



**Local Jobs
Program**

Interim Local Jobs Plan North and North West Tasmania

October 2020

Contents

The Local Jobs Program	3
Key priorities in the North and North Western Tasmania region.....	3
North and North Western Tasmania Employment Region overview	4
Socio-economic profile	4
Labour market challenges.....	4
Overview of priorities for the region	6
The North and North Western Tasmania Region Labour Market.....	9
Labour market update October 2020	9
Employment.....	9
ABS weekly payroll data.....	10
Participation rate	11
Unemployment	11
Employment services caseload characteristics.....	11
Income support.....	12
Industry profile.....	13
Employment trends (for selected industries)	13
Youth aged 15-24	14
Youth unemployment	14
Youth disengagement	15
Vacancies and job advertisements	15

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this Island, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment would like to pay our respects to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people: The past and present Custodians of the Land upon which we meet and gather.

The Local Jobs Program

The Local Jobs Program (LJP) brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to focus on the reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways for job seekers in 25 Employment Regions, as part of supporting Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This interim Local Jobs Plan identifies the labour market priorities for North and North West Tasmania, with a focus on **creating employment opportunities**, meeting local **employer demands** and **better skilling** local job seekers. The plan identifies the direction, strategies and actions of the North and North Western Tasmania Employment Facilitator. The interim plan recognises and draws on State and Local Government work for example as set out in The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council reports (PESRAC), Launceston City Deal, regional economic/employment strategies by Cradle Coast Authority and Northern Tasmania Development Corporation, and workforce development hubs (such as the Northern Region Workforce Development Facilitator, and Break O'Day LGA Employment Connect Project).

This interim plan will be reviewed by the **Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce**, and whenever the priorities change (or every six months).

This document has been developed alongside the interim plan for the Hobart and Southern Tasmania Region. At a high level, priorities are consistent between the regions. Taskforces for both regions may coordinate and collaborate on state-wide projects and will further identify and develop regionally specific priorities.

Key priorities in the North and North Western Tasmania region

1. Maximising the extent to which **local positions are filled by local job seekers** – including through ensuring apprenticeship positions are filled and locals are skilled to meet the needs of employers in the construction and other relevant sectors.
2. Maximising the benefits of existing Australian and Tasmania Government programs aimed at **skills development and employment pathways**.
3. **Engaging employers and their networks** in the design and delivery of initiatives – particularly in industries experiencing growth (for example Aged and Disability Care) or workforce shortages (for example Construction, Horticulture and Renewable Energy).
4. Reducing labour market disadvantage (including for Indigenous Australians, long-term unemployed, women, mature age workers and youth) through **facilitating access to employment and training opportunities**.
5. Complementing and advancing local and state government **economic development priorities and workforce strategies**.
6. **Facilitating local responses** where economic structural adjustment or redundancy events impact job seekers.

North and North Western Tasmania

Employment Region overview



The North and North West Tasmania Employment Region (the region) comprises 16 of the state's 29 Local Government Areas (LGAs) including King and Flinders Islands. The southern borders of the region adjoin the LGAs of Huon Valley, Derwent Valley, Central Highlands, Southern Midlands and Glamorgan Spring Bay, running west to east.

Major population centres across the region include Burnie, Devonport, Smithton, Ulverstone, Latrobe, Deloraine, Longford, Launceston, Georgetown, Scottsdale and St Helens. Launceston is the second largest city in Tasmania and the largest in the region.

The Launceston City Deal (a shared vision between the Australian and Tasmanian governments and the City of Launceston) includes a focus on jobs, skills and business growth, and

infrastructure projects such as the University of Tasmania (UTAS) campus renewal.

The West Coast, Circular Head, and Waratah-Wynyard have diverse mining, forestry, tourism, aquaculture and agriculture industries. Dairy is strongly represented in Circular Head, Meander Valley, Dorset and Waratah-Wynyard; Georgetown LGA has the major Bell Bay heavy industry precinct. Horticulture is a strongly consolidating sector across Central Coast, Latrobe, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and Launceston, while Burnie and Launceston have major tertiary education and health facilities servicing the region.

Bridport and St Helens are coastal tourist destinations, with niche offerings in links golf at Barnbougle/Lost Farm at Bridport. Scottsdale and St Helens offer rapidly consolidating world class mountain biking and other tourism opportunities.

Socio-economic profile

The region contains some very disadvantaged areas, with 7 LGAs (George Town, West Coast, Break O'Day, Burnie, Central Highlands, Devonport and Dorset) ranked in the lowest quintile in the 2016 SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage in Australia.¹ Ravenswood, an SA2 within the Launceston LGA is the most disadvantaged SA2 in the region and is the 27th most disadvantaged SA2 in Australia, out of 2,184 SA2s.

Labour market challenges

Tasmania and the North and North Western Tasmania region face a number of challenges, including:

Low population growth, high youth unemployment and an ageing population. For example, from 2018 to 2019, the estimated resident population grew by 0.83 per cent in North Tasmania, while North West Tasmania grew by 0.74 per cent. In comparison, growth in Tasmania was 1.17 per cent

¹ ABS (Cat. 2033.0.55.001) SEIFA, 2016

and in Australia 1.51 per cent.² Tasmanian youth unemployment has historically been higher than in other parts of Australia, and the population is ageing more rapidly.

Low levels of digital literacy. Tasmania was the first state to be connected to the NBN, however in 2018 was ranked as the second most digitally disadvantaged state in Australia.³ While digital access has increased across the state in recent years, several low socio-economic areas of the region are still well below the national average. LGAs in the region have up to 28 per cent of households without internet access.⁴

Limited public transport outside of metropolitan centres which inhibits opportunities for some jobseekers to take on work and training. Public transport is largely limited to metropolitan town centres within the region and timetables do not always align with employer needs for shift times. The cost of public transport is a further barrier to employment for those on low incomes, as is access to private vehicles, and in some regions lower level of car ownership and the cost of operating and maintaining a vehicle are barriers to economic participation.⁵

Historic and generational low educational attainment, particularly outside of metropolitan areas. While educational attainment across Tasmania has increased in recent years it is still below the national average on some indicators. Some comparisons drawn from 2016 ABS Census data highlight the disparities:

- In Northern Tasmania, 35.2 per cent of residents had completed year 12 equivalent, in the North West it was only 27.6 per cent. Both parts of the region were well below the Australian figure of 51.9 per cent.
- University qualification attainment in North West Tasmania was 16.6 per cent and 21.2 per cent in Northern Tasmania, well below 30.9 per cent nationally, and 23.8 per cent for Tasmania.
- However, vocational education attainment in Northern Tasmania was 21.6 per cent and 24.1 per cent in North West Tasmania, above 18.8 per cent nationally.⁶

² As at June 2019, ABS, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0) accessed via <https://profile.id.com.au/tasmania/population-estimate>

³ Australian Digital inclusion Index (ADII) accessed via <https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/>

⁴ TasCOSS Understanding Digital Inclusion in Tasmania – Report on Research Findings <https://tascoss.org.au/new-submission-to-the-tascoss-vault-11/>

⁵ https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/174076/Transport_Access_Strategy.PDF

⁶ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016 accessed via <https://profile.id.com.au/tasmania/schooling>

Overview of priorities for the region

This section provides an overview of the high level employment and skills priorities identified to support the region's labour market and economic recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

1. Maximising the extent to which local positions are filled by local job seekers – including through ensuring apprenticeship positions are filled and locals are skilled to meet the needs of employers in the construction and other relevant sectors

A range of current and future residential and infrastructure construction projects offer opportunities for employment and apprenticeships. Major infrastructure projects in the region include the Burnie and Launceston UTAS campus redevelopments, building of the Northern Tasmania prison and renewable energy initiatives such as Marinus Link, Robbins Island and Cattle Hill wind farms and reopening or redevelopment of Savage River, Mount Lyell and Beaconsfield mines.⁷

2. Maximising the benefits of existing Australian and Tasmania Government programs aimed at skills development and employment pathways

A number of Australian and Tasmanian Government programs targeting skills development and employment pathways are already operating in North and North Western Tasmania. There is potential to support people and businesses to take advantage of these in an integrated, and place-based way. The range of programs and services includes but is not limited to:

- Australian Government **employment services** including jobactive, Transition to Work, Parents next, Employability Skills Training, PaTH industry pilots, Skills for Education and Employment (SEE).
- The Australian Government **Industry Training Hub and the Career Facilitator** in Burnie. The Industry Training Hub has been in place since March 2020 and aims to improve opportunities for young people in regions with high youth unemployment, targeting Year 11 and Year 12 students. The Career Facilitator works with young people to build skills and choose occupations in demand in their region.
- The **JobTrainer Fund** provides fee-free, nationally recognised training in up to 200 priority qualifications for industries with an identified need for more skilled workers and represents up to 7000 additional placements for Tasmanians.
- Opportunities are available as part of the **Energising Tasmania** commitment to develop a skilled workforce equipped with the expertise needed for the renewable energy and related sectors in Tasmania. Energising Tasmania is a \$16.1 million funding commitment from the Australian Government to develop a skilled workforce to meet demand across our major energy projects, including Project Marinus and Battery of the Nation.
- The **Rapid Response Skills Initiative** provides up to \$3000 towards the cost of training for eligible people who have lost casual, full-time or part-time work in the last 12 months due to retrenchment, downsizing or business closure.

⁷ <https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/infrastructure-tasmania/tasmanian-infrastructure-project-pipeline>

3. Engaging employers and their networks in the design and delivery of initiatives – particularly in industries experiencing growth (for example Aged and Disability Care) or workforce shortages (for example Construction, Horticulture and Renewable Energy)

Business and industry sectors are best placed to know their workforce needs. Major employers and sectors which operate state-wide in Tasmania include:

- The Federal Group (hospitality/accommodation sector, also freight movement) with multiple sites around the state.
- The University of Tasmania (education sector) with multiple sites across the state.
- The Tasmanian State Service (Public Administration including Tasmanian Health Service) with multiple sites around the state.
- The Australian Public Service (Public Administration) operating in multiple sites/agencies around the state.
- The seafood industry (covering farmed producers Petuna, Huon Aquaculture and Tassal, along with wild fisheries) with diverse sites around the state.
- RAC Tasmania (Retail, Transport, Accommodation and Hospitality) at various sites around Tasmania.

Major employers based in the region include:

- Costa Berries (Horticulture grower/distributor with sites/farms across north and north west Tasmania).
- Bell Bay Aluminium (minerals processing at Georgetown).
- Simplot Australia (vegetable growing/processing).
- Grange Resources (mining/minerals processing at Savage River/Port Latta, HQ in Burnie).

4. Reducing labour market disadvantage (including for Indigenous Australians, long-term unemployed, women, mature age workers and youth) through facilitating access to employment and training opportunities

All Australian governments are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their communities, organisations and businesses to implement the new [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) at the national, state and territory, and local levels. Within the region 11.9 per cent of the jobactive caseload in Northern Tasmania and 16.2 per cent in the North West identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (as at 24 September 2020). This is an overrepresentation in comparison to the 7.7 per cent of the population in Northern Tasmania and 6.9 per cent in North Western Tasmania population in the region in the 2016 Census.⁸

The Tasmanian Government's PESRAC Report noted among the industries hardest hit by the COVID suppression response in Tasmanian were industries that historically employ a high proportion of women and youth, such as; accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, and arts and recreation services.

Other cohorts that may experience labour market disadvantage are likely to be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and may require additional support to participate.

⁸ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016

5. Complementing and advancing local and state government economic development priorities and workforce strategies

State and local government initiatives around employment and skills pathways are established across the region and have strong linkages with the employers, industries and communities in which they operate. These include:

- Premier’s Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC).
- Cradle Coast Authority Regional Futures Plan.
- Northern Tasmania Development Corporation (NTDC).
- Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing and Energy Council (TMMEC).
- Launceston City Deal.

6. Facilitating local responses where economic structural adjustment or redundancy events impact job seekers

The full economic impact of the pandemic remains to be seen. For example:

- **Supply chain breakdown** related to current and future outbreaks of COVID-19 will potentially impact businesses. Currently, as Victorian restrictions continue, a number of businesses in the region are affected by a reduced capacity to restock or obtain critical componentry.
- The harvest season is expected to be severely impacted by **limited labour mobility** due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Uncertain future demand** for exports, including tourism.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Australian Government put supports in place for medium and small businesses including JobKeeper payment. As progressive realignment of the level of support through JobKeeper and other programs takes effect, support for businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19 to adapt to the new economic environment may be required.

In response to these challenges there is potential businesses may need to downsize or pivot operations or cease trading, with implications for the labour market.

Tasmanian applications for JobKeeper processed

	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Tasmania	14,320	15,109	15,320
North and North West Tasmania	6,663	7,068	7,187

Source: ATO JobKeeper data, <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/jobkeeper/data>

The North and North Western Tasmania Region Labour Market

Labour market update October 2020⁹

While COVID-19 presents its own immediate challenges, the region has a long history of entrenched labour market and social disadvantage, with its unemployment rate averaging 6.3 per cent over the last five years and around one in four working age (15-64 years) persons receiving income support. Employment growth in the region has been relatively weak in recent years, impacting negatively on both the number and types of job opportunities available.

ABS Labour Force Survey regional estimates also suggest that labour market conditions have deteriorated in the region since March 2020, when Australia recorded its 100th case of COVID-19.

Selected ABS Labour Force Survey indicators, August 2020

	Employment			Unemployment			Unemployment rate		Participation rate	
	Aug-20 (’000)	Change since Mar-20 (’000)	(%)	Aug-20 (’000)	Change since Mar-20 (’000)	(%)	Aug-20 (%)	Change since Mar-20 (% pts)	Aug-20 (%)	Change since Mar-20 (% pts)
North and North Western Tasmania	119.2	-0.5	-0.4	9.4	3.6	61.0	7.3	2.7	59.6	1.4
Tasmania	255.3	-3.4	-1.3	17.2	3.8	28.6	6.3	1.4	61.1	-0.1
Australia	12,583.4	-413.6	-3.2	921.8	206.0	28.8	6.8	1.6	64.8	-1.1

Source: Data for North and North West Tasmania are from ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, August 2020, original estimates. Data for Tasmania and Australia are from ABS, Labour Force, Australia, August 2020, seasonally adjusted estimates.

Employment

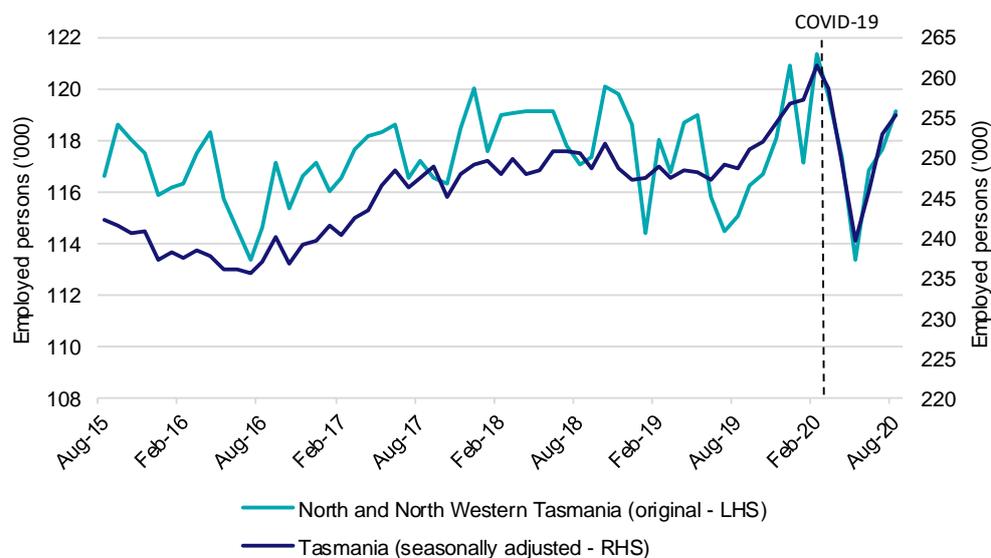
There were 119,200 employed people in the region in August 2020.

The number of employed people has decreased by 500 between March and August 2020.

Over the last five years, employment in the region has grown at an annual average rate of 0.4 per cent, well below the 1.1 per cent recorded for Tasmania.

⁹ Throughout this labour market update, unless otherwise stated, data are for the combined SA4s of Launceston and North East, and Tasmania – West and North West, which are a good proxy for the North and North West Tasmania Employment Region. Data are the latest available at the time of writing.

Employed persons aged 15 and over (five years to August 2020)



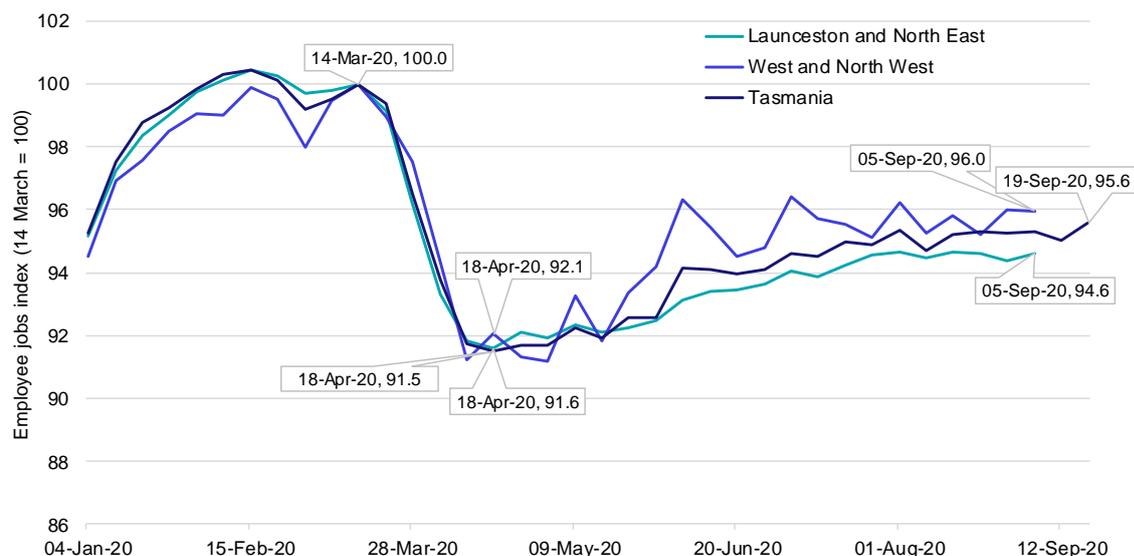
Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, August 2020

ABS weekly payroll data

Following a steady rise at the beginning of the year, the ABS weekly payroll data show that between 14 March 2020 and 5 September 2020:

- The number of employee jobs in the Launceston and North East SA4 fell by 5.4 per cent, compared with a 4.0 per cent decline in the West and North West Tasmania SA4 and a 4.7 per cent decline for Tasmania.
- There has been some improvement over the four weeks to 5 September, with employee jobs increasing by 0.2 per cent and 0.7 per cent in Launceston and North East and West and North West Tasmania respectively. In the same period, payroll jobs increased by 0.6 per cent in Tasmania.
- Despite this recent increase, payroll jobs remain well below pre-COVID levels.

Employee jobs 4 January March to 19 September (14 March 2020 = 100)



Source: ABS, Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages, week ending 19 September 2020. Latest available data at the SA4 level are for the week ending 5 September 2020. The North and North Western Tasmania regions corresponds with the Launceston and North East and West and North West SA4s.

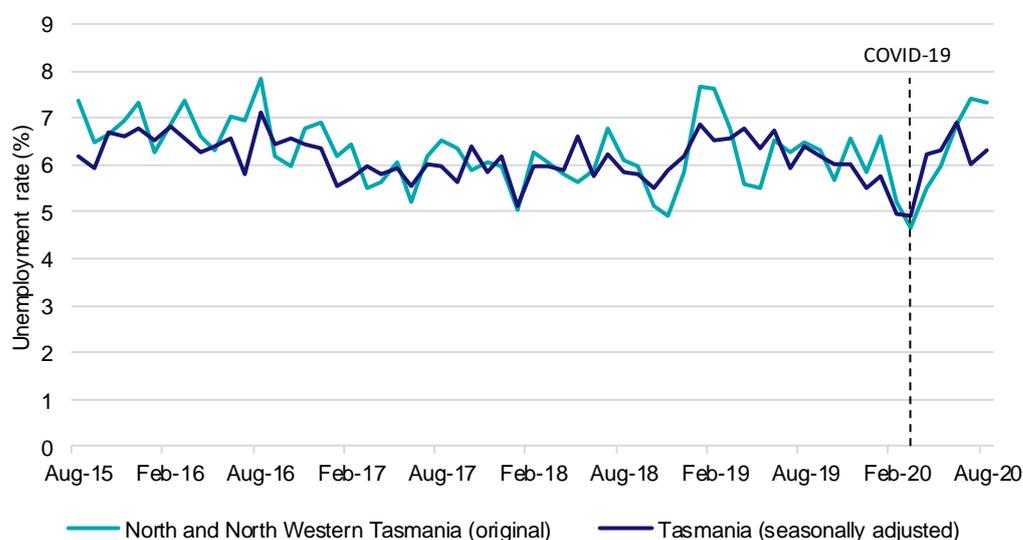
Participation rate

- The region's participation rate increased by 1.4 per cent between March and August 2020, to stand at 59.6 per cent, below the 61.1 per cent recorded for Tasmania.
- Despite this increase, it continues to be amongst the lowest in the country.
- The population in North and North West Tasmania is comparatively older: 44 per cent of the population are aged 55 and over, the highest share in the state and well above the 34 per cent recorded nationally.

Unemployment

- The region's unemployment rate was 7.3 per cent in August 2020, up by 2.7 percentage points since March 2020, well above the 6.3 per cent recorded for Tasmania.

Unemployment rate time series (five years to August 2020)



Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, August 2020

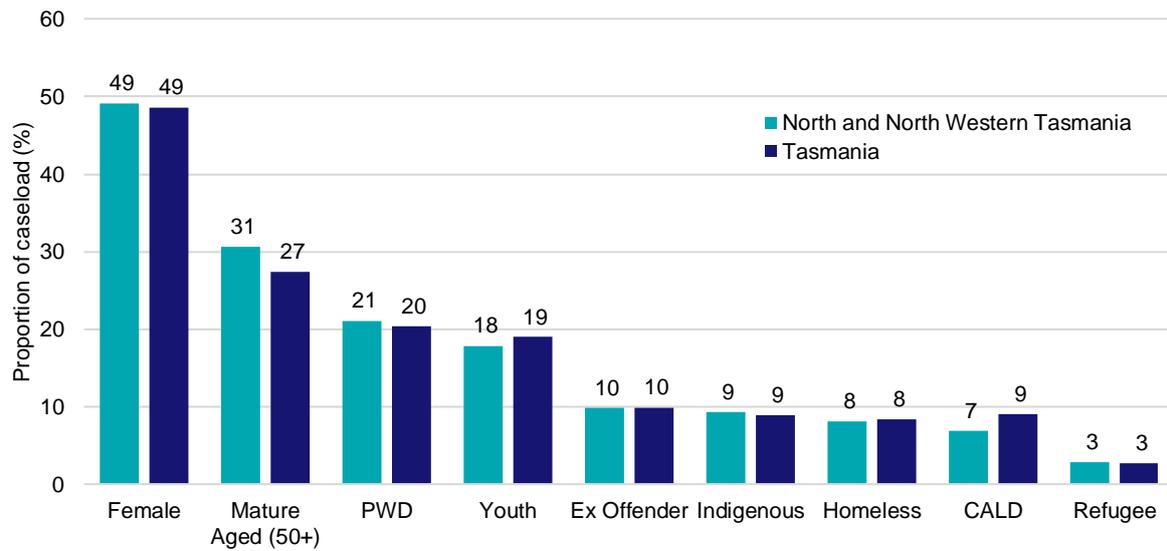
Considerable labour market disparity exists within the North and North West Tasmania Employment Region. Latest available *Small Area Labour Markets* data show that, in the March quarter 2020, the unemployment rate in North and North West Tasmania ranged from just 1.6 per cent in the SA2 of King Island, to 18.2 per cent in the SA2 of Ravenswood.¹⁰

Employment services caseload characteristics

As at 30 September 2020 the caseload in the region increased from 10,562 people in March 2020 to 18,063 in September 2020, a rise of 71 per cent. This compares with an increase of 81 per cent for Tasmania and 97 per cent for Australia. The caseload in the region has higher proportions of mature aged people (aged 50 and over) and youth, compared with Tasmania.

¹⁰ Data for SA2s are sourced from the National Skills Commission, *Small Area Labour Markets*, March quarter 2020, smoothed estimates. Labour market data at the regional level can display significant variability and should be viewed with caution.

Employment services caseload for selected cohorts (September 2020)



Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment, administrative data, August 2020. PWD = Persons with disability. CALD = Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.

Income support

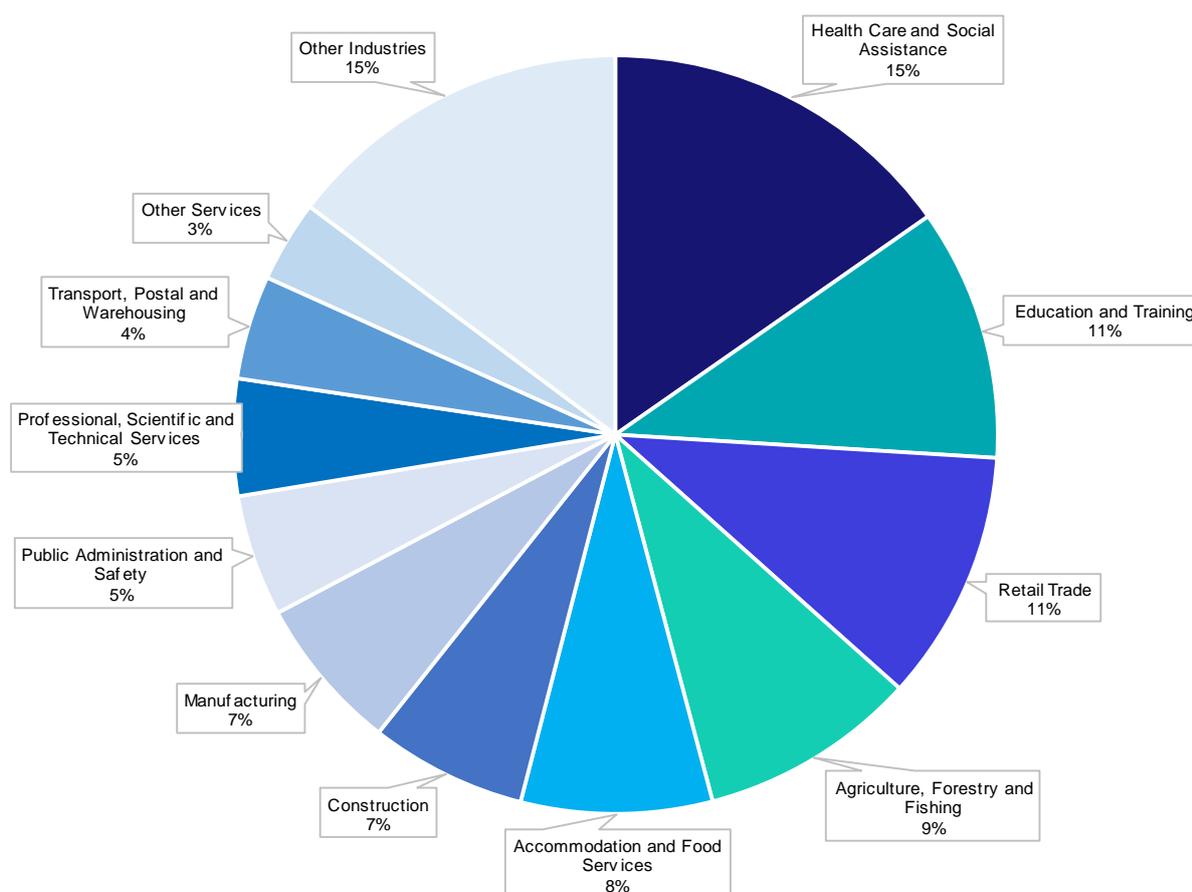
In August 2020, the proportion of the working age (15-64 years) population on income support in the region stood at 24.4 per cent, above the 22.5 per cent recorded in Tasmania and the 16.3 per cent recorded nationally. Indeed, it is the fifth highest of all Employment Regions in Australia.

Industry profile

As at August 2020, the largest employing industries in North and North Western Tasmania were health care and social assistance, education and training and retail trade.

Small businesses employ almost half of Tasmania's total private-sector workforce. According to the Tasmanian Department of State Growth there are nearly 40,000 businesses across the state, with 95 per cent (approx. 37,300) being small businesses¹¹. As identified in the PESRAC Interim Report, a key feature of Tasmania's economy is the prevalence of small business: 61 per cent of Tasmania's businesses are non-employing, and a further 36 per cent have fewer than 20 employees.

Share of employment by industry in North and North Western Tasmania, August quarter 2020



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, August 2020. "Other industries" includes: Wholesale Trade; Financial and Insurance Services; Administrative and Support Services; Arts and Recreation Services; Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; Information Media and Telecommunications; Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services; and Mining.

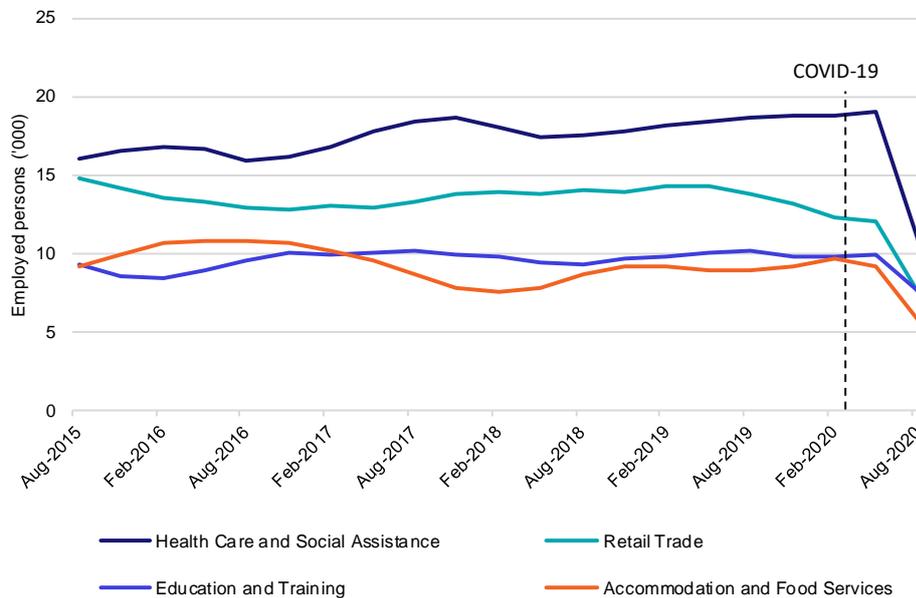
Employment trends (for selected industries)

Although COVID-19 has affected some industries more than others, it is important to consider longer term employment trends to understand where current and emerging opportunities may be in this region. Employment in North and North Western Tasmania has fallen in all industries between May and August 2020. However, over the five years to May 2020, employment:

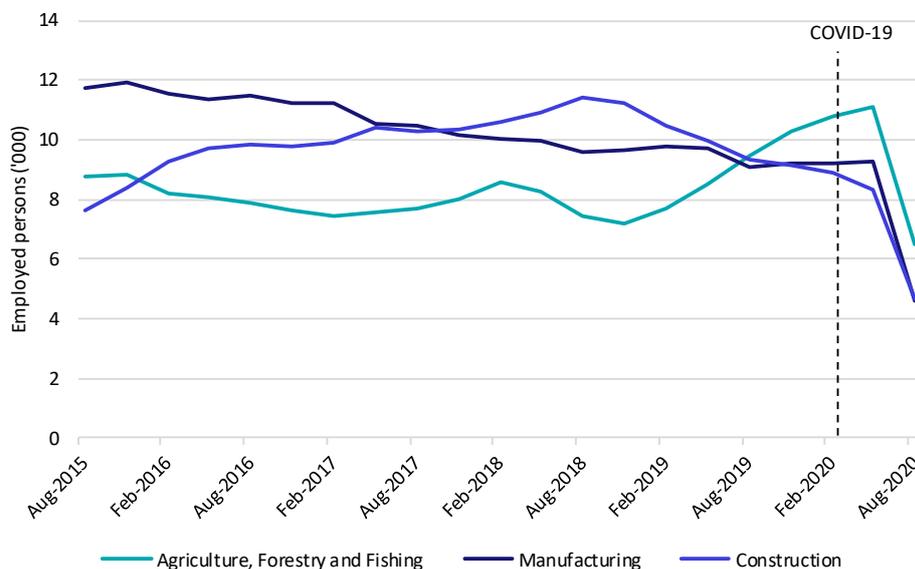
¹¹ https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/about/divisions/industry_and_business_development/small_business

- Substantially increased in health care and social assistance and agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- Remained steady in accommodation and food services and education and training.
- Decreased in manufacturing and retail trade.

Employed persons in 'services' industries, five years to August 2020 ('000)



Employed persons in 'producing' industries, five years to August 2020 ('000)



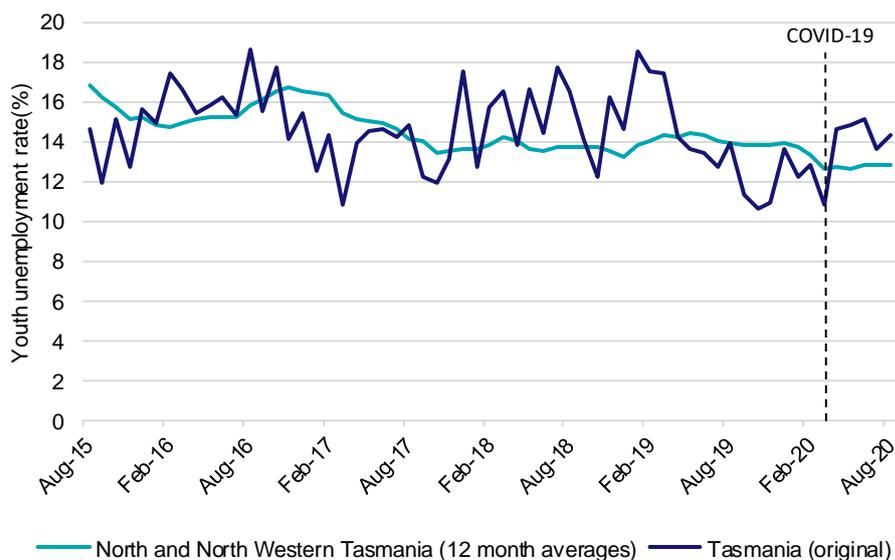
Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, August 2020

Youth aged 15-24

Youth unemployment

- The youth unemployment rate in North and North West Tasmania was 12.8 per cent in August 2020, compared with 14.3 per cent for the state.
- The youth unemployment rate has increased by 0.2 per cent points since March 2020.

Youth unemployment (five years to August 2020)



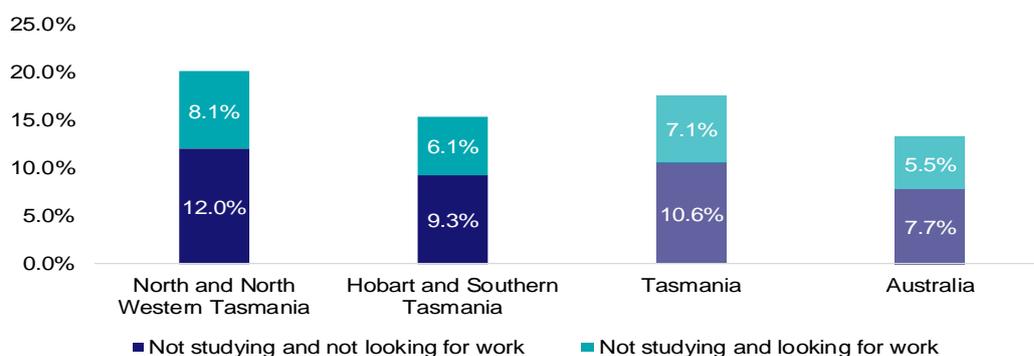
Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, August 2020

Youth disengagement

Data below are based on 2016 Census, which is the latest available source for this information.

- The region has a higher rate of youth disengagement than the Hobart and Southern Tasmania Employment Region.
- Around 20.1 per cent of young people aged 18-24 in North and North Western Tasmania were disengaged, compared with 17.7 per cent for Tasmania and 13.2 per cent for Australia.

Young people not studying nor working (18-24 years old)

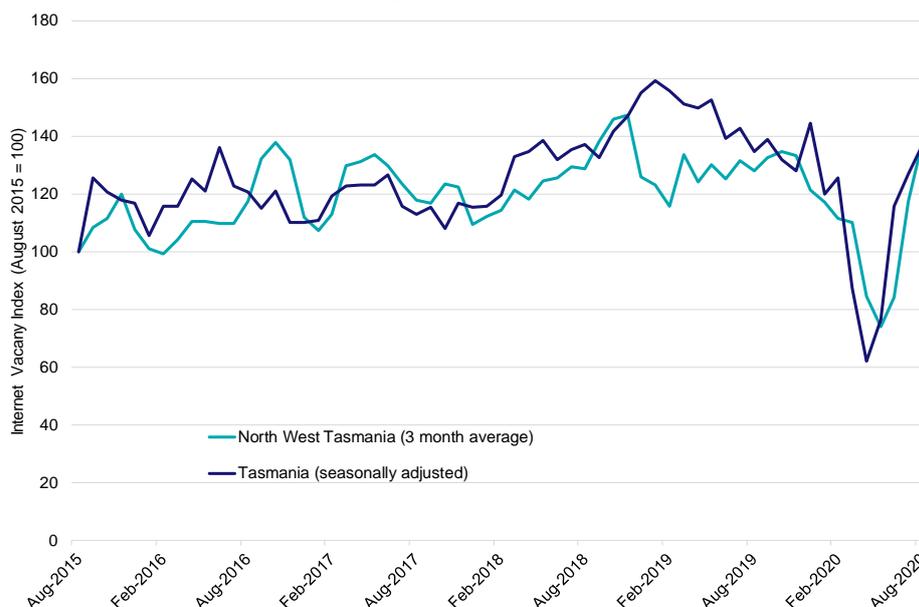


Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

Vacancies and job advertisements

The level of vacancies in the North West Tasmania Internet Vacancy Index region declined by 34 per cent over the three months to May 2020, before increasing again in the period to August 2020 (up by around 87 per cent from the lowest point) despite this with recent increases, vacancies in the region are 24.4 per cent above pre-COVID levels (February 2020) and are 8 per cent higher than levels recorded in August 2019.

Online job advertising time series (five years to August 2020)



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, August 2020. Data for North West Tasmania is a three-month moving average, and data for Tasmania is seasonally adjusted; both have been indexed to August 2015.

Top 10 advertised occupations (August 2020)

ANZSCO Occupation	
Registered Nurses	Truck Drivers
General Clerks	Other Miscellaneous Labourers
Sales Assistants (General)	Judicial and Other Legal Professionals
Metal Fitters and Machinists	Aged and Disabled Carers
Motor Mechanics	Internal Medicine Specialists

Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, August 2020. Raw data are used for analysis.

A note on comparing data

It is important to note that unemployment statistics collected as part of the Labour Force Survey can vary considerably from income support statistics and jobactive caseload numbers.

A person is considered employed by the ABS if they are aged 15 years and over and work for an hour or more during the Labour Force Survey reference week. The ABS also classify someone as employed if they have taken any kind of leave or were paid for some or all of the previous four weeks (including via the JobKeeper payment). In addition, employees who were away from their jobs for less than four weeks without pay but still believed they had a job (i.e. were temporarily stood down) would also be classified as employed.

A person is considered unemployed by the ABS if they are not employed, have actively looked for work at some time in the last four weeks and are currently available for work.