strategies can be developed to improve the skills mix on the South Coast.
Executive Summary

In 2012, Regional Development Australia – Far South Coast (RDA FSC), released the first South Coast Skills Audit to provide specific analysis about the skills missing on the Far South Coast and in particular what skills would be required to manage and generate future growth in the region. It was recognised that this first audit would provide a baseline of evidence from which strategies could be developed to improve the skills mix in this region.

The 2016 South Coast Skills Audit draws on the results of the 2012 South Coast Skills Audit and identifies the current and future skills required on the Far South Coast, encompassing three Local Government Areas. Over 800 businesses were contacted as part of this study, with 142 responses received. The skills audit will assist RDA FSC in developing strategies to improve the skills mix in the region.

As per the 2012 audit, this audit also identified that developing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce in the region is still driven by social and economic factors. In particular respondents were confident in identifying current skills shortages however were less confident in predicting the skills requirements their businesses would require over the next decade.

This audit found that the majority of survey respondents operate small businesses that comprise 10 employees or less (55% of respondents). While there is some pressure on certain sectors (e.g. Agriculture/Forestry and Utilities) in terms of skills requirements, the majority of businesses (60% of respondents) noted that their current workforce did have the skills their business requires (increase of 17% since 2012). Critical skills shortages were experienced across all sectors, with 31% of respondents currently experiencing critical skill shortages.

In predicting the future size of their workforce and skills required, businesses were confident in predicting the size of their workforce in five years (84% of respondents were confident in indicating expected workforce numbers in five years), however not as confident in predicting the size of their workforce in 10 years.

Small population base, location and lack of relevant training available were identified as the top three factors that prevent employers from attracting employees with the required skill sets. Small population base and location were also identified in the 2012 audit as the main factors constraining businesses from attracting and retaining personnel with appropriate skills. The third factor relates to a shortage of training offered throughout the region particularly in the health care, energy and ICT sectors. Increased education funding and opportunities was cited as the main factor that could assist businesses to attract employees with the required skill sets.

Lack of infrastructure construction activity, lack of professional networks and shortage of appropriate accommodation were only considered minor factors in attracting and retaining skills in the region.

Geographic isolation, the small population base and competition from outside the regions are still seen as the main factors preventing employers from attracting and retaining employees in the region. Lack of relevant training available to employees, security of work and attitude towards employment were also seen as more important than infrastructure construction activity in attracting and retaining employees in the region.
1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this audit

The 2016 South Coast Skills Audit draws on the results of a similar audit undertaken in 2012 and provides an overview of current and future skills needs on the Far South Coast. The audit uses a methodology that is repeatable and therefore enables comparisons to be made between time periods.

The purpose of this report is to identify the current and future skills needs and the environment in which those skills will be required. This audit will provide RDA FSC some clarity around the constraints and opportunities that influence the skills mix on the Far South Coast and will provide the evidence required to develop strategies to improve the skills mix in the region.

1.2 Why another audit?

In December 2012, RDA FSC released the first South Coast Skills Audit. This first ever skills audit was initiated in response to requests from local government, Chambers of Commerce, industry groups, employer groups, community groups and local agencies. It was recognised that there was considerable detailed literature available on skills/job environments in Australia, NSW and the NSW SE Region, however, there is little specific analysis of the situation on the NSW South Coast. It was recognised that this first audit would provide a baseline of evidence from which strategies could be developed to improve the skills mix of the South Coast.

1.3 Definition of the term ‘Skills’

As per the 2012 report, the term ‘Skills’ is defined as follows:
Those skills required now, or in the future, for a business to effectively and efficiently fulfil its purpose (as defined by that business).

The term ‘business’ refers to any business, organisation or institution in the region.
2. Methodology

2.1 Questionnaire

This report summarises a number of questions that were put to businesses throughout the region to gain an understanding of the current skill needs. It also attempts to provide a prediction about what skills sets may be required in the region now and into the future. A copy of the questionnaire completed by respondents is included in Appendix A.

2.2 Sectors

The 15 industry sectors that were included in the study are as follows:

- Fisheries/Maritime
- Education/Training
- Government
- Retail
- Electricity/Gas/Water/Waste
- Building/Construction/Mining
- Arts/Recreation
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Financial
- Transport/Postal
- Health Care/Social
- Technology/ICT
- Manufacturing
- Tourism/Hospitality
- Other Services

2.3 Sample size

A total of 817 businesses and organisations were contacted during the study. A media release was distributed via RDA FSC inviting businesses to partake in this project. Businesses were contacted by email and were invited to participate in an online survey that they were able to complete manually.

The business and organisations that did not respond to the surveys manually were contacted via phone during business hours, and a second email was sent to all that had not responded. A further follow up phone call was made to businesses where surveys were still marked as incomplete or where there was a low response rate to the survey from the above listed industry sectors.
3. Results/responses

There were 142 responses received throughout the duration of the study. The data collected includes all 15 sectors identified in the report, and consists mostly of small to medium sized businesses and organisations.

3.1 Total response by LGA

The table below indicates the total number of responses from each respective LGA. The responses included as ‘Others’ consist of a number of businesses and organisations that operate throughout the NSW Far South Coast, but where main operations are based outside of the region.

Table 1: Breakdown of total responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bega Valley Shire Council</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurobodalla Shire Council</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoalhaven City Council</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Total response by Industry sectors

Businesses were asked to indicate the industry that is most relevant to their workplace. The data collected extends across a wide range of industries. With the exception of a small number, no fewer than 4% of responses are from each industry included in the study.
Table 2: Breakdown of industry sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries/Maritime</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/Construction/Mining</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care/Social</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Training</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Recreation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/ICT</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Forestry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism/Hospitality</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity/Gas/Water/Waste</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport/Postal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The specific nature of the businesses and organisations listed under ‘Other Services’ include legal, auto mechanics, consultants and volunteer and private fire services.

3.3 Size of current workforce

Surveyed businesses were asked to indicate the size of their current workforce.

The majority of surveyed establishments are small businesses that employ fewer than 11 staff members (55%). The number of workplaces that employ fewer than 51 staff members totals to 113 of the 141 workplaces (79%) surveyed.

Six respondents (4%) were unable to specify the number of current employees due to the nature of their casual positions having low retention rates, and insecure workloads. These trends have remained consistent since 2012.
### 3.4 Current skills needs

Businesses were asked to indicate whether the skill sets of their current workforce meet their skills needs requirements.

The majority of those surveyed, 85 businesses (60%) indicated that their current workforce did have the skills their business requires, while 54 businesses (38%) indicated their skills needs are not being met currently. Three businesses (2%) did not specify whether their current workforce had the required skills sets.

In 2012, 43% of respondents stated that their current skills needs were being met, with 56% of respondents identifying skills needs were not being met.

#### Table 3: Breakdown of the number of employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 employees or less</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 50 employees</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 100 employees</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 100 employees</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not specify</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Breakdown of skills needs (2012)

Figure 3 below demonstrates that there is an amount of pressure on businesses in terms of skills requirements. Industries such as the Agricultural/Forestry and Utilities sectors are experiencing some shortages in skills with their current workforces. On the contrary, the financial services sector identified that all skill requirements are currently being met.

It can be seen in the comparison of current skills needs and previous (2012) skills needs that the situation has improved 17% within the last 4 years, however due to the low response rate from certain sectors between the survey periods, it is difficult to draw comparisons.

Figure 3: Breakdown of current skills needs within sector (2016)
The comparison in skills needs has improved in a number of industry sectors including Fisheries/Maritime, Health Care/Social, Education/Training and Government.
3.5 Future jobs in five years

Businesses were asked what skills sets they consider their workforce would need to have in the next five years. The skills sets that were identified included:

Table 4: Required skill sets predicted for the next five years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Trade</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not specify/Unsure</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not need to change</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Administration/Marketing</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Literacy/ICT</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Hospitality</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People/Team/Communication</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Labouring</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/General Assistant</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare/Teaching</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist/Nursing/Aged Care</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the required skill sets listed as ‘Other’ (7.7%) were truck driving, pharmacy assistant, volunteering and cultural awareness skills.

Businesses were also asked to predict what their workforce numbers would look like in the next five years. 120 respondents (85%) indicated what they expected their future workforce numbers may need to be, while a further 22 respondents (15%) did not provide a projection.

Of the businesses who provided a prediction, 63 businesses (52%) indicated that their future workforce would comprise of one to 10 employees in the next five years. A further 38 businesses (32%) indicated they predicted their workforce numbers to range between 11 to 50. Seven businesses (6%) indicated their workforce numbers may need to be between 51 and 100. While 12 respondents indicated their workforce would consist of more than 100 employees (10%). 22 respondents in total did not indicate their predicted workforce numbers.

These figures were not captured within the 2012 Skills Audit and therefore no comparison to earlier data is available.
3.6 Future jobs in ten years
Businesses were then asked that assuming an ideal scenario, what skills sets they consider their workforce would need to have in the next 10 years. While a number of respondents indicated that they could potentially need many of the skill sets mentioned in the previous section. The majority of the respondents were either unsure or did not specify. A number of businesses were also unsure about forecasting due to uncertainties related to the domestic and international economy, funding, and increased casual employment. There were also a number of business owners unsure if they would retire within the next 10 years.
Table 5: Required skill sets predicted for the next ten years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not specify/Unsure</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not need to change</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Trade</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Administration/Marketing</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Literacy/ICT</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People/Team/Communication</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/General Assistant</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Hospitality skills</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Labouring</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood/Teaching</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist/Nursing/Aged Care</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the required skill sets listed as ‘Other’ includes pharmacy assistant, accountant, volunteering and cultural awareness skills. It was also indicated by a respondent that therapist skills would be required, although the exact skills sets were not specified any further.

Businesses were also asked to project what their workforce numbers would look like in the next 10 years. 107 businesses (75%) were able to indicate a projection. 35 businesses (25%) did not provide a projection.
Figure 6: Breakdown of projected workforce numbers in ten years (2016)

Figure 7: Previously projected workforce numbers (2012)
4. Skills Required

4.1 Current and future

Respondents were asked to indicate if they currently experience any critical skills shortages with their workforce.

While 43 businesses (30.7%) indicated they currently experience critical skills shortages the majority of businesses (69.3%) did not indicate any critical skills shortages. Respondents were also asked to nominate what skill sets their business require now and into the future. While some of the skill sets identified were quite specific to a particular sub-sector of an industry, other skills identified were more general in nature.

4.1.1 Fisheries / Maritime

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Oyster Farmers Hospitality Workers

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Oyster Farm Business Management

4.1.2 Building / Construction / Mining

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Qualified Tradespeople
Fencing Installers
Landscape Gardeners
Carpenters
Earth Moving
Roofers

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Qualified Tradespeople
Tilers
Window Makers
Boiler Makers
Retail Skills
Construction Qualifications

4.1.3 Health Care / Social

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Veterinarian Surgeons
Social Welfare Workers
Registered Nurses Pharmacists
Pharmacist Assistants

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Administration Assistant
Receptionist
Registered Nurses
Veterinarian Surgeons
Veterinarian Nurses
Disability Support Workers
Aged Care Workers Project
Managers Project Officers
Planning Qualifications
Horticultural Skills
ICT Staff Skills
Junior Therapists
Hospitality Qualifications
4.1.4 Education / Training

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
- Truck Drivers
- Traffic Control
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous Teachers
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous Teachers’ Aides
- Marketing
- ICT Staff
- Online Sales
- Business Training
- Financial Management
- Special Education Teachers
- Mathematics and Science Teachers
- Qualified Early Childhood Teachers

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
- General Labouring
- Aged Care Workers
- Disability Support Workers
- Aged and Disability Care Planners
- Plant Operators
- Truck Drivers
- Administration
- Medical Reception
- Youth Workers
- Qualified Tradespeople
- Traffic Controllers
- Project Managers
- Event Management
- Baristas
- Qualified Cooks/Chefs
- ICT Staff Teaching Support Staff
- Mathematics Teachers
- Early Childhood/Childcare Workers
- Digital Marketing
- Receptionist
- Application Developers

4.1.5 Arts / Recreation

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
- Project Management
- Arts and Event Management

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
- Digital literacy
4.1.6 Technology / ICT

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Sales Staff
Digital Marketing
Programmers
Website Maintenance
Social Media Management

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Sales Staff
Digital Marketing
Cinematographers
Video Editors
Camera Assistant
Sound Recordist
Gaffer
Programmers
Graphic Designers
Customer Service
Web Design
Website Maintenance
Bookkeeping
Virtual Assistants
Aircraft Maintenance Engineers
Mechanical Aircraft Maintenance Engineers
Project Management
Warehousing and Inventory
ICT Staff Skills
3D Effects Editor
Animator

4.1.7 Government

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Leadership Skills
Heavy Plant Operators
Civil Engineers
Town Planners
Asset Managers
Utilities Management

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
General Labouring
Heavy Plant Operators
Electricians
Civil Engineers
Social Workers
Customer Service
Town Planners
Project Managers
Management
Leadership Skills
Financial Management
4.1.8 Agriculture / Forestry

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Farming Market gardening
- Horticulture
- Aquaculture
- Agriculture
- Cooking
- Hospitality
- Building and construction
- Training and assessment
- Event management
- Communications
- Marketing and Fundraising Skills
- Fundraising
- Tourism
- ICT

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
- Adult education
- Eco-Tourism
- Market gardening
- Horticulture
- Aquaculture
- Agriculture
- Cooking
- Hospitality
- ICT
- Education providers

4.1.9 Manufacturing

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
- Chemical Plant Operators
- Truck Drivers
- Clerks
- Supervisor Skills
- Management
- Qualified Tradespeople
- Machine Operators
- Business Analyst
- Accounting Management
- Human Resources
- Training
- Screen Printing

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
- Qualified Tradespeople
- Industrial Designers
- Engineers
- ICT Staff
- Digital Marketers
- Sales Trainers
- Business Management
- Chemical Plant Operators
- Truck Drivers

4.1.10 Retail

CURRENT SKILLS shortage
- Retail and Clerical Skills
- Forklift Drivers
- Digital Literacy

FUTURE SKILLS shortage
- Retail and Clerical Skills
- Bicycle Mechanics
- Sound Technician
- Accounting
- Marketing
- Management
- ICT Staff
- Digital Literacy

Other responses also highlighted “commitment to learning, customer service, improved grammar”.
4.1.11 Financial
CURRENT SKILLS shortage
N/A
FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Bookkeeping

4.1.12 Tourism / Hospitality
CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Cleaners
Housekeeping
Laundry
Qualified Head Chef/Cook
Management
Marketing
Also mentioned by one respondent was “lack of work ethic”.
FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Property Management
Qualified Tradespeople (including electricians, plumbers)
Qualified Head Chef/Cooks
Tourism Management
Marketing Management
Cleaners
Receptionist
Yard Keepers
Housekeepers
Administration
Bookkeeping
Digital Literacy

4.1.13 Electricity / Gas / Water / Waste
CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Financial Specialists
Electricians
FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Bookkeeper
Administration
Qualified Tradespeople (including Electricians, Air Conditioner Technicians).
General Labourers

4.1.14 Transport / Postal
CURRENT SKILLS shortage
No particular skills were highlighted though “communications and teamwork skills and fitness” was raised by one respondent
FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Heavy Vehicle Drivers
Also indicated by respondents included “reliability, teamwork and communication skills, strong work ethic”

4.1.15 Other services
CURRENT SKILLS shortage
Auto Electrician
FUTURE SKILLS shortage
Conveyancing
Administration
Financial
Qualified Tradespeople
Volunteers
Lawyers
Paralegal
Human Resources
ICT Staff
Auto Electrician
5. Constraints to growth

5.1 Potential factors that may prevent employers from attracting employees with required skill sets

Businesses were asked to indicate factors, if any at all, that may prevent them from attracting employees with the skills sets they require.

The potential factors that were encompassed in the study, in addition to the percentage of businesses that consider them potential factors include the following:

5.1.1 Location
12% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.2 Small population base
12.7% of respondents specified the small population base as a potential factor. Businesses indicated there is often a need to source workers from outside of the region due to the small populations of the town centres in which they operate.

5.1.3 Shortage of appropriate accommodation
0.7% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.4 Lack of services in the region
4.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses indicated that they perceive there to be a shortage of educational and training services and opportunities throughout the region.

5.1.5 Competition from out of region
9.9% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. A number of aspects were indicated such as higher wages being offered outside of the region, educational services and opportunities and competition for contracts as being factors that attract people away from the region.

5.1.6 Lack of partner employment opportunities
4.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.7 Lack of professional networks
2.1% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.8 Industry image
4.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.
5.1.9 Security of work
7% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses indicated they held concerns regarding the stability of ongoing demand for products and services in their sector. One respondent identified that public hospitals create difficulties in terms of wages, as they are able to pay higher rates than private health care providers.

Some respondents noted that due to the influx of tourists particularly in summer, there can be a high turnover of staff, as employees would prefer security of employment tenure and therefore seek either full-time or permanent part time positions. The seasonal nature of employment in certain sectors means that employers can only offer casual employment.

5.1.10 Lack of public transport
4.9% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.11 Difficulty in accessing larger population centres and cities
3.5% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.12 Lack of infrastructure construction activity
2.8% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.13 Attitude towards employment
9.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses indicated that many younger employees hold negative attitudes towards entry-level positions, in addition to a belief that there is a shortage of work ethics.

It was also indicated that employees that have had previous employment outside of the region are hard to retain and hold negative attitudes towards the lower wages offered.

5.1.14 Regional self-esteem
3.5% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

5.1.15 Lack of quality secondary education facilities
4.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Respondents consider there to be a shortage of quality secondary education provided by facilities throughout the region. It was highlighted by businesses that shortfalls in grammar, mathematical skills and digital competency are current factors.

It was indicated that a shortfall in the quality of secondary education has the potential to affect the skills sets of their future workforces.

5.1.16 Lack of relevant training availability
10.6% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses indicated that there is a current shortage of training offered throughout the region, specifically that of Health Care, Energy and ICT sectors.
5.1.17 Other
9.9% of participating businesses specified ‘Other.’

These factors included the following:

- Poor telecommunications infrastructure
- Decreases in full-time employment positions

**Figure 8: Potential factors that may prevent employers from attracting employees with required skill sets**

Only 31% of respondents provided an answer to this question. The previous skills audit only qualitatively assessed the above constraints to growth in the region.
6. Opportunities for growth

6.1 Factors that assist in attracting and recruiting current/future employees

Businesses were asked what factors they consider may be able to assist them in attracting and recruiting current and future employees.

Factors outlined by businesses that could assist them to attract and recruit employees included the below responses. The majority of responses (44%) were either unsure or did not specify a response to this question.

Table 6: Factors that could assist attracting and recruiting employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor(s)</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not specify/Unsure</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased education funding and opportunities, in addition to training funding and opportunities</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher wages throughout the region</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased spending on infrastructure and development</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitudes towards employment and a greater emphasis on work ethics</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversifying, expanding and/or improving the business</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater economic certainty</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not need assistance</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased tourism</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A focus on health, the environment, transport and increased funding for their organisations</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A focus on arts and culture, and incentives for relocation</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Factors that may prevent attracting and recruiting current/future employees

Businesses were asked if they consider any factors that may prevent them from attracting and recruiting current and future employees.

The potential factors that were encompassed in the study, in addition to the percentage of respondents that consider them potential factors include the following:
6.2.1 Location
21.8% of participating respondents specified that this is a barrier to attracting employees due to the rural nature of the region. Potential employees may be reluctant to relocate to the region.

6.2.2 Small population base
23.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.3 Shortage of appropriate accommodation
3.5% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.4 Lack of services in the region
12% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses indicated that if a shortage of education and training persists there could be a significant shortage of skills in the long-term.

6.2.5 Competition from out of region
23.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses highlighted that free or subsidised training and education should be available to their workforce. It was indicated that this approach could allow businesses to train their staff at a much cheaper cost, which could alleviate budgetary constraints for small businesses.

6.2.6 Lack of partner employment opportunities
11.3% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.7 Lack of professional networks
2.1% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.8 Industry image
5.6% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.9 Security of work
19% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses indicated they held concerns surrounding the stability of ongoing demand for products, services and contracts in their respective sector. Organisations also indicated concerns regarding funding, which they indicate might compromise their services in the long-term.

6.2.10 Lack of public transport
8.4% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.
6.2.11 Difficulty in accessing larger population centres and cities
9.9% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.12 Lack of infrastructure construction activity
9.9% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.13 Attitude towards employment
16.2% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.14 Regional self-esteem
7% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. None of the respondents detailed any reasons for this consideration.

6.2.15 Lack of quality secondary education facilities
7.7% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. Businesses identified the lack of education of trades at high schools throughout the region as a factor that may affect them in the long-term. It was noted that trade pathways are not encouraged by secondary education providers.

6.2.16 Lack of relevant training availability
14.8% of participating businesses specified this as a potential factor. There were no specific comments on the lack of relevant training, although businesses mentioned TAFE funding cuts as a potential factor in the long-term.

6.2.17 Other
28.9% of participating businesses specified ‘Other’ detailing factors, such as:-

- Financial constraints of being a small business
- Lack of organisational funding
- Poor telecommunications infrastructure
- Lack of development in art and culture
- Difficult working relationships with employment services
- Seasonal changes to tourism during the winter
Figure 9: Potential factors that may prevent attracting and recruiting current/future employees

Almost 30% of respondents did not specify an answer to this question.
7. Additional comments

7.1 General comments on attracting and recruiting employees to business
Businesses were invited to include any additional comments regarding other factors that may assist their business with attracting and recruiting employees.

Nine businesses (6.3%) made additional comments that included the following:
- Training staff brings with it great costs, in addition to a significant time component
- Reliance on telecommunications infrastructure was emphasised
- Remuneration and clear career pathways were highlighted as an area in which the respondents business could attract, recruit and retain employees into the future
- Imposing a tax on steel sourced from foreign companies bidding for naval contracts

93.7% of businesses did not submit any additional comments relating to their business.

7.2 General comments on attracting and recruiting employees throughout the region
Respondents were invited to include any additional comments regarding other factors that may assist business throughout the region attract and recruit employees.

A further 17 businesses (12%) made additional comments that included the following:
- Bus drivers need to be easier to employ
- Training staff needs to be subsidised to lower costs for business
- Incentive schemes related to education could achieve positive outcomes
- Depends on the public services available throughout the region
- Increased development and infrastructure could assist the region
- TAFE needs to teach life/communication skills and secondary education refresher courses
- Lower unemployment could attract people to the region
- Improved telecommunications infrastructure
- Support for public transport networks. Currently inconvenient for travellers from Cooma, Bega and Goulburn
- Truck licenses are difficult to obtain
- Economic relief for self-employed and small businesses that employ staff that offer their time to volunteer for emergency services (e.g. Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Fire & Rescue NSW, St John’s Ambulance)
- Public school wages are too high to compete with, drives employees away from pursuing employment in early childhood.

88% of businesses did not submit any additional comments relating to the region.
8. Conclusion

The 2016 Skills Audit is the second to be undertaken for the Far South Coast region by RDA FSC. The 2016 audit received double the number of responses in comparison to the 2012 audit, and while the number of respondents could be considered small given the number of businesses within the region, significant effort was made to ensure there was a substantial cross section of responses across the fifteen industry sectors represented throughout the Far South Coast.

While a number of respondents identified several key factors that are either constraints to or opportunities to future growth, very few provided follow up commentary to justify their position.

Economic and social factors around remuneration, lack of services, location and small population base were identified by respondents as some of the key factors that limit their ability to attract and retain key qualified/specialised personnel to the region. Nearly all sectors identified the skills required currently and into the future.

Access to further training and professional development are seen as areas where strategies can be developed to attract and retain employees to the Far South Coast. In particular, increased education funding and training opportunities, higher wage growth and increased spending on infrastructure and development were the three highest factors respectively that could assist in attracting and recruiting current/future employees to the region.

Some respondents suggested that free or subsidised training should be available to their workforce to alleviate budgetary constraints of small businesses. Other respondents also noted the quality of secondary education facilities and funding cuts for TAFE institutions as potential long term factors that may impact on key skills within the region.

The 2012 Skills Audit noted that infrastructure development was key to attracting and retaining skills in the region. In 2016, infrastructure was still seen as an important factor but not one of the main factors. Rather, investment in human infrastructure might be the method by which skills can be retained or attracted to the region and could be achieved through either career development or upskilling opportunities.
Appendices
Regional Development Australia Far South Coast Skills Audit

Regional Development Australia Far South Coast (RDA FSC) is undertaking a skills audit to identify current and future skills needs and the environment in which those skills are/will be required. The findings will allow RDAFSC to develop strategies to improve the skills mix in the region.

RDAFSC conducted this audit four years ago in 2012, the findings from which formed a report which has been a valuable resource in securing funding to assist in achieving an economically diverse and prosperous region and was the foundation for the formation of the strategies to address skills shortages.

This 2016 audit will allow RDAFSC to update the 2012 report with current information and re-evaluate its strategies to overcome issues associated with attracting and recruiting employees to the region.

Help to secure the prosperity of the South Coast through developing, attracting and retaining skills in the region - take the survey today!

Your Details

Business/Organisation name*: ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................
Location*: ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................
Postcode*: ...................................................
Contact Person*: .......................................................................................................................... ... ..........................................................................................................................
Email*: ...............................................................................................................................
Tel*: ..........................................................................
Mobile*: ...........................................................................

*This information will only be used for this survey unless we receive specific permission from you otherwise.

Which Sector would you say your business/organisation is in?  (Please tick the appropriate box)

☐ Fisheries/Maritime  ☐ Retail
☐ Building/Construction/Mining  ☐ Financial
☐ Health Care/Social  ☐ Tourism/Hospitality
☐ Education/Training  ☐ Elec/Gas/Water/Waste
☐ Arts/Recreation  ☐ Transport/Postal
☐ Technology/ICT  ☐ Manufacturing
☐ Government  ☐ Other Services
☐ Agriculture/Forestry

Please specify the nature of your business/organisation

(eg, Public Buses, Wharf Amenities, Physiotherapy, Supermarket, Accounting, etc)
How many employees does your business/organisation have?

- [ ] 1 to 10
- [ ] 11 to 50
- [ ] 51 to 100
- [ ] More than 100

Are all your skills needs met within your current workforce?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**Current Employment & Skills**

What are your most critical skills shortages? (List all that apply.)

-
-
-
-
-

What factors, if any, are preventing you from attracting employees with these skills?

- [ ] 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 opportunites
- [ ] 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 toward employment
- [ ] Regional self esteem
- [ ] Lack of secondary education facilities
- [ ] Lack of relevant training availability
- [ ] Other (please specify)
**Future Employment & Skills in Next 5 Years**
Assuming an ideal scenario, what do you believe your future workforce numbers will need to be in five years?

- [ ] 1 to 10
- [ ] 11 to 50
- [ ] 51 to 100
- [ ] More than 100

Assuming an ideal scenario, what skills sets will you need in the next five years? (List all that apply.)

- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................

**Future Employment & Skills in Next 10 Years**
Assuming an ideal scenario, what do you believe your future workforce numbers will need to be in ten years?

- [ ] 1 to 10 employees
- [ ] 11 to 50 employees
- [ ] 51 to 100 employees
- [ ] More than 100 employees

Assuming an ideal scenario, what skills sets will you need in the next ten years?

- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................

**Attracting & Recruiting Future Employees**
What factors would assist you in attracting and recruiting future employees?

- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
- ..........................................................................................................................
What factors might prevent you from attracting and recruiting future employees?

- 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 toward employment
- Regional self esteem
- Lack of secondary education facilities
- Lack of relevant training availability
- Other (please specify)

Please use this section to add any further comments on attracting and recruiting employees to your business and the region (both now and in the future).
## Appendix B – Possible Job Growth by sector and current levels of employment

### Current levels of employment – Bega Valley Shire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1 to 10</th>
<th>11 – 50</th>
<th>51 - 100</th>
<th>More than 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries/Maritime</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building/Construction/Mining</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care/Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education/Training</td>
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<td>Arts/Recreation</td>
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<td>Technology/ICT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
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<td>Agriculture/Forestry Manufacturing</td>
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<td>Retail</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Financial</td>
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<td>Tourism/Hospitality</td>
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<td>Electricity/Gas/Water/Waste</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport/Postal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
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### Job Growth by sector over next 5 years – Bega Valley Shire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1 to 10</th>
<th>11 – 50</th>
<th>51 - 100</th>
<th>More than 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries/Maritime</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Education/Training</td>
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<td>Agriculture/Forestry Manufacturing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism/Hospitality</td>
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<td>Transport/Postal</td>
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<td>Other Services</td>
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**Job Growth by sector over next 10 years – Bega Valley Shire**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1 to 10</th>
<th>11 – 50</th>
<th>51 - 100</th>
<th>More than 100</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fisheries/Maritime</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Current levels of employment – Shoalhaven

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<th>Sector</th>
<th>1 to 10</th>
<th>11 – 50</th>
<th>51 - 100</th>
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### Job Growth by sector over the next 5 years – Shoalhaven

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## Current levels of employment – Eurobodalla Shire

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Job Growth by sector over the next 5 years – Eurobodalla Shire

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• Economic development and jobs growth
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