



# *Dorset* CONNECT

*An integrated analysis of job seekers, the labour market and economic profile of Dorset Local Government Area for Break O'Day Employment Connect*



Fae Robinson  
Futures



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

INTRODUCTION	4	Page   2
OVERVIEW	5	
1. <i>DORSET</i> – PLACE AND PEOPLE	6	
2. <i>DORSET</i> – EMPLOYERS AND JOB SEEKERS	11	
3. <i>DORSET</i> – BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT	16	
4. <i>DORSET</i> – SKILLS AND TRAINING	20	
5. DESIGNING <i>DORSET</i> CONNECT	26	
APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEWEES	31	
APPENDIX 2 – FINDINGS WORKSHOP PRESENTATION SLIDES	33	
APPENDIX 3 – DATA SOURCES AND GLOSSARY	76	
APPENDIX 4 – ENDNOTES	77	

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

Figure 1: Dorset location	6	Page   3
Figure 2: Population change by age cohort – Dorset 2016- 2021	7	
Figure 3: Population change by location – Dorset 2016- 2021	8	
Figure 4: Proportion of residents born overseas 2021	8	
Figure 5: Percentage of workforce by industry – Dorset 2021	11	
Figure 6: Change in employment by industry – Dorset 2016-2021	12	
Figure 7: Unemployment rate – Dorset 2011-2022	13	
Figure 8: Age profile – population and local workers – Dorset 2021	14	
Figure 9: Resident workers employed outside Dorset – 2021	15	
Figure 10: Weekly housing rental payment – 2021	17	
Figure 11: Method of travel to work 2021	18	
Figure 12: Worker qualifications in top seven industries 2021	20	
Figure 13: Local workers living outside Dorset 2021	21	
Figure 14: Top four fields of education – Scottsdale-Bridport 2017-2021	22	
Figure 15: VET in schools enrolments – Scottsdale-Bridport 2017-2021	23	
Figure 16: Vocational education and training activity 2017-2021	23	
Figure 17: Apprentices and trainees in training – Scottsdale-Bridport 2018-2022	24	
Figure 18: Apprenticeships and traineeships – Scottsdale-Bridport 2017-2021	25	
Figure 19: <i>Dorset</i> CONNECT	27	

## LIST OF TABLES

---

Table 1: Employing and non-employing businesses by industry – Dorset 2021	13
Table 2: Median house price increases – Dorset 2017-2022	16



## INTRODUCTION

---

Page | 4

In early 2022, Break O'Day Employment Connect (BODEC) invited proposals for the provision of two reports for the Dorset Local Government Area (LGA). The *Consultant's Brief: Job Seeker Analysis* sought a picture of job seekers in Dorset, the challenges they face and understanding of how they secure employment. The *Consultant's Brief: Labour Market Analysis and Economic Profile* required understanding of the local economy, as well as the labour requirements and challenges faced by employers and industries in Dorset.

BODEC has been operating since September 2020 and is now part of the Tasmanian Government's network of Jobs Hubs. It was initially funded through the Tasmanian Employment Partnership with a focus on securing sustainable and quality employment outcomes for employers and job seekers in the Break O'Day LGA. BODEC has been transitioning to a Jobs Hub by expanding its operations south to Bicheno/Coles Bay and west to the Dorset LGA.

Fae Robinson Futures and Stenning & Associates were appointed in September 2022 to produce an integrated report encompassing both of the Consultant's Briefs. Extensive quantitative desktop research was undertaken by Stenning & Associates led by Nick McShane, and almost 50 interviews were undertaken by Fae Robinson with a cross-section of people across Dorset to understand the local lived experience and qualitative elements affecting job seekers and the labour market.

A branding workshop, with a range of Dorset participants, also deepened understanding of the needs and positioning of a local jobs hub.

In November 2022, Fae Robinson and Nick McShane facilitated a 'Findings Workshop' with the BODEC Board, providing an overview of the work to date, the direction of our thinking and to seek feedback from them. This report incorporates the results of the Findings Workshop (the slides for which are available as a companion document to this report), and integrates the job seeker and labour market analysis, and economic profile of Dorset in a compelling narrative of the current situation and opportunities for a responsive and differentiated service model called *Dorset CONNECT*.

**Fae Robinson and Nick McShane**

January 2023

## OVERVIEW

---

Dorset is a place of opportunity. Its rich productive farmland, extensive forests, rugged landscapes and northern coastline endows its communities with jobs, industries, experiences and lifestyles. Unemployment is low and productivity is high. There is strong growth in the over 70s population and some growth in the working age population.

While many people are thriving, there are families doing it tough. There is evidence of intergenerational disadvantage and even poverty, placing Dorset in the highest third of Tasmania's LGAs on the index of social disadvantage. There have also been mental health challenges experienced across the population but locals have come together to respond to these and other local challenges.

Jobs in Dorset are plentiful, and job seekers scarce. Employers need staff across almost every sector – agriculture, hospitality, tourism, personal, aged and child care among them. They are particularly looking for job-ready staff with commitment and motivation and use a wide variety of recruitment options to find them. The favourite is word of mouth, seeking validation from other locals that a new recruit will bring the right attitude to the job. They are happy to train them if they show these 'soft' skills.

Job seekers are also expecting more of employers – they want flexible hours of work, and need appropriate accommodation and childcare. The scarcity of job seekers and the ageing of the workforce, particularly in agriculture, is encouraging many employers to find inventive solutions, although some traditionalists remain.

There are some deep systemic barriers that impact the employment ecosystem in Dorset. Housing is scarce and expensive, childcare is limited, and having a licence and owning a car is almost essential for getting to work. Agriculture, the biggest employer, is struggling with its image among job seekers. Employers find it hard to get the skills and expertise they need locally – the Dorset workforce is significantly less qualified compared to the Northern Region and Tasmania as a whole.

Many job opportunities in Dorset suit vocational education and training (VET) and the Dorset Trade Training Centre supports a strong vocational learning program, but enrolments in VET in Schools, and the wider VET training system have been declining. There is also some misalignment between the training on offer and industry needs, and dissatisfaction among employers that formal training is disconnected from industry realities. The expectations of employers and aspirations of job seekers also need to be better aligned.

Based on the research and analysis in this report, we recommend a bespoke model, perhaps known as *Dorset CONNECT* (final title to be determined), a fit-for-purpose service with local skilled, experienced staff working with partners, sustained by strong leadership, local knowledge and relationships, and committed local governance. The proposed model focuses on job design and redesign, job readiness and commitment, and community engagement and support, and has the potential to make a significant contribution to more flourishing industries and thriving communities.

## 1. *DORSET* – PLACE AND PEOPLE

---

### Key Themes

- Geographic good fortune
- Population growth and change
- Active community connections
- A tale of two halves

### Geographic good fortune

Dorset LGA lies on the north-east corner of Tasmania; its coastal location and landscape support thriving agriculture, some forestry and fishing, and tourism.



Figure 1: Dorset location

Dorset's population is spread across two larger towns, Scottsdale and Bridport, and six smaller townships – Ringarooma, Branxholm, Winnaleah, Legerwood, Derby, and Gladstone.

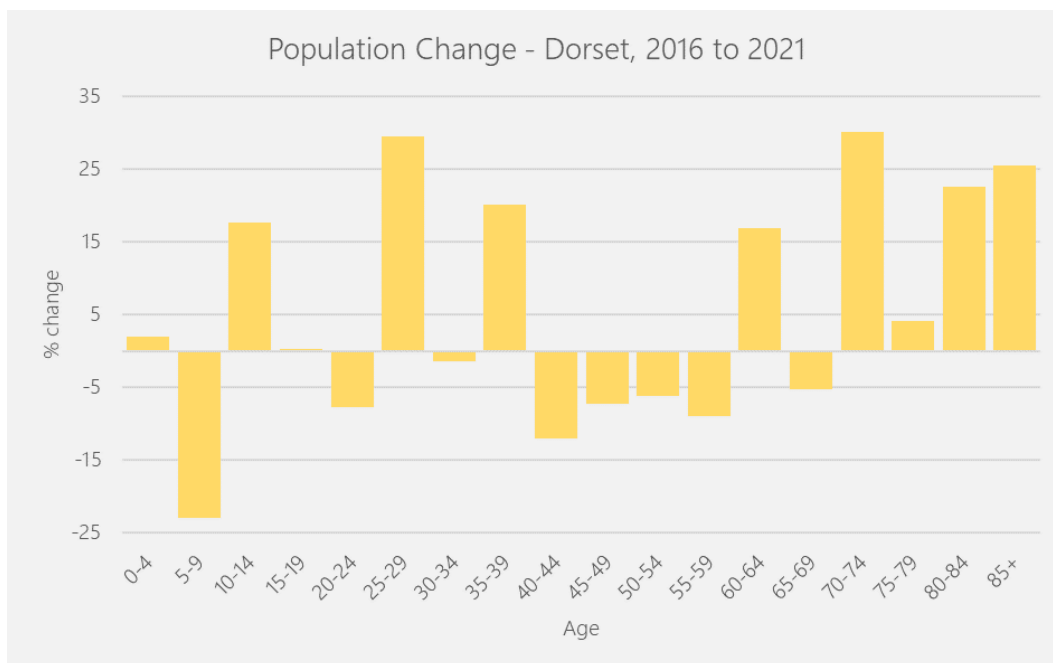
Each town has its own focus:

- Scottsdale is the main service centre for Dorset.
- Bridport is a holiday centre with fishing activity and Flinders Island transport services.
- Derby has become the access hub to the network of mountain bike trails known as Blue Derby. Nearby Branxholm, with fabrication and forestry services, and Winnaleah, provide some accommodation for the Blue Derby workforce.

- Ringarooma and Legerwood have a rich agricultural heritage and continue to support agriculture in Dorset.
- Gladstone is Tasmania’s most north-easterly township with a history of mining and is as close to St Helens as it is to Scottsdale.

## Population growth and change

Dorset’s population increased by three per cent to 6832 between 2016 and 2021, characterised by rapid growth in the over 70s population and a 23 per cent increase in the number of working age people. However, the changes in working age population weren’t uniform – the 25-29, 35-39 and 60-64 age groups increased significantly, while the other working age groups were down, although to a lesser extent.



**Figure 2: Population change by age cohort – Dorset 2016- 2021<sup>1</sup>**

The rapid growth in the over 70s population has been influenced by retired and semi-retired people buying relatively cheaper property and moving into Dorset in recent years, as well as ageing of the longer-term resident population.

Population growth has occurred outside the main towns perhaps for lifestyle choice or cheaper real estate. Locations with the largest increases are near Scottsdale – South Springfield (+20%), Springfield and North Scottsdale (both +19%) and Nabowla (+17%).

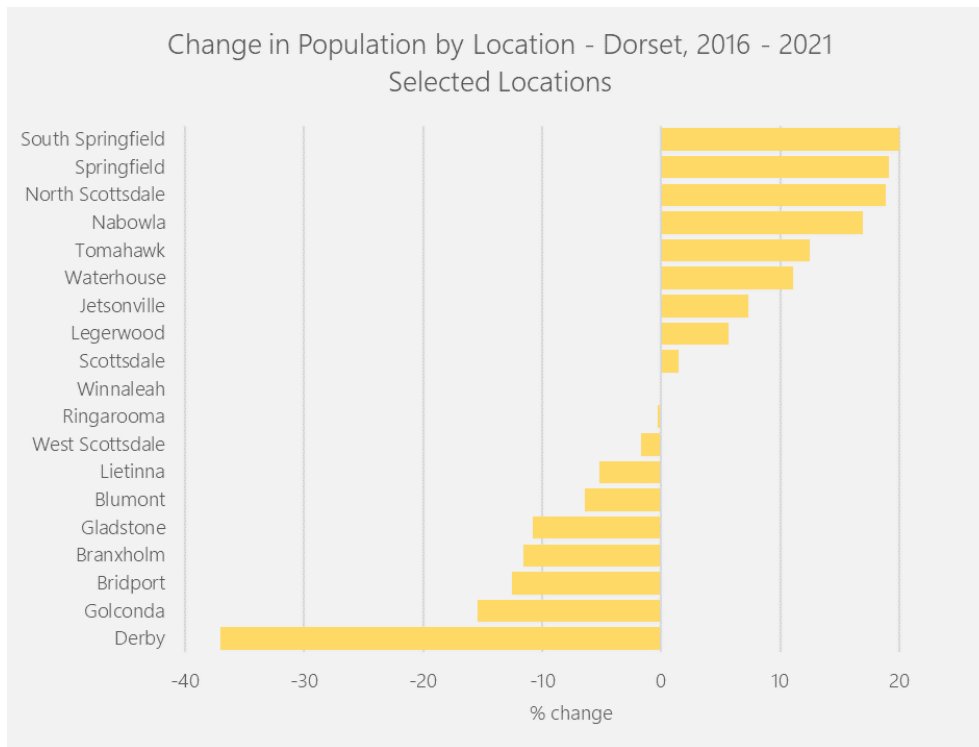


Figure 3: Population change by location – Dorset 2016- 2021<sup>2</sup>

Centres where there is reported population decline may be influenced in part by residents selling up and moving further out to capitalise on significant increases to property prices, for example, Derby, where property prices increased by 241 per cent between 2017 and 2022, and feeder towns of Branxholm (up 157%) and Winnaleah. Locals report that as many as 250 properties have been converted to short stay accommodation, with official figures reporting 117 standalone short term rental accommodation properties in September 2021.

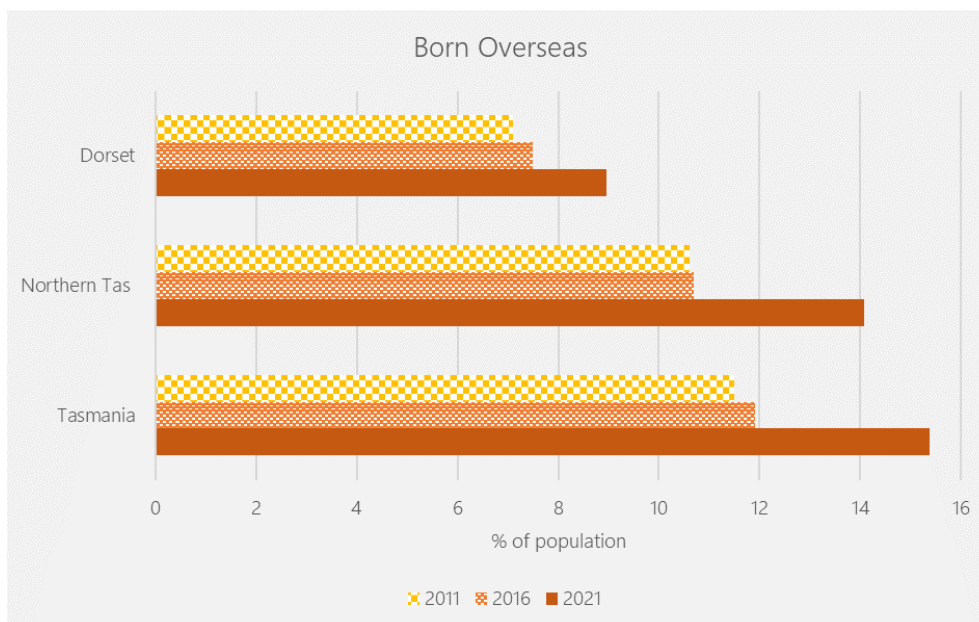


Figure 4: Proportion of residents born overseas 2021<sup>3</sup>



Overseas-born migrants to Dorset made up nine per cent of the population in 2021, a two per cent increase from 2011. Ten per cent of migrants arrived between 2016 and 2021. This relatively small number of overseas migrants plays an important role in business and industry across Dorset – skilled workers from the Philippines work in meat processing, Nepalese work in aged care and hospitality, and Pakistanis have worked in agriculture, although these numbers declined recently due to Visa rule changes. These migrant workers offer skills needed by Dorset employers, and are respected for their generally strong work ethic.

### Active community connections

Many of the relationships and connections across the Dorset community are strong. People are motivated to support their community in different ways, for example, through committed active membership of the Dorset Suicide Prevention Network; planning, facilitating and supporting thriving social activities at the Ringarooma Community Hub; and planning and delivering the annual Scallop Fiesta in Bridport.

The North East Chamber of Commerce is active across the municipality. It has 53 members, holds monthly meetings, and provides a voice for, and promotes local businesses.

Schools act as important focal points for community – the district high school was described as ‘the hub of the Winnaleah community’ and supports local families; in turn, the community supports the local schools.

### A tale of two halves

Dorset was described as ‘a tale of two halves’, with wealth in agriculture on the one hand, and families with genuine struggles on the other. Farming families and businesses that support agriculture are viewed as relatively prosperous, while there is evidence of disadvantage and even poverty. Geography is a key influence in this dichotomy.

Dorset’s rich, natural landscapes makes it a stronghold for agriculture – particularly dairy and beef farming, as well as vegetable growing. Agriculture supports the largest number of businesses and dominates employment. Many are still family run farms, although as holdings have increased, the number of families actively farming has diminished. A handful of corporates have holdings.

The proximity of Launceston, particularly to Scottsdale and Bridport, also plays a part in the socio-economic experience of Dorset by drawing particularly young people away for Years 11 & 12 and higher education; many of them never return. And the tyranny of isolation is keenly felt by residents further east who experience greater barriers to transport, health and wellbeing, and digital services.

These geographic, and other factors like increased costs of housing and fuel, contribute to Dorset’s ranking as the 10<sup>th</sup> most disadvantaged council area of the 29 in Tasmania on the ABS Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (SEIFA), and third most disadvantaged of the eight councils in Northern Tasmania. The Dorset Community House

describes a growing 'inequality gap' and a 'huge need in our remote areas'; the Community House has established a satellite house in Gladstone to provide much needed services.

Page | 10

Recent history, with the closure of Auspine, French Pine and Simplot factories and the loss of jobs, still casts a shadow on some families and communities. These closures and associated job losses shattered well established work patterns and employment expectations. They changed the employment trajectory for many young people in Dorset, where families enjoyed employment down the generations in forestry and manufacturing and had expectations that each generation would follow the last.

A recent youth needs analysis undertaken by the Dorset Community House found that in 28 per cent of households with couples and children neither adult was working, meaning many young people don't have a clear line of sight to what it means to work. This early and intergenerational experience may limit understanding and aspiration for work and may be impacting Dorset's lower participation rate considered in more detail below.

Two reports, a *Background Paper* and a *Youth Needs Analysis*, have been produced for the Dorset Community House which shine a light on the current experience of young people in Dorset. There are opportunities to connect with this important local youth-based project and to work in partnership with Community House.

## 2. *DORSET* – EMPLOYERS AND JOB SEEKERS

### Key Themes

- Employers are desperate
- Recruitment is a two-way street
- Job seekers are scarce
- Expectations are changing

### Employers are desperate

Across Dorset, employers are desperate for workers – people to milk cows, to fix bikes and to drive buses, to make coffees and serve beers, to harvest crops and process timber, to work in childcare, aged care and personal care, and more. Employers acknowledged they're overwhelmed with work and struggling for staff. There is no shortage of jobs, with a prominent local estimating there are 100-150 jobs available in Dorset.

In 2021, there were 2869 people in the Dorset workforce, an increase of 12 per cent from 2016. Seven industries account for over seven in ten jobs and a quarter of jobs are in agriculture.

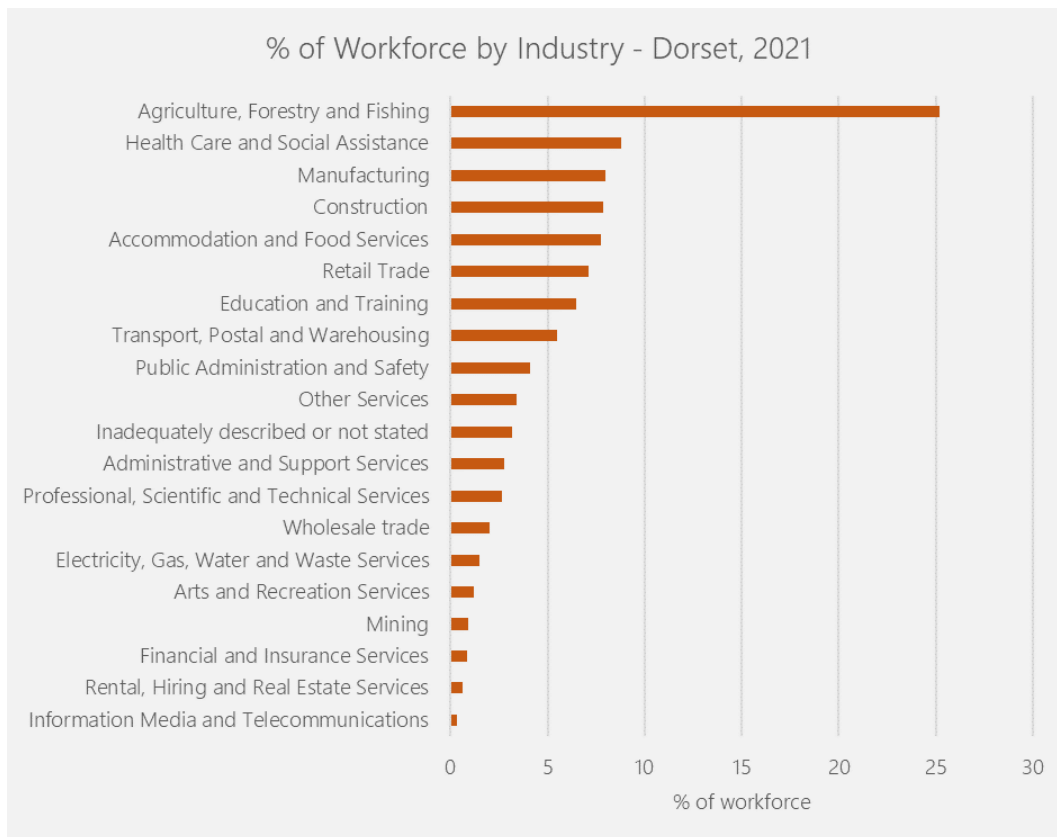


Figure 5: Percentage of workforce by industry – Dorset 2021<sup>4</sup>

About 60 per cent of workers are employed full time, with almost 40 per cent in both agriculture, forestry and fishing, and construction, working more than 40 hours per week – perhaps because they are owner operators. Incomes for workers in construction, manufacturing, and education and training are higher than in other sectors, while in accommodation and food, and retail, workers tend to be lower paid. Dorset workers tend to be paid slightly less overall than workers in Northern Tasmania.

The top five employment growth industries between 2016 and 2021 were financial and insurance services (up 60%), mining (up 53%), construction (up 49%), electricity, gas, water and waste services (up 39%) and education and training (up 28%). The biggest declines were in rental, hiring and real estate services (down 32%), arts and recreation services (down 24%) and retail trade (down 17%). COVID adversely affected tourism and hospitality with employment down 21 per cent from pre-COVID levels (2018/19).

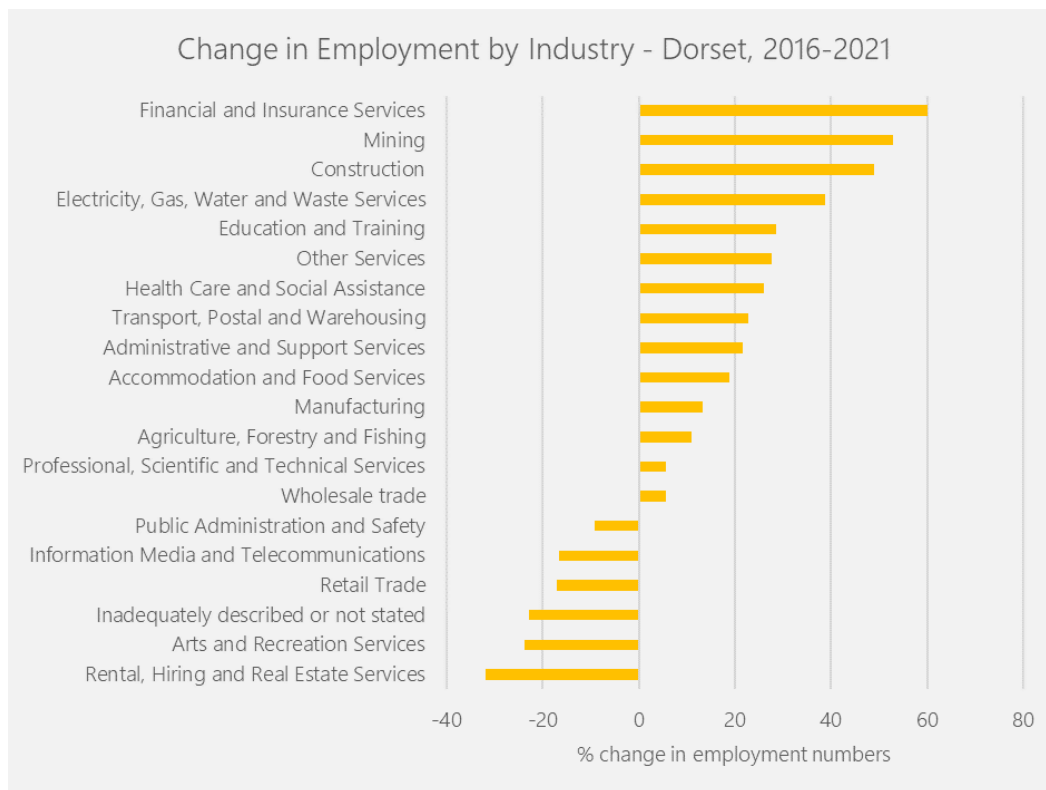


Figure 6: Change in employment by industry – Dorset 2016-2021<sup>5</sup>

### Recruitment is a two-way street

Dorset is SME central – of the 870 businesses in Dorset in 2021, small to medium sized businesses dominate. Three hundred and fifty (350) of these SMEs are in agriculture, forestry and fishing and 97 per cent of them don't employ anybody, or employ less than 20 staff. Agriculture, forestry and fishing also dominates employment, with more than a quarter of the Dorset workforce employed in this sector in 2021, mostly in agriculture.

Employing and Non-Employing Businesses by Industry - Dorset, 2021	Non-Employing (%)	1 to 19 Employees (%)	20 to 199 Employees (%)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	61	36	3
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	94	6	0
Construction	46	54	0
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	40	54	6
Accommodation and Food Services	46	54	0
Retail Trade	31	69	0

Table 1: Employing and non-employing businesses by industry – Dorset 2021<sup>6</sup>

Employers use a wide range of media to recruit staff but far-and-away prefer word of mouth (WOM) which provides them with direct local intelligence about a prospective employee. If WOM doesn't prove successful, they use online options including Jora (a search engine specifically for jobs), Seek, Gumtree and Facebook; newspapers (*North Eastern Advertiser, The Examiner*); recruitment agencies; and posters on windows and noticeboards. Some found the more expensive options unaffordable.

However, employers particularly love people taking the initiative – walking through the door and making the effort to demonstrate they are keen to be considered for employment. It allows employers to assess presentation, communication and other basic skills. They expressed enthusiasm for employing locals, and particularly want to employ young people as their workforce ages: 'I'd love young people to show interest – this is a long-term career'. Employers expressed frustration that applications, interviews and then job offers don't always result in employment of locals or young people – applicants are all too frequently not good at responding even when a formal offer of employment is made.

### Job seekers are scarce

Dorset's unemployment rate has declined significantly since 2014; in 2022 it stood at 4.8 per cent or 154 job seekers. This is the same rate as for Tasmania as a whole and slightly higher than Northern Tasmania.

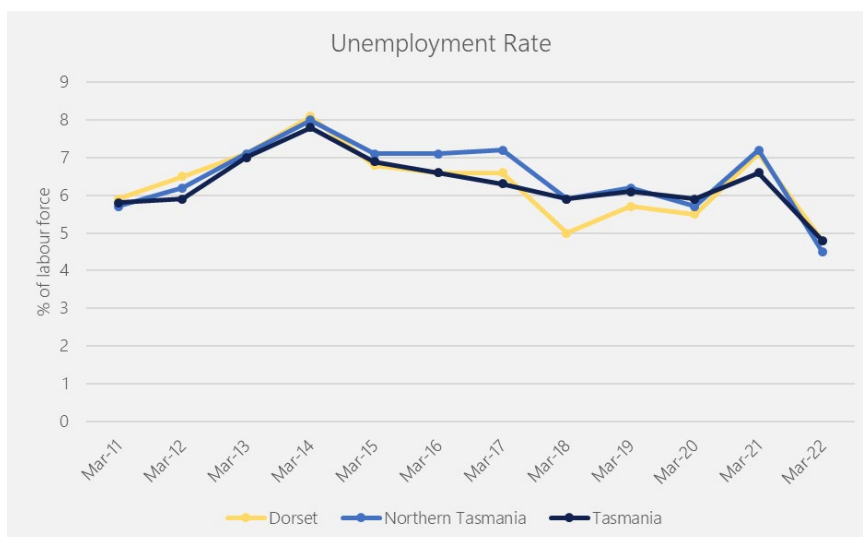
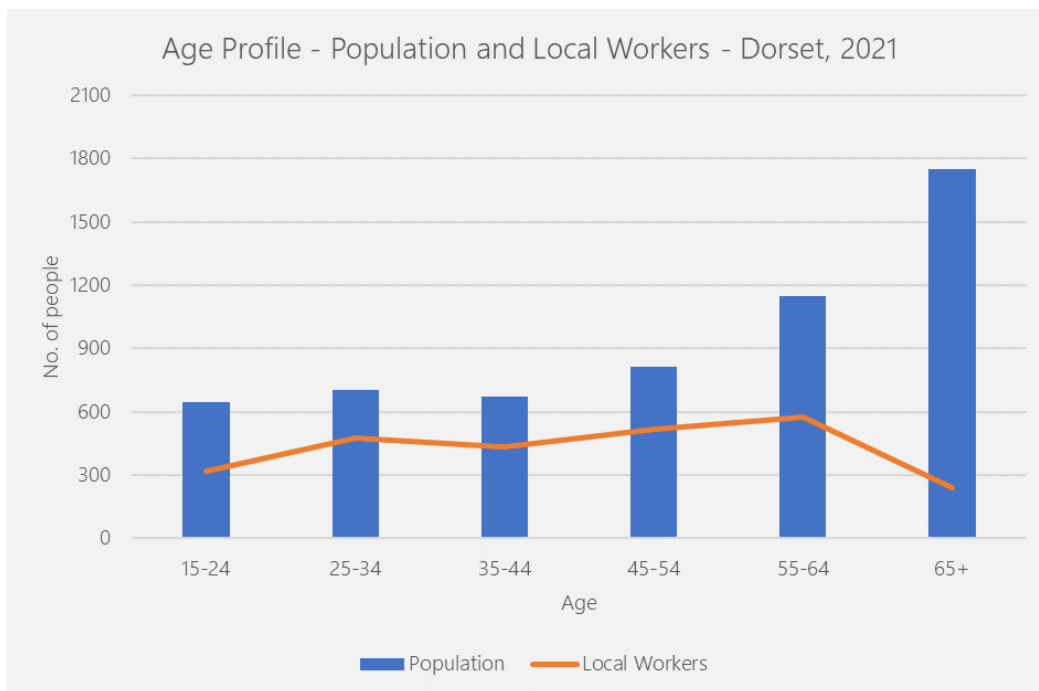


Figure 7: Unemployment rate – Dorset 2011-2022<sup>7</sup>

In line with this fall in unemployment, more people in Dorset are participating in work (up 2% between 2016 and 2021). The overall participation rate in 2021 was 53 per cent, below both Tasmania (58%) and Northern Tasmania (57%). Those not in the labour force decreased by three points to 39 per cent over the same five year period.

Dorset’s lower participation rate may in part reflect the age profile of its residents, where more than a quarter of the population is aged over 65. The over 65s are the largest population group aged 15 years and over and their disengagement from the labour force is increasing – rising by three per cent between 2016 and 2021. At the same time, those aged 15-64 not in the labour force decreased by nine per cent. The participation rate may also be influenced by the number of households with one or none of the adults working.



**Figure 8: Age profile – population and local workers – Dorset 2021<sup>8</sup>**

The recruitment market was reported as ‘really tough since COVID.’ The situation was compounded during COVID by the lack of a seasonal labour force usually provided by international workers (backpackers). Some seasonal labour is provided by local women who are available to work school hours only. Employers still report a tight labour market with an absence of young people actively seeking work.

Almost one quarter (22%) of workers resident in Dorset travel outside the municipality for work, further exacerbating the availability of workers to fill jobs within Dorset. More than 300 workers travel outside to work in just four categories of jobs. Some are travelling to jobs not readily available in Dorset, such as manufacturing jobs in and around George Town, or some professional jobs in Launceston. However, some are travelling to jobs for which there is ample availability in Dorset, including health care and social assistance, construction, and agriculture, forestry and fishing.

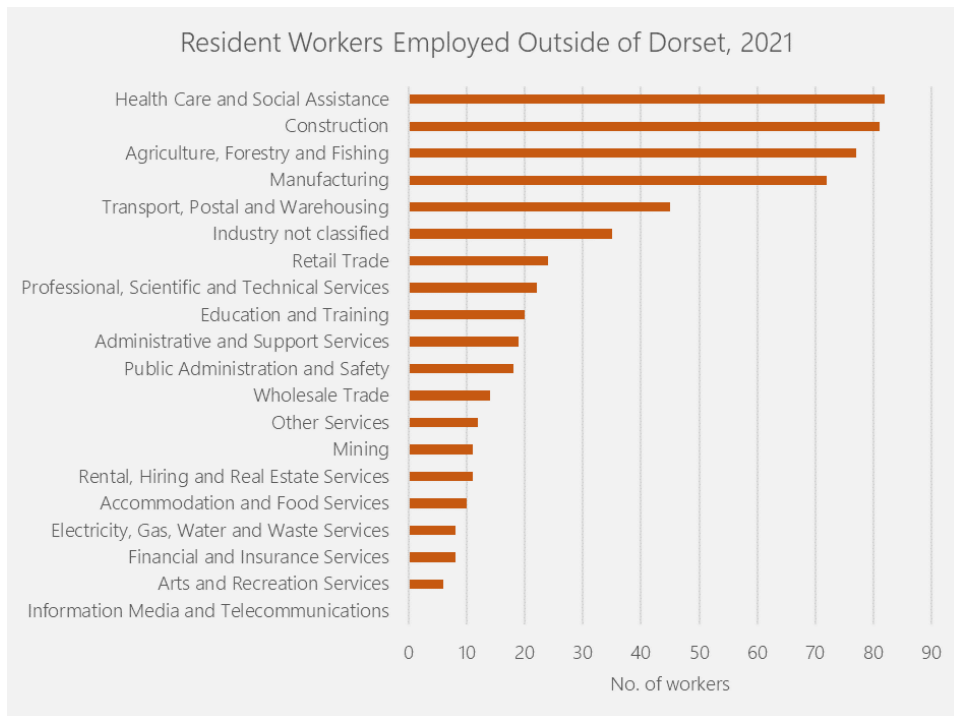


Figure 9: Resident workers employed outside Dorset – 2021<sup>9</sup>

### Expectations are changing

With a scarcity of job seekers and high demand for labour, job seekers are challenging accepted workplace norms and seeking to balance lifestyle and work. Expectations of the work environment are very different for young people – employers are finding many don't want to work weekends, are balancing childcare commitments, or seeking flexible working arrangements. This poses challenges for seven-day-a-week industries like dairy farming, vegetable growing, hospitality and tourism.

Job seekers are looking for, but perhaps not seeing, opportunities for a career in the types of jobs and industries operating in Dorset. Employers in agriculture lamented the lack of understanding of work on farms: 'they don't see how advanced farm work is, the range of skills required', while in hospitality, there was lack of recognition of career prospects: 'hospitality can be a career where you earn good money'. Many see jobs with unsociable hours and entry level jobs as unattractive, and don't appreciate that 'where you start is not where you end up'. Expectations are high.

Some employers are responding to these changed expectations with more flexible working arrangements – some hospitality operators are offering longer shifts to compensate for the cost of transport and the dairy industry is looking to change its milking regimes, with some moving to milking once a day, or a combination of once and twice-a-day. Farmers are trying to be creative and accommodating – one reported that 'as soon as you offer the hours they want they'll stay...' 'we succeed because we care about what's going on in their lives'. Employers are also offering incentives. Some, however, were reported as more traditional and 'not responsive to a changing world', and while good at business, may not be formally trained in the art of managing people.

### 3. *DORSET* – BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

#### Key Themes

- Housing is at a premium
- Transport is a challenge
- Demand for childcare outstrips demand
- Perceptions of agriculture
- Local worker readiness and experience
- Increased competence in literacy and numeracy needed

#### Housing is at a premium

Although the number of homes and units has increased over the last five years and is ahead of the increase in the population – homes increased by six per cent and units by 18 per cent – homes to rent or buy in Dorset are still scarce and often unaffordable. The cost and availability of housing is seen as a major barrier to growing the population and filling jobs – employers describe losing prospective employees due to their inability to secure accommodation. A number of employers either provide accommodation on site or rent accommodation in nearby towns to ensure access to labour, and secure commitment from their employees. One employer is considering buying land to develop for employee accommodation.

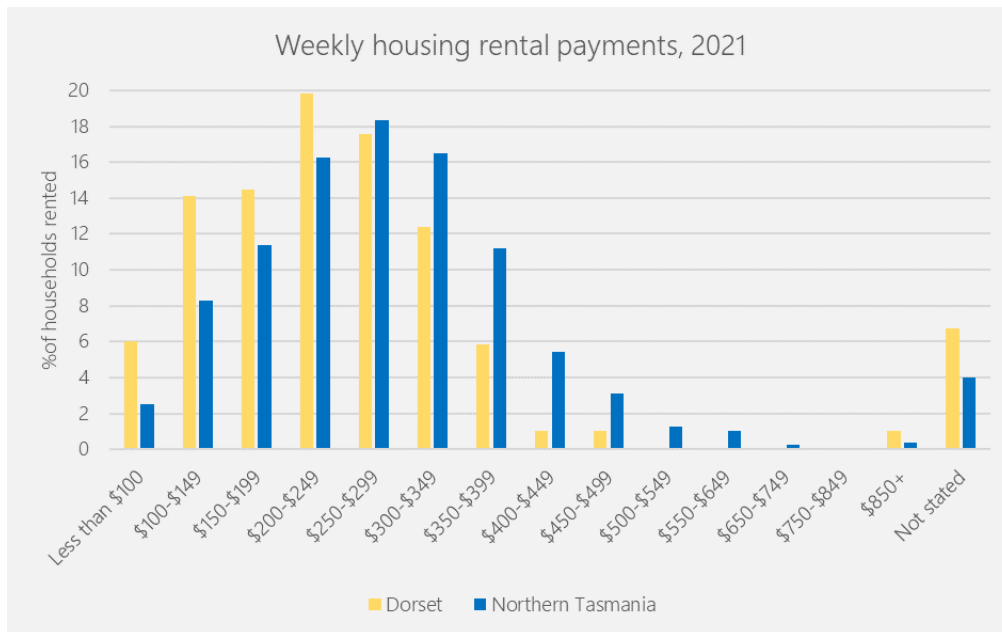
In the last five years Dorset has seen significant increases in median house prices.

Location	2017	2022	Change
Branxholm	\$205,000	\$527,500	+157%
Bridport	\$279,000	\$663,500	+138%
Derby	\$250,000	\$851,500	+241%
Ringarooma	\$125,000	\$280,000	+124%
Scottsdale	\$215,000	\$424,500	+97%

Table 2: Median house price increases – Dorset 2017-2022<sup>10</sup>

Figure 9 shows that Dorset residents enjoyed access to lower cost rentals compared to Northern Tasmania. This is changing. The trend to much higher rental prices is evident, with median weekly house rental prices increasing significantly in Bridport (38%) and Scottsdale (36%), and median unit prices increasing 47 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.<sup>11</sup>





**Figure 10: Weekly housing rental payment – 2021<sup>12</sup>**

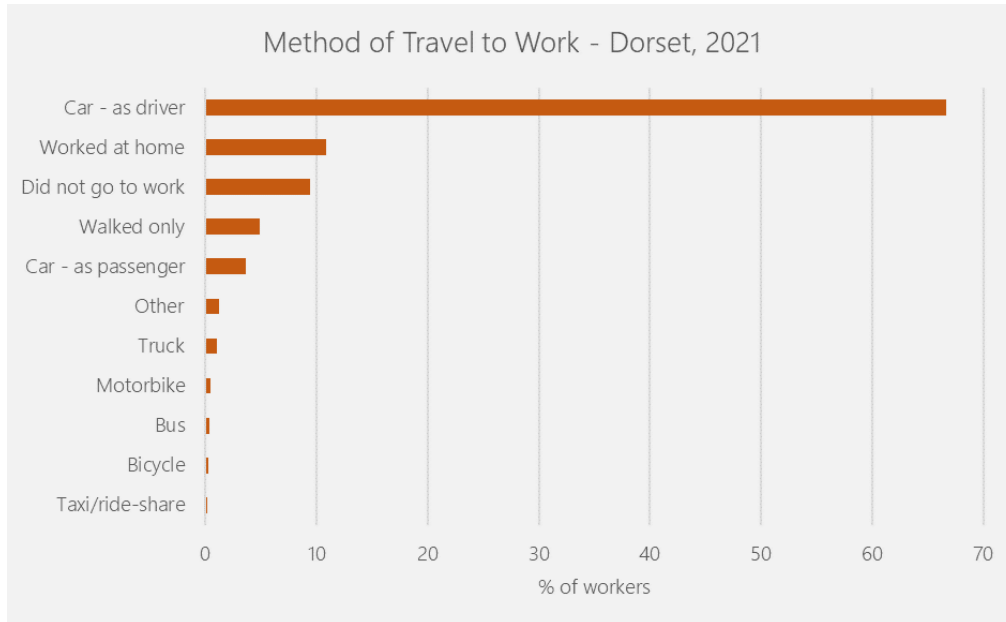
While the small number of rentals in other Dorset localities means data should be treated with caution, local consultations confirm that other towns across Dorset are also experiencing significant rises in rental prices. Overall, in 2021 over two thirds of renters paid between \$100 and \$299 per week compared to just over half for Northern Tasmania.

### Transport is a challenge

Transport is a ‘huge issue’ across Dorset – ‘often there are jobs going but people can’t get there’... ‘transport is a huge one in the business we run – not having transport immediately eliminates people from work’... ‘Transport is a big barrier especially for those at Year 10 who don’t want to go on to Years 11 & 12’. There is limited public transport going only as far as Derby, and the taxi service in Scottsdale was recently terminated leaving the small number of workers using the service to get to work with few options. Concern was also expressed that ‘parents won’t support children to pursue TAFE because of the cost of transport’.

Three bus services are operated by Redline – the 775 between Scottsdale and Launceston, 776 Bridport and Launceston, and 777 Derby and Launceston. The 776 only operates on school days and leaves Bridport via Scottsdale for Launceston at 6.45am and returns from Launceston College at 5.45pm. The 777 operates a weekday service from Derby departing 8.30am stopping at most towns; it returns to Derby at 6.45pm – an almost three-hour trip each way.

The bus services do not cater for commuters or rural industry workers so it is unsurprising that most people travel to work by car. But getting a drivers licence can be challenging, time consuming and costly. The L2P learner driver program delivered through the Dorset Community House that assists learner drivers to build up learner hours is currently suspended and there is only one driving school servicing the whole of the LGA – lessons can be unaffordable for some, at \$55 per hour.



**Figure 11: Method of travel to work 2021<sup>13</sup>**

The Dorset Community House has a 12 seater bus and a car available for people in Dorset needing transport to both medical appointments and social engagements who would otherwise be unable to get there. There is a small charge depending on the destination. Requests for transport to job interviews or work-related appointments are only accepted if a vehicle is available and only then at relatively short notice.

### Demand for childcare outstrips supply

There are two childcare centres in Dorset but timely access to childcare is ‘the big one for young mothers’. The Scottsdale Early Learning Centre is a long day care centre with an early learning program and school holiday/vacation care. The centre is located in the grounds of Scottsdale Primary School and is a community based and managed centre operated by Thrive Group Tasmania. It caters for 24 children aged six weeks to primary school age. In Bridport, a family-owned business called Explore Learning Educational Centre caters for 66 children from six weeks to pre-school age.

Parents reported long waiting lists: ‘it took nine months to get my child into day care’, and lengthy travel times detouring to deliver children to centres well beyond their workplace. For example, some workers travel from Derby to Bridport to drop off children before travelling on to Scottsdale for work, more than doubling fuel costs and travel time to more than an hour – Derby to Scottsdale takes less than half an hour. Parents do the same detour at the end of the day. Locals reported there is no after school care, and no family day care available in Dorset.

### Perceptions of agriculture

Farmers acknowledged challenges in attracting people to farming, particularly the dairy industry. Many lamented the perception of agriculture as dirty and an unattractive career

option especially for young people: 'there's a stigma attached to the agricultural world – it's seen as dirty and muddy'... 'we need to change thought patterns'... 'young people don't see it as a long-term career'. Many expressed concern about their ageing workforce with many workers in their 50s and 60s, 'the trouble with us is we're all getting older'.

Others discussed ways in which technology was making the work easier: 'it's not that dirty a job – you need to be pretty highly skilled' and described the range of skills a career in agriculture both needed and offered – milk harvesting, animal husbandry, pasture management, operation of plant machinery among them.

Some wanted more action from schools: 'there's a disconnection between agriculture and the school system', but the industry itself recognised the need to 'do a better job engaging school children'. The dairy industry has programs to increase student awareness and interest in a career in dairy including Cows Create Careers, exposure to the industry through Women in Agriculture, and local school tours of dairy farms. Scottsdale High School offers Certificate II in Agriculture to students in Years 11 & 12.

### Local worker readiness and experience

Many employers are happy to employ locals but find it hard to get the skills and expertise they need locally. In hospitality, employers reported locals falling short on levels of service and experience that meet national and international customer expectations: 'it's hard to get the right calibre of staff'... 'there are problems with quality and standards'... 'my challenge is to find staff who can do the job'.

Some employers expressed concern about the work readiness of applicants, particularly those who have never experienced work: 'It's hard for people to have a work ethic if they've never had a job'... 'I'm happy to employ young people but I can't parent them'.

It was also observed that some local workers lacked confidence, describing some cases as 'self-defeating, coming into jobs to fail' and 'it's hard to get young girls with confidence'. Overall, proficiency in 'soft' skills was the threshold for many employers, for example, motivation, flexibility, communication, attitude, commitment, problem-solving, time management, teamwork, and willingness to learn: 'soft skills are the challenge – we can teach the hard skills'... 'it's about values and soft skills – who they are and what they've done'... 'right attitude and motivation are more important than skills – we can train them'.

### Increased competence in literacy and numeracy needed

As the use of technology increases across industries and occupations, the level of competency needed in literacy and numeracy also increases. There is a correlation between low literacy and numeracy and low digital literacy. A 2011 report from the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) found that one in two Tasmanians (and Australians) did not have the required levels of literacy and numeracy needed to thrive.

## 4. DORSET – SKILLS AND TRAINING

### Key Themes

- A dearth of skills and qualifications
- VET course opportunities and selection
- Declining VET enrolments
- Work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships are important
- Nailing training

### A dearth of skills and qualifications

The Dorset workforce is less qualified compared with the Northern Region and Tasmania. Almost half (44%) the workforce has no formal qualifications compared to a third in the Northern Region (35%), and there are fewer bachelor or higher degree holders – just 15 per cent compared to 29 per cent for Tasmania and 25 per cent for Northern Tasmania.

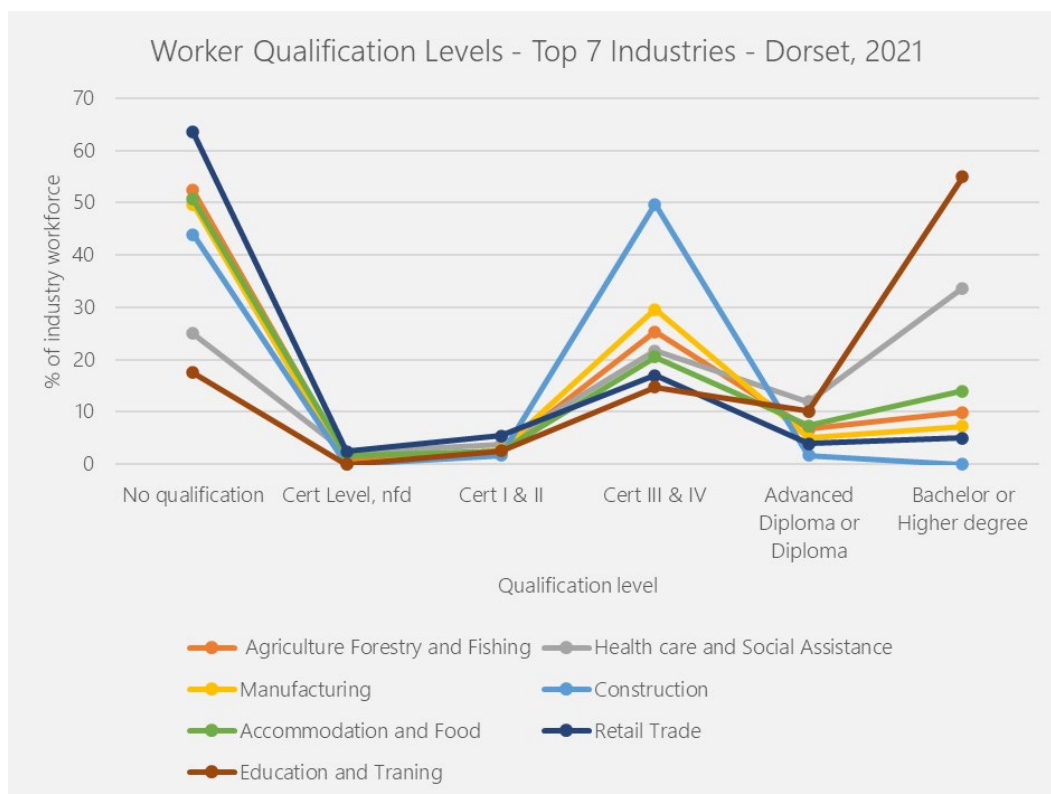


Figure 12: Worker qualifications in top seven industries 2021<sup>14</sup>

Professional skills are in demand and securing skilled staff locally is a challenge: ‘the pool is small to non-existent’... ‘as you go up the technical pyramid, it’s hard to get people’. Many professional and skilled workers choose to live in Launceston (and to some extent elsewhere) and commute to Dorset for work (see Figure 12). These ‘drive in drive out’ (DIDO)

workers provide skills predominantly to agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, public administration and safety, transport, postal and warehousing, health care and social assistance, and education and training industries. Examples include Dorset Council executives, skilled workers at Scottsdale Pork who commute from Devonport staying two nights to complete 32 hours, barge captains working at Bass Strait Freight, and some school staff.

The closure of Auspine, French Pine and Simplot factories were referenced as influencing the current dearth of skills, 'in 2006 Scottsdale felt amazing then there were mass evacuations of skills and professional people'... 'their demise (Auspine, French Pine and Simplot) was catastrophic – it almost wrecked the North East'.

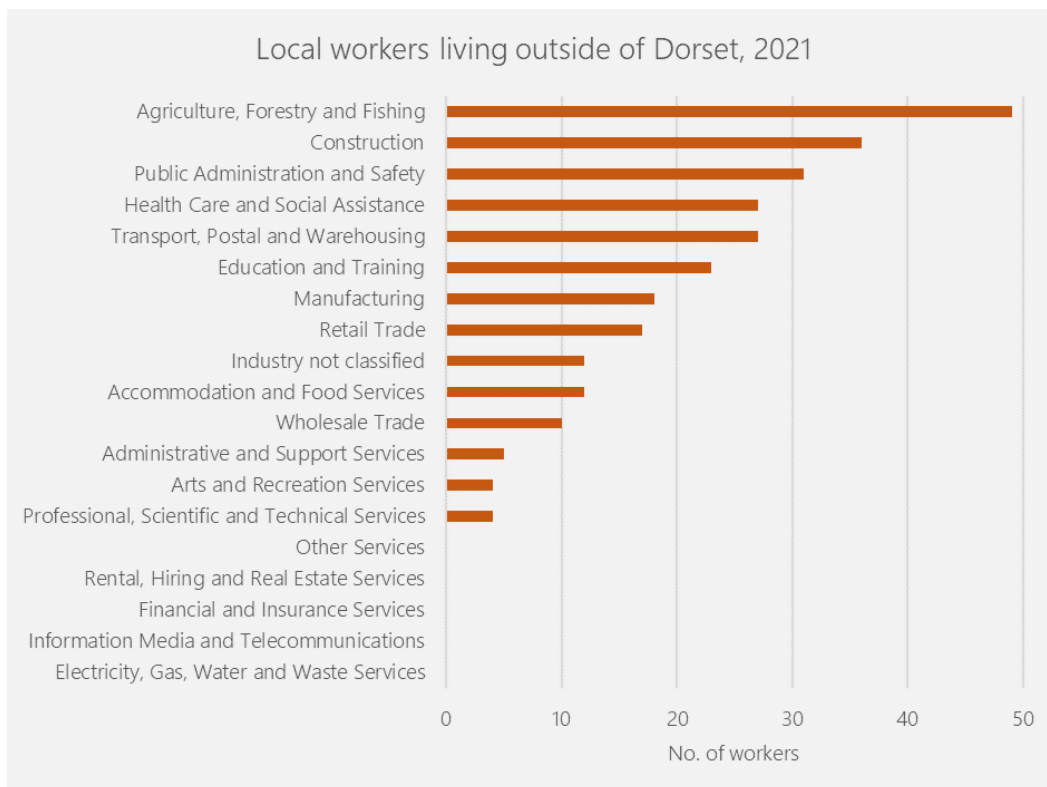


Figure 13: Local workers living outside Dorset 2021<sup>15</sup>

The proximity of Scottsdale and Bridport to Launceston also draws more academically inclined students from Scottsdale High School (SHS) to study at Launceston College where there is a wider choice of academic subjects; some go on to university and some never return home. This includes many of the school's student leaders and has the effect of changing the demographics of SHS and hollowing out the future skilled local workforce.

### VET course opportunities and selection

The Dorset Trade Training Centre (TTC) located at SHS is a key resource for the Dorset community. There are strong connections between Winnaleah District High School, which only goes to Year 10, and SHS, with students from both schools able to undertake VET within Dorset.

Year 11 & 12 students at SHS are offered Certificate II courses in agriculture, engineering and automotive in partnership with TasTAFE. Some Certificate III courses were offered pre-COVID with good employment outcomes reported. Vocational learning is supported by the Department of Education’s Vocational Learning in Tasmanian Schools Framework.

The mix of courses offered each year at the TTC is determined by those selected by students at Year 10 and the availability of TasTAFE teachers. While there is some alignment with local employment opportunities, there was scepticism among some employers about how well aligned the course offerings were to local needs. It was noted that there is a fully equipped commercial kitchen currently not being used for certificated training despite the ongoing demand for skilled hospitality workers; there is also local demand for trained personal care, aged care and child care workers and possible demand for qualifications in pork production.

The TTC provides occasional short course training opportunities to adult learners, including barista and Responsible Serving of Alcohol. Courses for non-school students are limited to three days duration to align with Department of Education policy and are conducted out of school hours.

Overall, between 2017 and 2021 around 70 per cent of VET activity in Scottsdale-Bridport<sup>1</sup> focused on engineering and related technologies; agriculture, environmental and related studies; management and commerce; and society and culture, with engineering and related technologies the most consistently popular choice. Management and commerce training has been steadily declining.

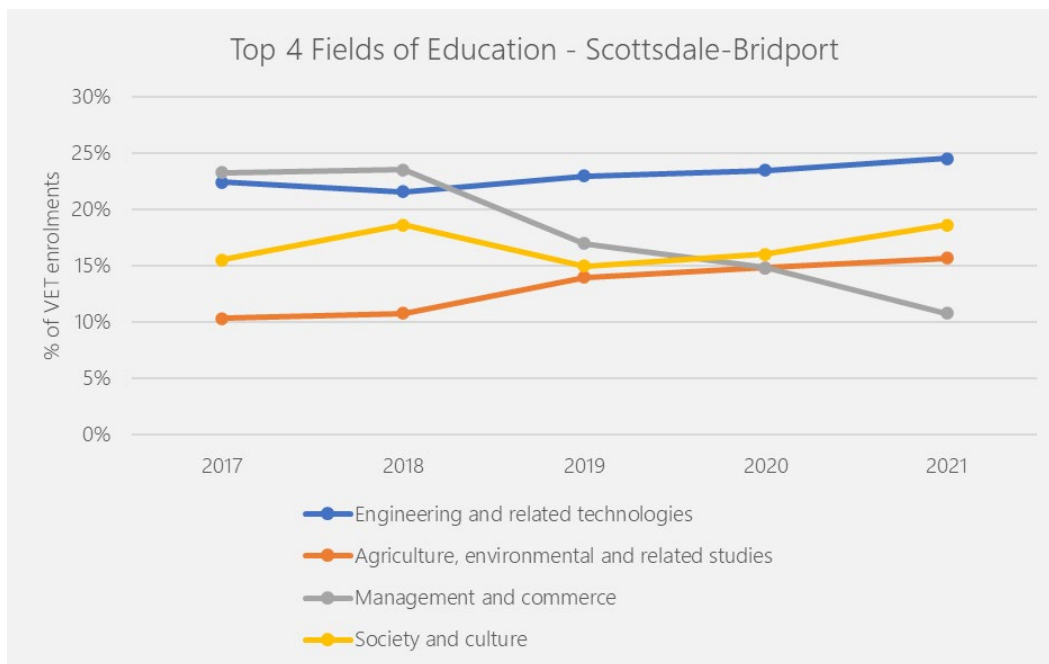


Figure 14: Top four fields of education – Scottsdale-Bridport 2017-2021<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note that the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) reports training data for the ABS Scottsdale – Bridport SA2 geographical area rather than the Dorset LGA area - these areas are closely aligned, but not identical

## Declining VET enrolments

VET in Schools enrolments have declined in the Scottsdale-Bridport area since 2017, despite a 46 per cent increase between 2020 and 2021. Enrolments between 2017 and 2021 comprised hospitality (19%), automotive (17%), agriculture (12%), engineering (11%), construction (7%) and fitness, sport and recreation (6%).<sup>17</sup>

Page | 23

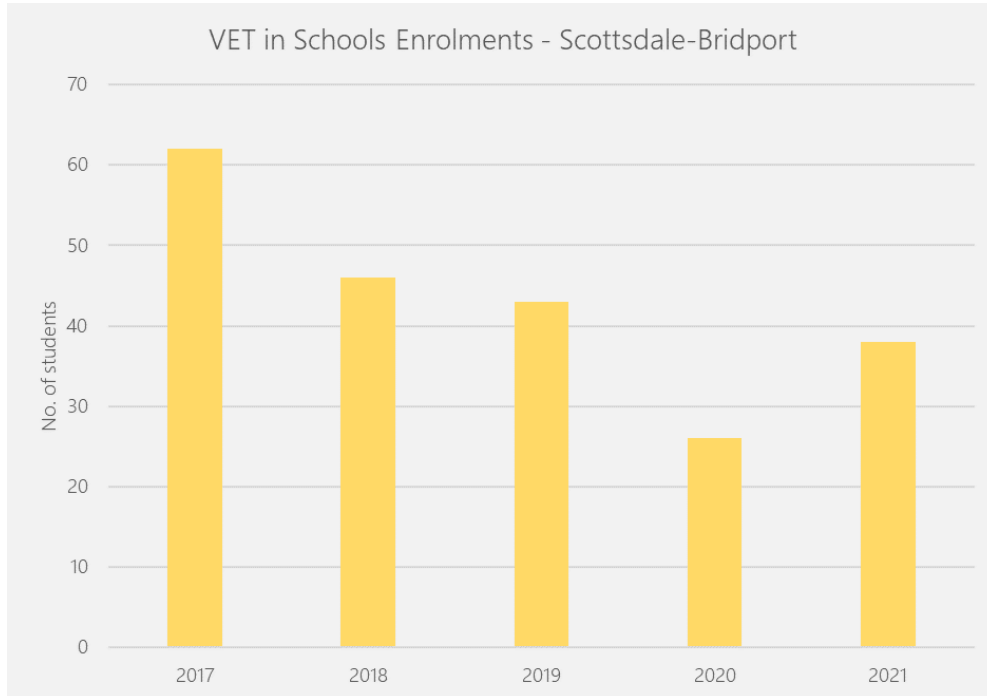


Figure 15: VET in schools enrolments – Scottsdale-Bridport 2017-2021<sup>18</sup>

The proportion of Dorset residents undertaking VET also declined between 2017 and 2020 before rebounding in 2021. Trends are similar to the rest of Tasmania.

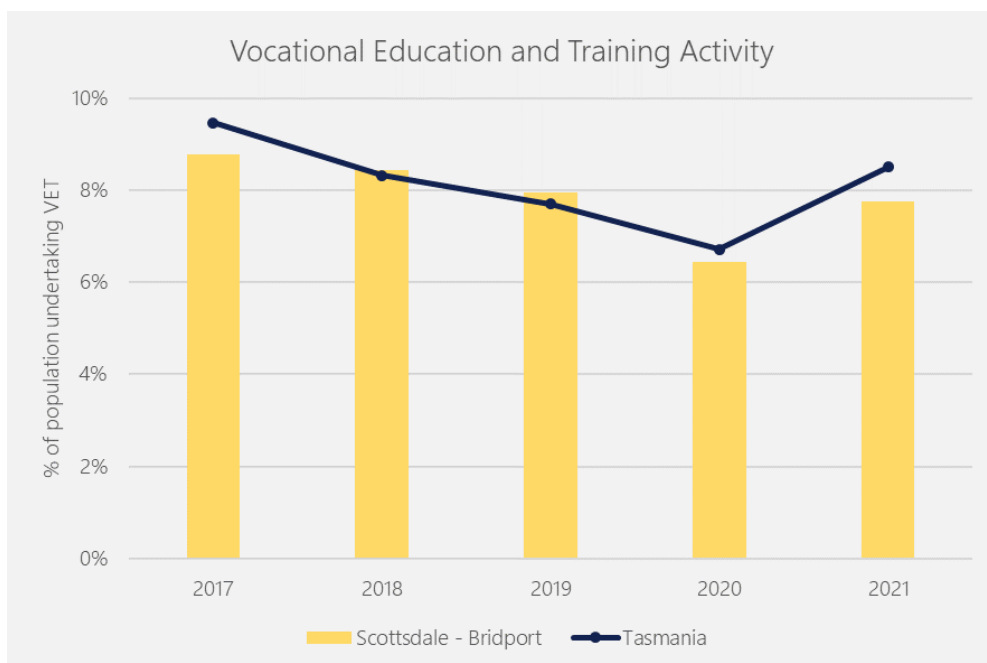


Figure 16: Vocational education and training activity 2017-2021<sup>19</sup>

Not everyone who may wish to undertake vocational education and training is able to do so. Access to, and the cost of, transport, particularly when courses are delivered in Launceston, together with the expense of course costs, militate against some pursuing post-school vocational education. In some cases young people may also lack family support to commit to this form of further education.

### Work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships are important

Schools aim to set their students up for success and work with local employers to provide opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships. The Department of Education has developed the *School and Industry Partnerships: A Framework for Developing the future workforce and creating work ready students* to underpin industry-school engagement. Not all students attending Dorset high schools are cut out to be at school to Year 12 so providing these opportunities is a win for the student and a win for the school.

Some employers are actively engaged with the schools, participating in mock interviews, supporting work experiences, and sharing their knowledge, for example, through Cows Create Careers, Women in Agriculture and on-site school tours: 'schools are genuinely proactive, especially in the trades sector'... 'We're trying to support school-based apprenticeships and work experience'. However, there was some dissatisfaction with the response of students when offered apprenticeship opportunities, and their lack of passion, commitment, and motivation in pursuing these opportunities.

The number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements/ recommencements, completions, and withdrawals and cancellations by Dorset residents has fluctuated over the last five years. TAFE institutes are the dominant provider of training for apprentices and trainees. This form of training is dominated by males – the main employment sectors are construction, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing, and health care and social assistance.

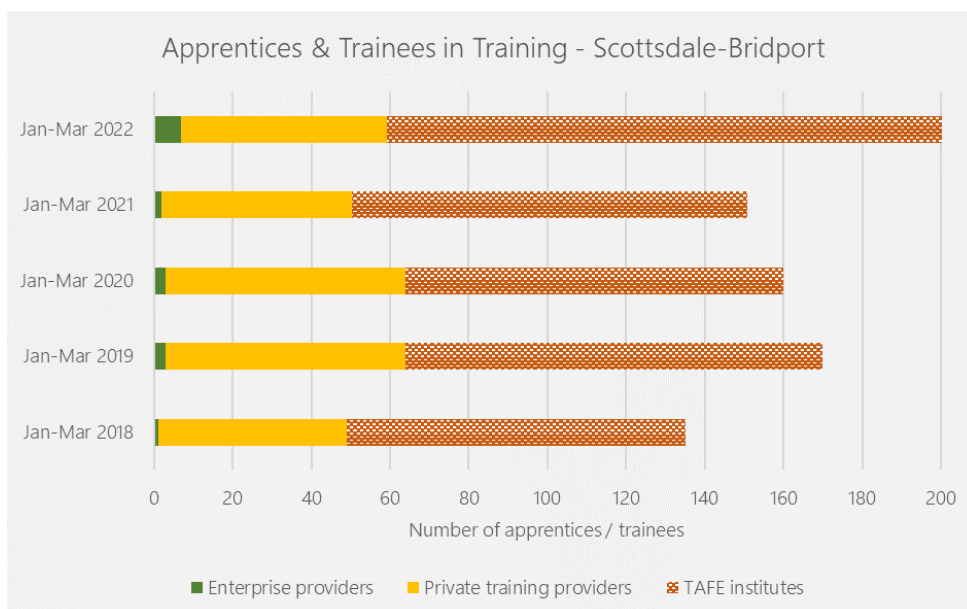


Figure 17: Apprentices and trainees in training – Scottsdale-Bridport 2018-2022<sup>20</sup>



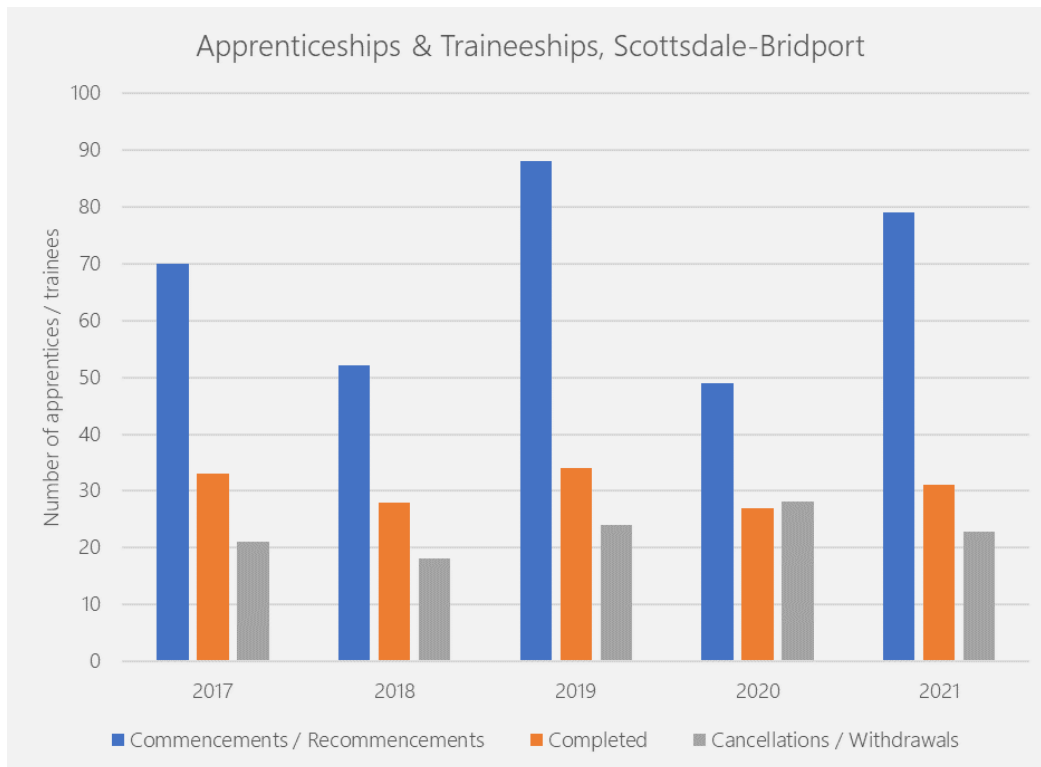


Figure 18: Apprenticeships and traineeships – Scottsdale-Bridport 2017-2021<sup>21</sup>

### Nailing training

Employers can be cynical about institutional training: 'I've lost faith in the training institutions'... 'we need farmers teaching farmers'... 'TAFE training courses are a waste of time' were comments shared by some employers. Some felt that training was not meeting local needs, expressing a 'disconnection between agriculture and the school system... you can't learn agriculture from a textbook'. Despite this, when employers do use local training options, for example, forklift training, they are satisfied with the results.

Most employers expressed a preference for on-the-job training, which occurs across a variety of sectors including hospitality and agriculture. To get the training, the job seeker must first get a job – the entry point for job seekers is less to do with technical skills and much more to do with 'soft' skills. These skills are highly sought after but not considered enough in the training process according to some: 'they're doing their best to provide the course work but not the social skills to go out into the wider world'.

Employers also sought a more collaborative and flexible approach to training across the training ecosystem including TTC, TasTAFE and other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). There was a view that training is not flexible enough and needs to be better tailored in relation to timing, place of delivery, and learning processes.

## 5. DESIGNING *DORSETCONNECT*

---

### Key Themes

- Connecting expectations and aspirations
- A recommended bespoke service model
- Building blocks for success

### Connecting expectations and aspirations

Dorset's geographic location, and population growth and change, endows it with a variety of job opportunities across a range of industries. Flourishing agriculture is a prized asset in need of willing workers and career oriented individuals, and there is significant growth in demand for personal, aged and child care and growth in employment in financial and insurance services, mining, construction, electricity, gas, water and waste services, and education and training.

There are also challenges. The population and workforce are ageing, young people with aspiration are drawn away, childcare is scarce, transport challenging, and housing expensive and limited. History has changed the employment story for some families but schools work hard to make industry connections and provide work-ready young people who are motivated to succeed. Expectations of employers offering jobs, and the aspirations of job seekers, are high.

### A recommended bespoke service model

Based on the research and analysis undertaken for this project, we recommend the BODEC Board considers a bespoke model perhaps known as *Dorset CONNECT*. It is conceived as a collection of services delivered on-the-ground across Dorset to respond to the mismatch between jobs and job seekers. In March 2022, Dorset's unemployment rate was 4.8 per cent, or 154 people. At the same time, there are many, and many different types of jobs available. Employers reported being desperate for staff and there were anecdotal estimates of up to 150 unfilled jobs.

The *Dorset CONNECT* model will build essential connections – between job seekers and jobs, employers and job seekers, job seekers and training, employers and training providers, and it will strengthen connections among education and training providers, business, industry bodies, community organisations and community. It will learn from the BODEC experience and the Jobs Tasmania Community of Practice, while building insight and independence and a flair for nailing what works in Dorset.

We recommend services to include:

- '*Career Connect*' that tailors career pathways in local industry sectors

- 'Casual Connect' that connects people to casual/seasonal jobs
- 'Skills Connect' that connects industry training needs to fit-for-purpose providers and interested job seekers
- 'Mentor Connect' that connects job seekers to trained mentors
- 'Schools Connect' that supports schools in implementing vocational and industry frameworks
- 'Community Connect' that strengthens community connections to job-readiness and long-term employment.

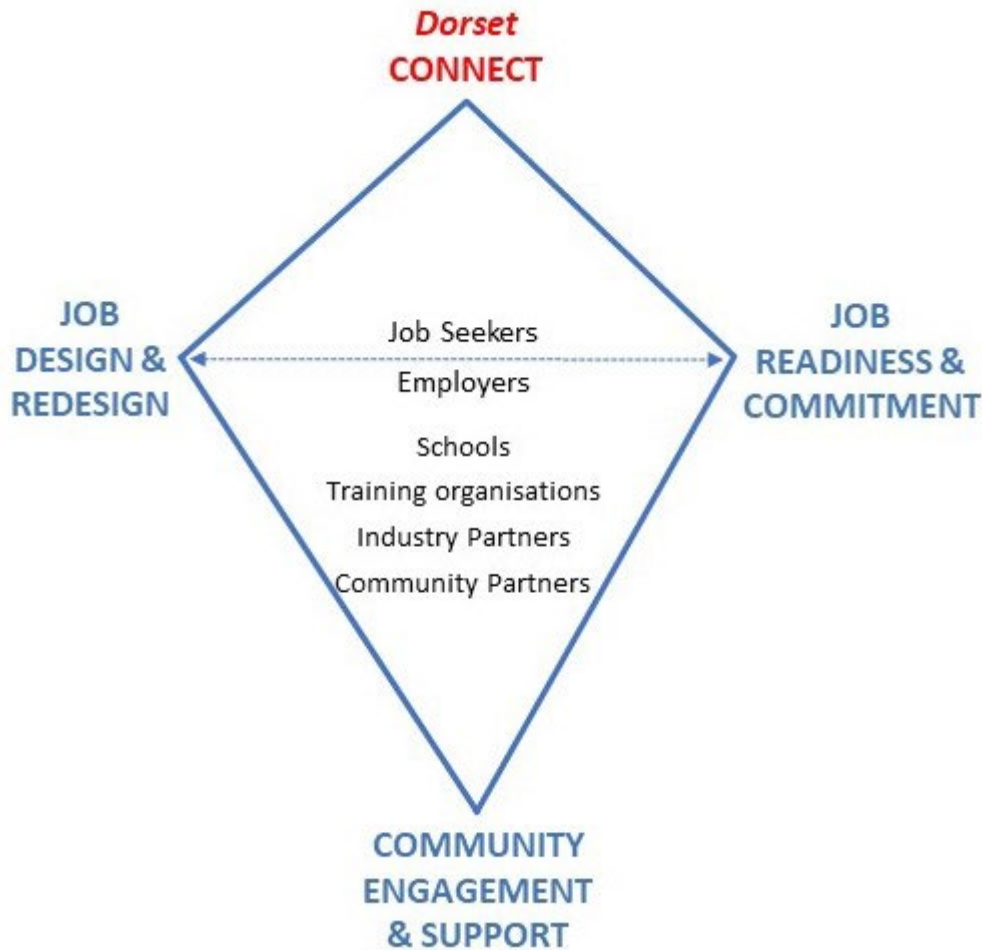


Figure 19: *Dorset* CONNECT

The essential challenges for *Dorset* CONNECT are to support and develop the goodwill and creative ingenuity of local employers on the one hand, and connect them to work-ready, motivated, appropriately trained job seekers on the other – especially to job seekers who can see opportunities and grasp them.

The service will develop a deep understanding of the mismatch between job availability and unemployed job seekers, and gain further insight into Dorset’s lower participation rate. It will build deep community relationships and uncover opportunities to engage ‘hidden’ cohorts in employment to produce sustainable and quality employment outcomes.

*Dorset* CONNECT will be underpinned by local knowledge and relationships, and a diversity of professional experience. Its people will build on strengths, change conversations, and have an open, collaborative, entrepreneurial, opportunistic mindset. They will work flexibly across Dorset, going to where the need and opportunities are.

In essence, *Dorset* CONNECT will add a creative dynamic to employment solutions and leave the nuts and bolts of employment services to the federal government's designated employment services providers.

Following are the recommended key components of *Dorset* CONNECT:

### *Job Design and Redesign*

In order to source much needed labour and fill jobs, particularly agricultural and hospitality jobs, *Dorset* CONNECT people will work with employers to help fill jobs from within and beyond Dorset. They will also need to work with employers, employer organisations and strategic partners to better align jobs to career pathways and job seeker aspirations to achieve more sustainable employment outcomes. They will need to:

- Support creative job design so jobs have greater appeal to different age groups, interests, and skill sets.
- Facilitate increased collaboration across employers to achieve more secure, ongoing employment in industries that are typically seasonal.
- Capitalise on apprenticeship, traineeship and school-based apprenticeship opportunities.
- Grow the appeal of, and promote opportunities available in, Dorset's primary industry sectors with active partners including Women in Agriculture, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Rural Youth, Agriculture Centre of Excellence, and the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group.

### *Job Readiness and Commitment*

While employers expressed a desire to employ locals, they also expressed concern about the readiness and commitment of locals to do the available jobs. *Dorset* CONNECT will need to work with job seekers, schools, and training organisations to:

- Increase tailored training matched to local job opportunities and employer needs.
- Help find ways to develop job seeker 'soft' skills sought by employers.
- Encourage and support employers to share knowledge and mentor young people to develop job readiness, commitment and confidence.
- Link adult learners to the training they need to secure employment.
- Work with local employment agencies to develop responses that address barriers to employment for some individuals.

## *Community Engagement and Support*

A key role for *Dorset* CONNECT people will be to help change the employment story for those who haven't experienced work or who may be experiencing barriers to getting and staying in quality, sustainable work. They will need to consider how to:

Page | 29

- Work with the Community House and schools to increase community understanding of job readiness.
- Investigate ways to address transport barriers, including opportunities for Area Connect, a community-based transport option, and increased driver licensing training.
- Identify and support development of childcare services including options for family day care, after school care, and increased training.
- Work with schools, libraries, 26TEN and others to increase literacy and numeracy capability.
- Engage with service providers including mental health practitioners, to increase understanding of, and support for, job seekers as required.
- Engage with influencers in towns across Dorset to identify, tailor and refine opportunities.

## **Building blocks for success**

An earlier study analysing the success factors of the South East Employment Hub, a similarly funded project under the Jobs Tasmania Regional Jobs Hub program, described six building blocks that contribute to success. Active consideration of each of these success factors will help support a quality, sustainable service in Dorset.

1. **VISION & LEADERSHIP** – *a regional vision and local strategic leadership.*
  - Strong local leadership, a long-term vision, high visibility and branding, a positive mindset, and community support and understanding of *Dorset* CONNECT will be essential for success.
2. **INSIGHT & KNOWLEDGE** – *a holistic understanding and commitment to evidence.*
  - This report contributes to the place-based knowledge needed for *Dorset* CONNECT to succeed. Sharing this knowledge, and continuing to build strategic insight and understanding, will be the bedrock for building creative, effective, local sustainable solutions.
3. **PEOPLE & RELATIONSHIPS** – *experienced local people working together to respond to local needs.*
  - An essential ingredient in jobs hub success is passionate, skilled locals working as a team, sustained by quality local relationships. *Dorset* CONNECT will need a respected and experienced local to lead the team and deliver quality relationships across a broadly defined jobs ecosystem.

4. **INCLUSIVE SYSTEM** – *participation of community, business and government across the jobs system.*

Page | 30

- The jobs ecosystem is more than just employers and job seekers. Community groups, industry associations, education institutions (schools, libraries, Department of Education, TasTAFE, RTOs, universities), Dorset Council, service providers, government, and others all have a role in the delivery of jobs hub services. The *Dorset CONNECT* leadership will develop the narrative and weave the relationships so people see themselves as part of the jobs hub system.

5. **SHARED GOVERNANCE** – *an authorising environment created by high level government collaboration and community-led governance.*

- Community-led governance, perhaps supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BODEC, which commits the parties to shared goals and understanding, and an intention to work together in good faith, will be needed to underwrite *Dorset CONNECT*. Responsibilities will include both strategic and process aspects of operations with a focus on achieving identified objectives. This local, formal governance structure will help to support and authorise testing of new and innovative models – *in communities, with communities.*

6. **KEY ENABLERS** – *optimal performance by connecting in transport, training, key agency participation, and diversified funding across the system.*

- There are several barriers to employment experienced by Dorset locals which will need to be addressed to achieve optimal outcomes for participants. Transport, childcare, housing cost and availability, and perceptions of local industry sectors, particularly agriculture, will require cross government and multi-agency solutions to ensure all Dorset residents seeking work can get to, and stay in work. Seeking out other funding opportunities to deliver solutions will grow the success of *Dorset CONNECT*.

## APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEWEES

---

Roger Unwin – Director, Scottsdale Pork

Sue Farnell – Secretary, North East Chamber of Commerce

Maria Branch – President, North East Chamber of Commerce

Scott Tomkins – Community Engagement Worker, Health Consumers Tasmania

Rebecca Smith – Community Engagement Worker, Health Consumers Tasmania

Greg Howard – Mayor of Dorset

Narelle Saward – Max Employment Job Coach, Workforce Australia

Jonathan Bissett – Managing Director, Bison Constructions

Kym Corfield, Manager Scottsdale Catchment, Libraries Tasmania

Trish Scholwin – Coordinator, 26 TEN; local farmer

Andrew Bennett – Farmer, Business Owner and Property Consultant, Harcourts North East Real Estate

Mike Miers – Dairy General Manager, Ingleby Farms Australia

Linda Arnison – Owner, Bridport Café

Anna Robertson – Production Manager, Bridestowe Lavender Farm

Narelle Krushka – Coordinator, Dorset Trade Training Centre

Elizabeth (Libby) Williams – Principal, Scottsdale High School

Peter Fysh – Dorset local and former editor, North East Advertiser

Gina Scott and Tony Scott – Owners, Platypus Park accommodation business

Penny Sattler – Managing Director, Barnbougale

Tess Moore – local farmer and Human Resources Consultant

Danish Siddiqui – CEO, Pathfinder, NDIS service provider

Matthew Hartley – Team Leader North East, Pathfinder, NDIS service provider

Sarah – hospitality employee

Naomi Buster – Coordinator, Dorset Community House

John Marik – Acting General Manager, Dorset Council

Christina Maletta – Vertigo MTB

Richard (Buck) Gibson – Business owner, Vertigo MTB

Marcus Haywood and Simone Haywood – Dairy farmers

Lisa and Emily – Employees, Two Doors Down café, Derby

Candice Burnett – Principal, Winnaleah District High School

Taylor Clyne – Editor, North East Advertiser

John Williams – Business owner and farmer

Mark McDougal – Business owner and farmer



Cara Rodgers – Main Street restaurant, Derby

Brodie O’Brien - Manager, Dorset Hotel

Page | 32

Linda Singline – Office Administrator, CMTP, Branxholm

Jo McGrath – Co-owner, Branxholme Fabricators

Cheryl McCartie – Farmer and community volunteer

Michell Beeson – Manager, Bass Strait Freight, Bridport

Emily Nixon – Board member, Rural Youth

Hugh Christie – CEO, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association

Zoe Bennett – Dorset Community House

Marita, Aleisha and Mark – volunteers, Dorset Community House





## APPENDIX 2 – FINDINGS WORKSHOP PRESENTATION SLIDES

The updated presentation slides from the 'Dorset Findings' workshop are contained in this Appendix – there are 42 slides. They provide more quantitative information about job seekers, the labour market and economic profile of Dorset.



Dorset Council

# Dorset Findings

---

Fae Robinson & Nick McShane

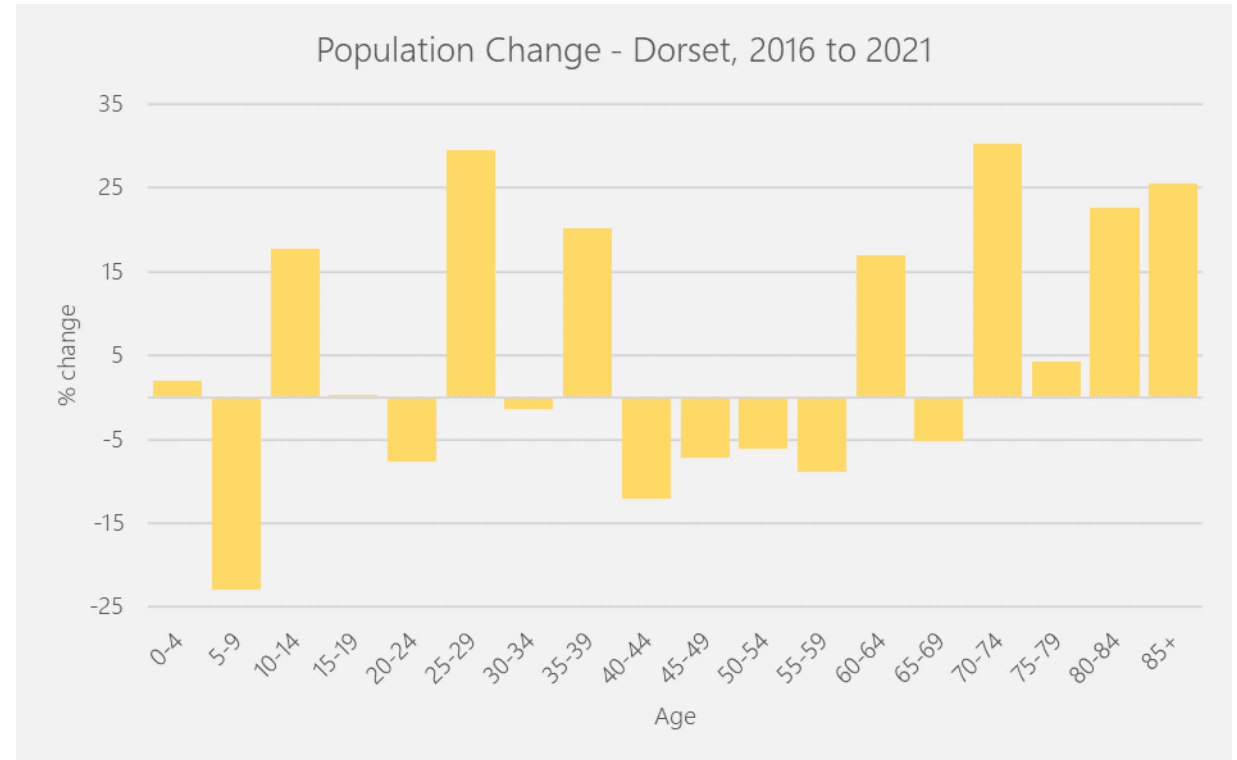
# Outline of the Workshop

---

- Part 1: Data Analysis – Findings
- Part 2: The Lived Experience – Findings
- Part 3: '*Dorset Connect*'

# Population Profile

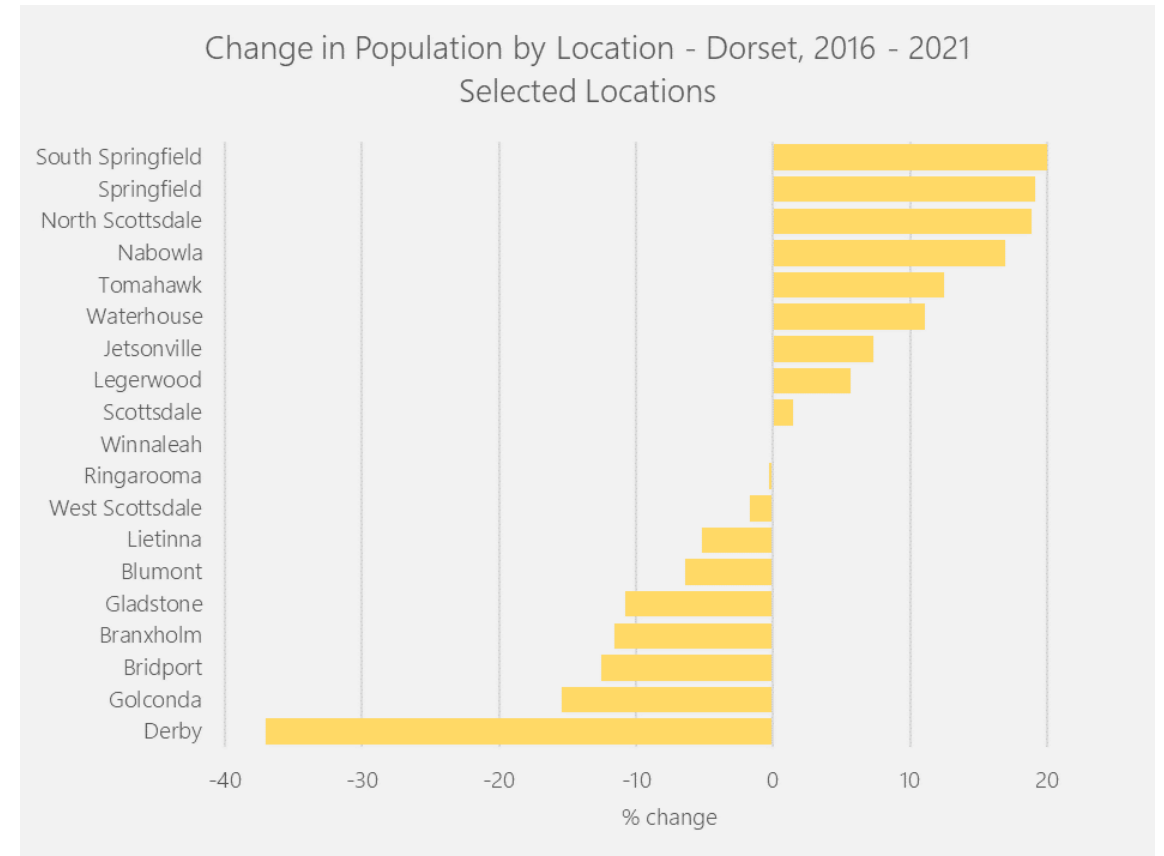
- 3% population increase to 6832 people - 2016 to 2021
- Aging population - over 70s are fastest growing group
- Working age population (aged 15-64) increased by 23%
- Dorset is Tasmania's 10<sup>th</sup> (out of 29) and Northern Tasmania's 3<sup>rd</sup> (out of 8) most disadvantaged LGA



[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 \(Usual residence data\). Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\).](#)

# Population Profile

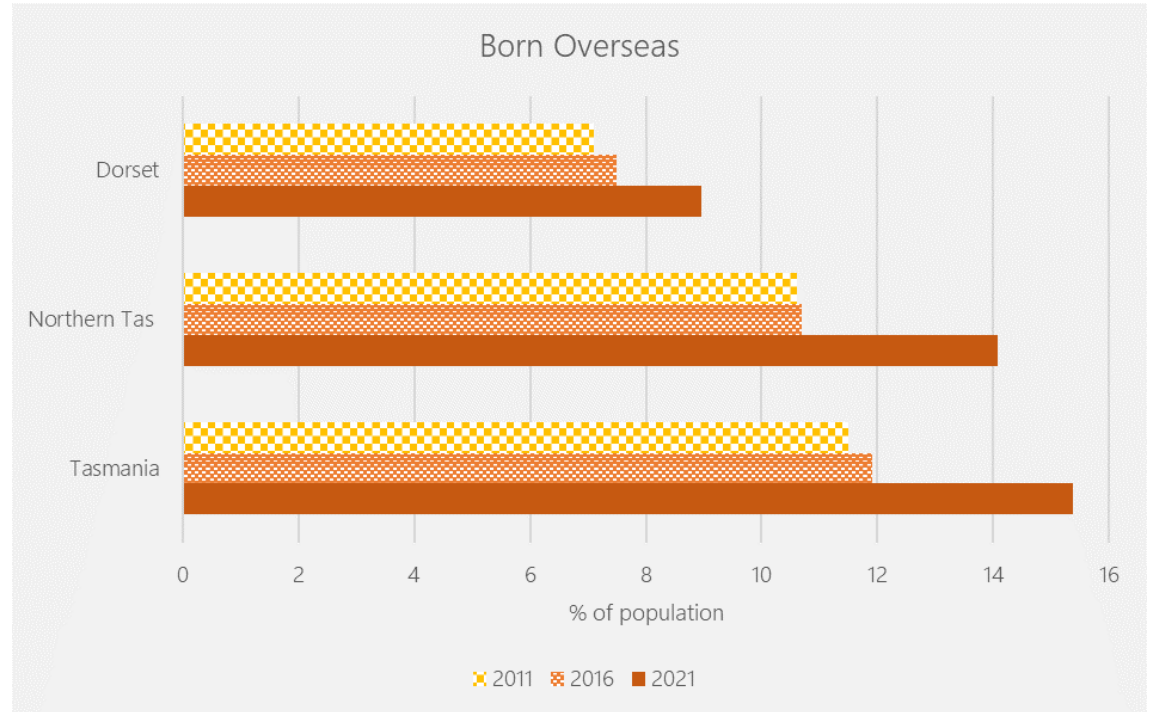
- Census data shows the population increase has been dispersed across the LGA
  - Some of the locations have experienced decreases – with Derby showing the largest decline (-37%)
  - Some locations surrounding Scottsdale have shown increases – for example South Springfield (+20%), Springfield and North Scottsdale (both +19%) and Nabowla (+17%)



Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 & 2021](#)

# Population Profile

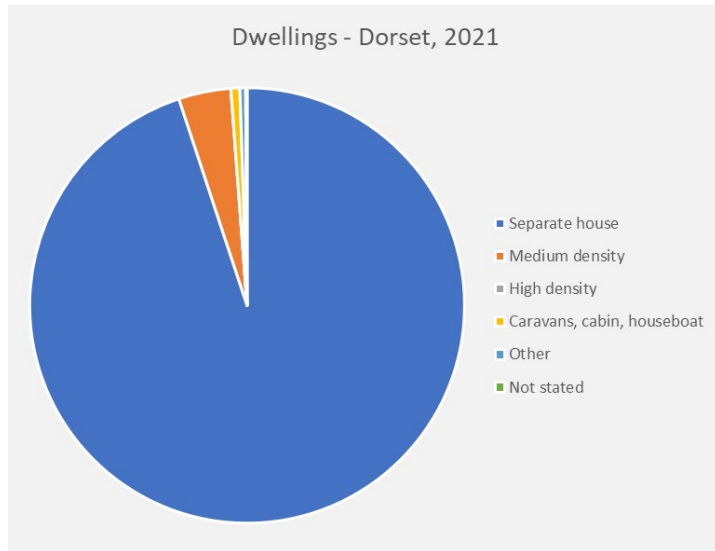
- Migrant population is smaller than both Northern Tasmania and Tasmania
  - In 2021, 9% of Dorset's population was born overseas (up from 7% in 2011)
  - 10% of Dorset's migrants arrived between 2016 and 2021
  - Less than 3% of the population speak a language other than English at home



[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\).](#)

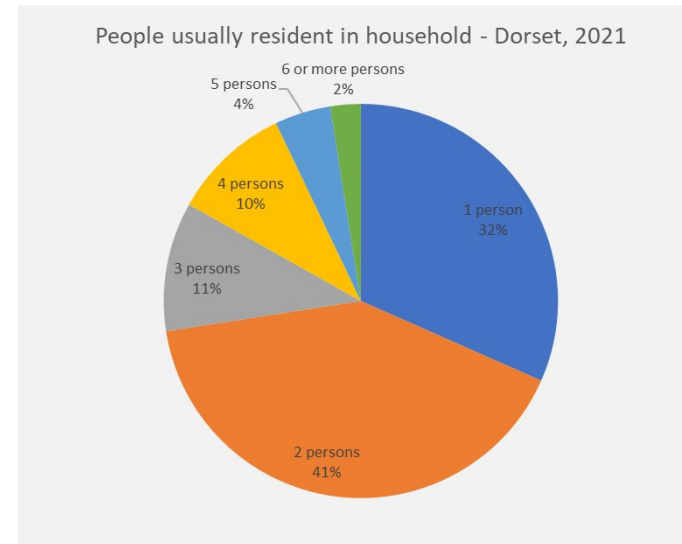
# Housing Profile

- In 2021 there were 3738 separate houses and 153 medium density dwellings
- Housing stock has increased over the past 5 years
  - Separate houses up by 224 (6%)
  - Medium density dwellings up by 28 (22%)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

- The average household size has increased marginally over the past 5 years, from 2.21 to 2.22 persons per dwelling
  - Almost a third were single people households
  - 41% were 2 people households



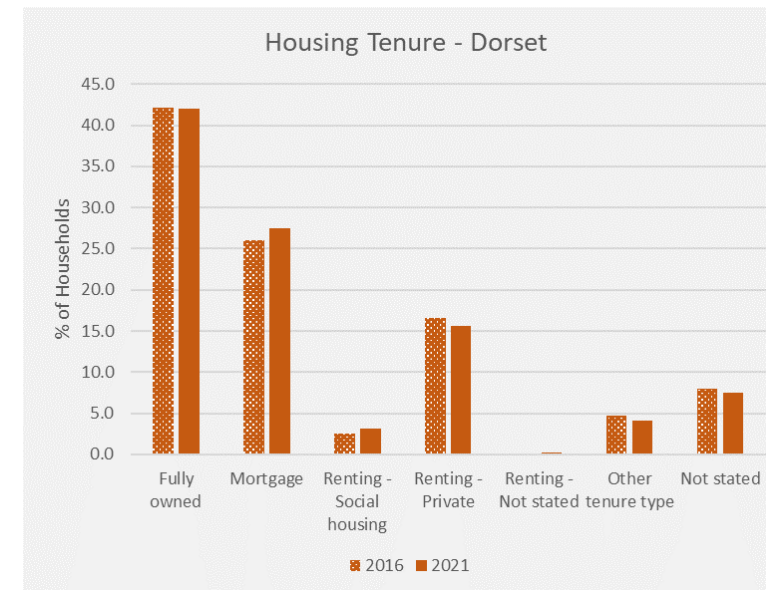
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Housing Profile

- In the 5 years to 2022, Dorset experienced significant increases in median house prices
  - This is consistent with the experience across Tasmania
- Almost 70% of households either fully own their property or have a mortgage
  - In the rental market, private tenancies predominate
  - There were 117 standalone properties available for short term rental in the September quarter of 2021

Location	2017	2022	Change
Branxholm	\$205,000	\$527,500	157%
Bridport	\$279,000	\$663,500	138%
Derby	\$250,000	\$851,500	241%
Ringarooma	\$125,000	\$280,000	124%
Scottsdale	\$215,000	\$424,500	97%

Source: [Real Estate Institute of Tasmania > Market Facts > Suburb Reports \(reit.com.au\)](https://reit.com.au)

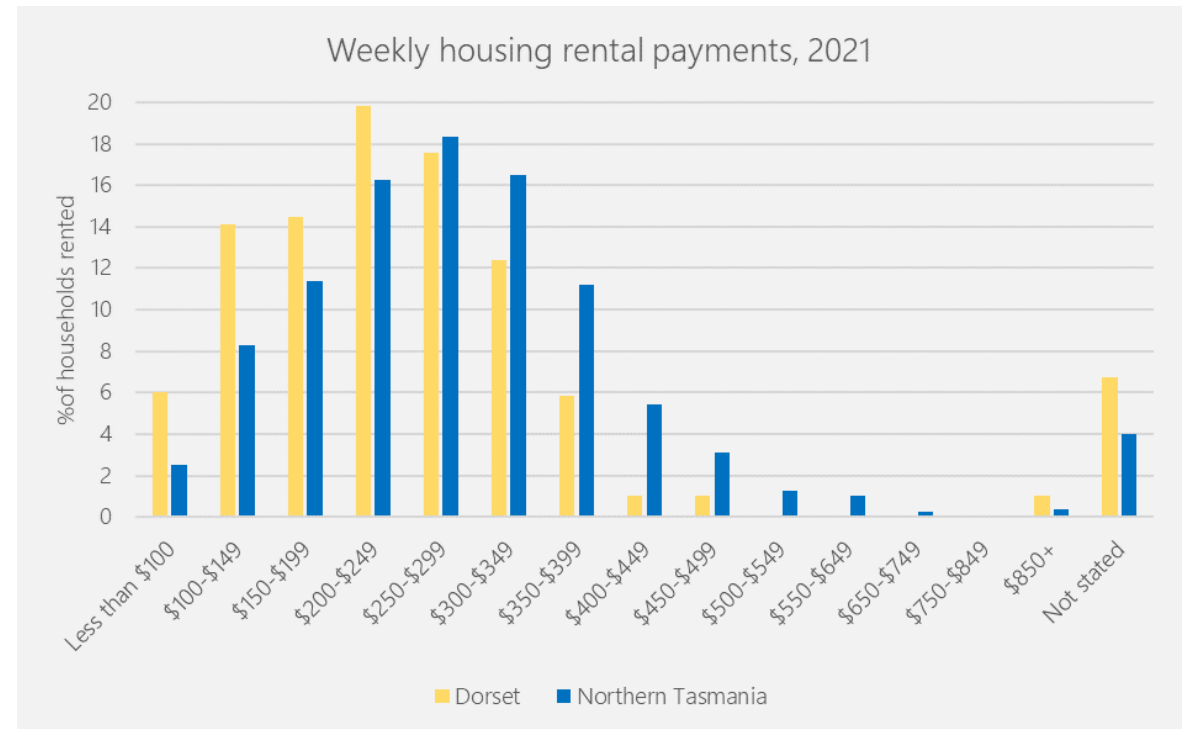


Source: [Real Estate Institute of Tasmania > Market Facts > Suburb Reports \(reit.com.au\)](https://reit.com.au)



# Housing Profile

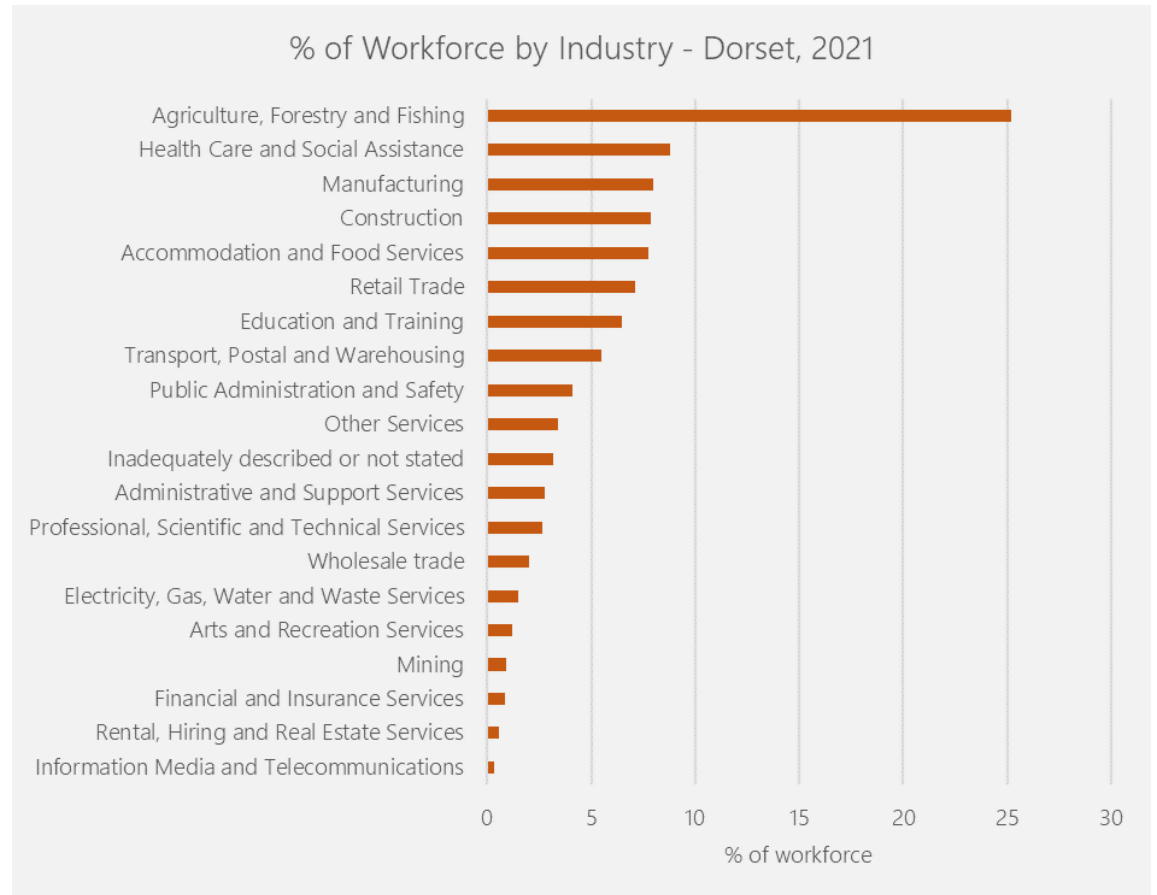
- Dorset rental payments per week are lower than for Northern Tasmania (581 households in 2021)
  - 66% of renters paid between \$100 and \$299 per week (54% for Northern Tasmania)
- On a locality basis, over the 5 years to 2022
  - Median weekly house rental prices increased significantly in Bridport (38%) and Scottsdale (36%)
  - Median unit rental prices increased in Bridport (47%), with a lower increase in Scottsdale (11%)
  - Rental increases in the other localities should be treated with caution due to the small number of rentals involved.



[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021.](#)  
[Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\).](#)

# Economic Profile

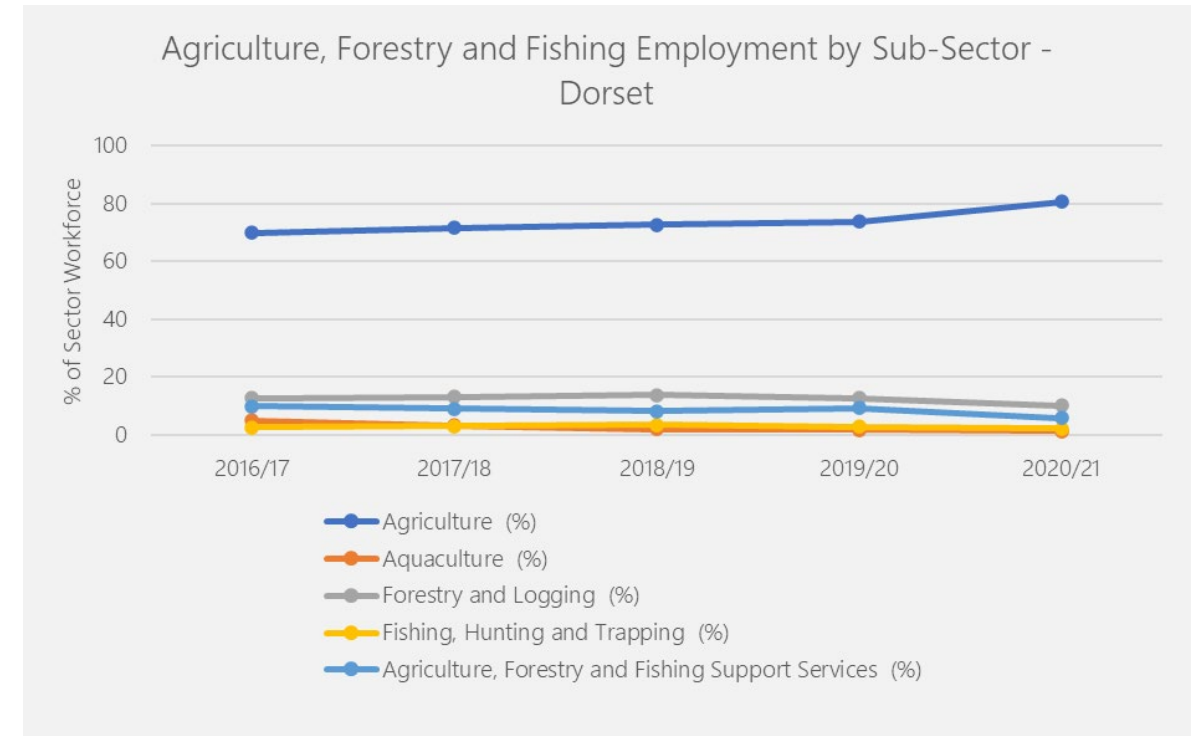
- 2869 persons in workforce in 2021
  - increased by 12% since 2016
- Seven industries account for 71% of employment
  - Agriculture, forestry and fishing is dominant - 25% of jobs
  - The next six largest industries each have less than 10% of jobs



[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\).](#)

# Economic Profile

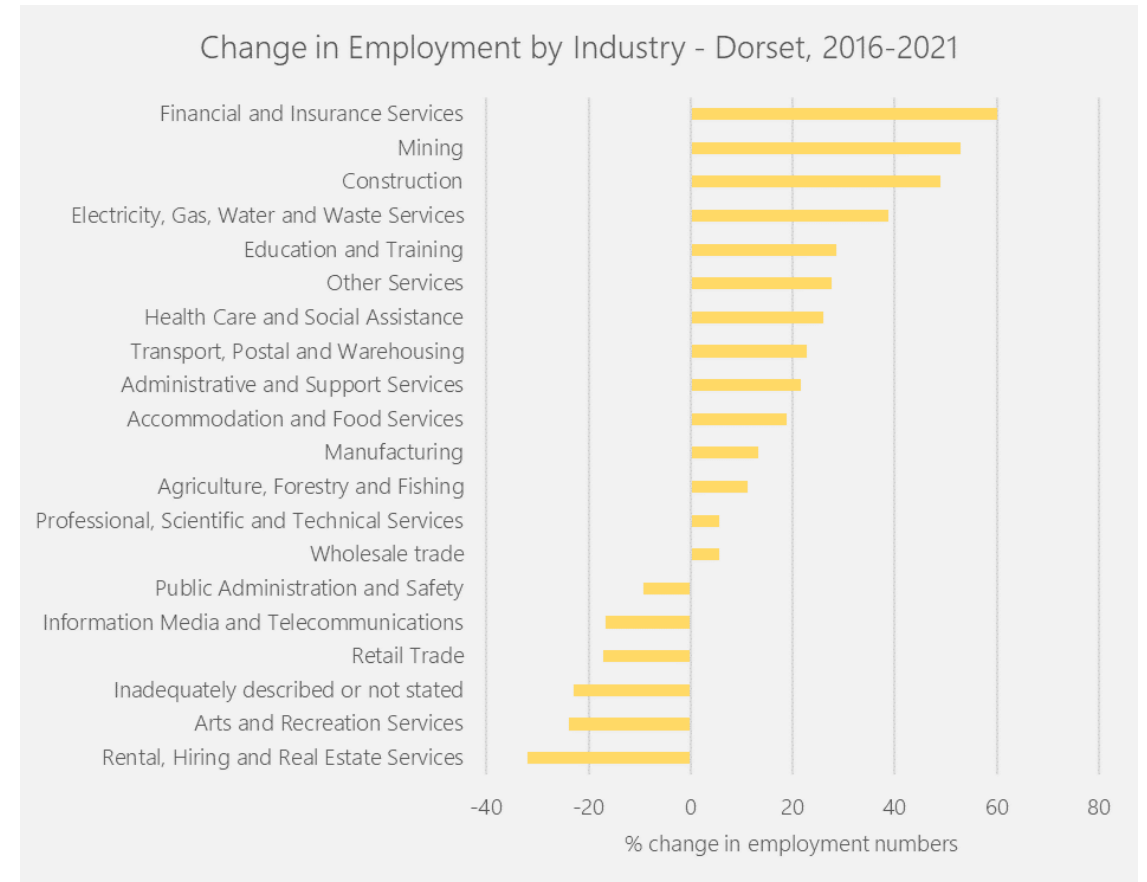
- Within Agriculture, forestry and fishing
  - Agriculture provides 81% of jobs
    - Up from 70% 5 years ago
  - Forestry and logging provides 10% of jobs
    - Down 14% in the last 5 years (down 48% over last 10 years)
  - Fishing, hunting and trapping provides 2% of jobs
  - Aquaculture provides 1% of jobs
  - Agriculture, forestry and fishing support services provide 6% of jobs



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Economic Profile

- The top five employment growth industries between 2016 and 2021
  - Financial and insurance services - 60%
  - Mining - 53%
  - Construction - 49%
  - Electricity, gas, water and waste services - 39%
  - Education and training - 28%
- Biggest employment declines were
  - Rental, hiring and real estate services – falling by 32%
  - Arts and recreation services 24% decline
  - Retail trade – 17% decline
- COVID adversely affected Tourism and Hospitality – employment down 21% from pre-COVID levels (2018/19)



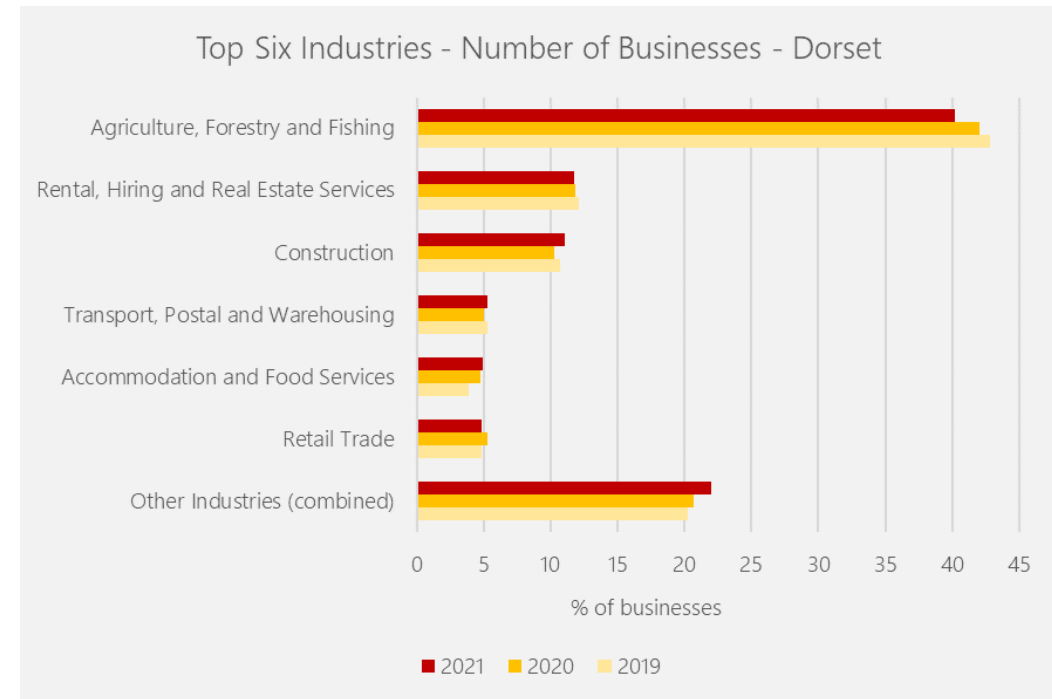
Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021](#).  
Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Economic Profile

- Business numbers are relatively stable – 870 in 2021
  - 97% are small to medium businesses (less than 20 employees)
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing is dominant – 350 businesses in 2021
  - 97% are small to medium businesses
  - 3% had between 20 and 199 employees

Employing and Non-Employing Businesses by Industry - Dorset, 2021	Non-Employing (%)	1 to 19 Employees (%)	20 to 199 Employees (%)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	61	36	3
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	94	6	0
Construction	46	54	0
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	40	54	6
Accommodation and Food Services	46	54	0
Retail Trade	31	69	0

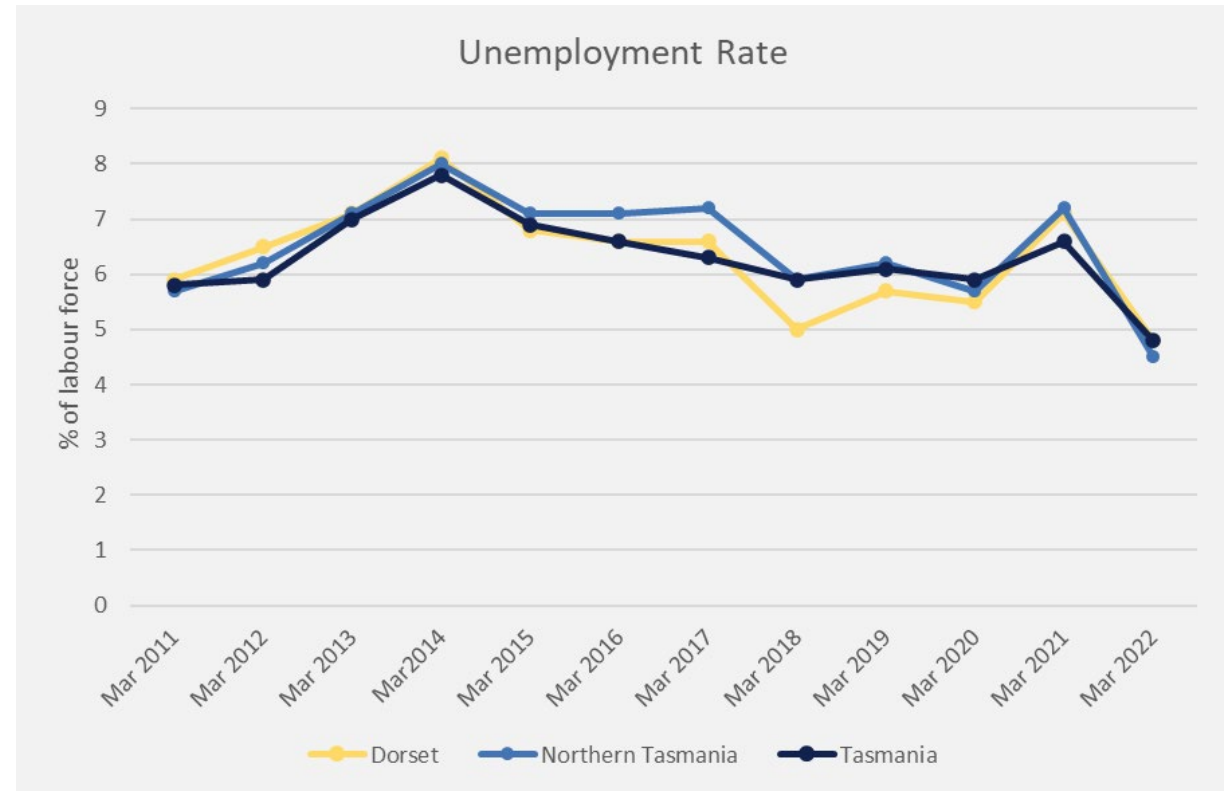
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, 2016 to 2021. .id (informed decisions)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, 2016 to 2021. .id (informed decisions)

# Workforce Profile

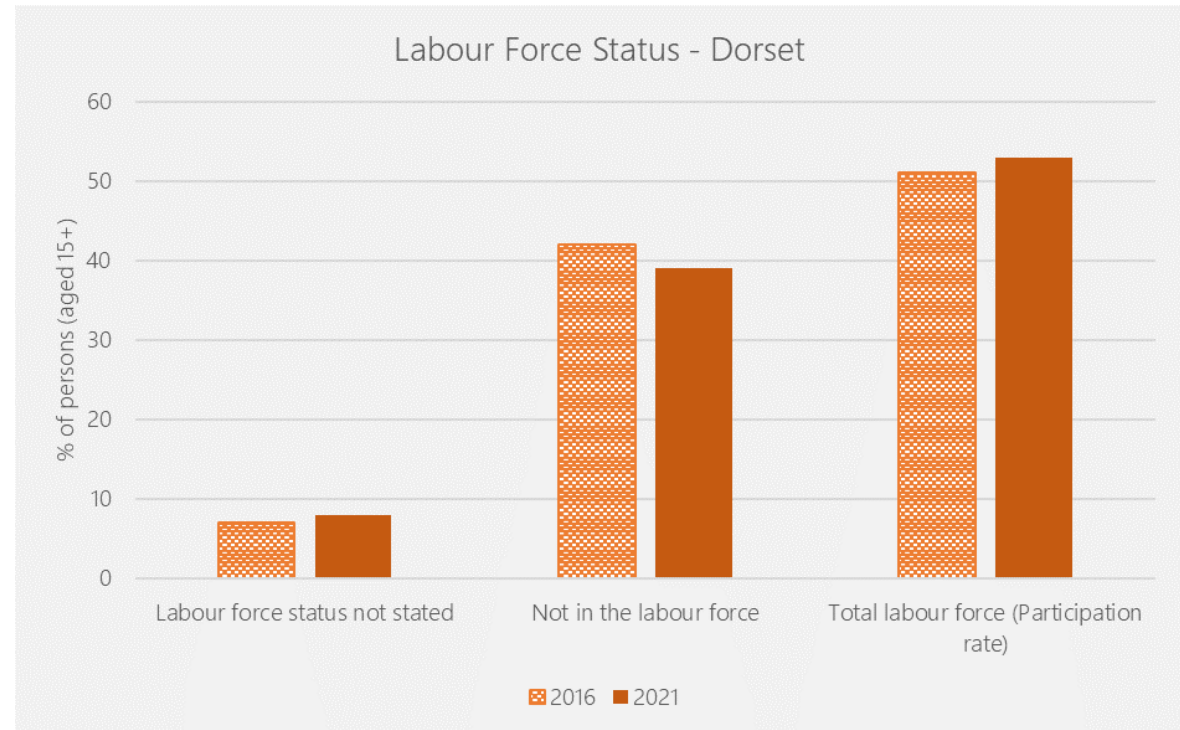
- In March 2022, Dorset's unemployment rate was the same as for Tasmania and slightly higher than Northern Tasmania
  - 154 unemployed people (4.8%) compared to 4.5% for Northern Tasmania and 4.8% for Tasmania
  - Unemployment rate has declined significantly since 2014
    - despite a rise to 7.2% in 2021 which has since been corrected as the economy has recovered from COVID
- If it is assumed that the underemployment rate for Dorset in November 2022 was the same as Tasmania, then some 6.8% of Dorset's workforce (174 people) could be underemployed



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour force survey catalogue number 6202.0, and Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Workforce Profile

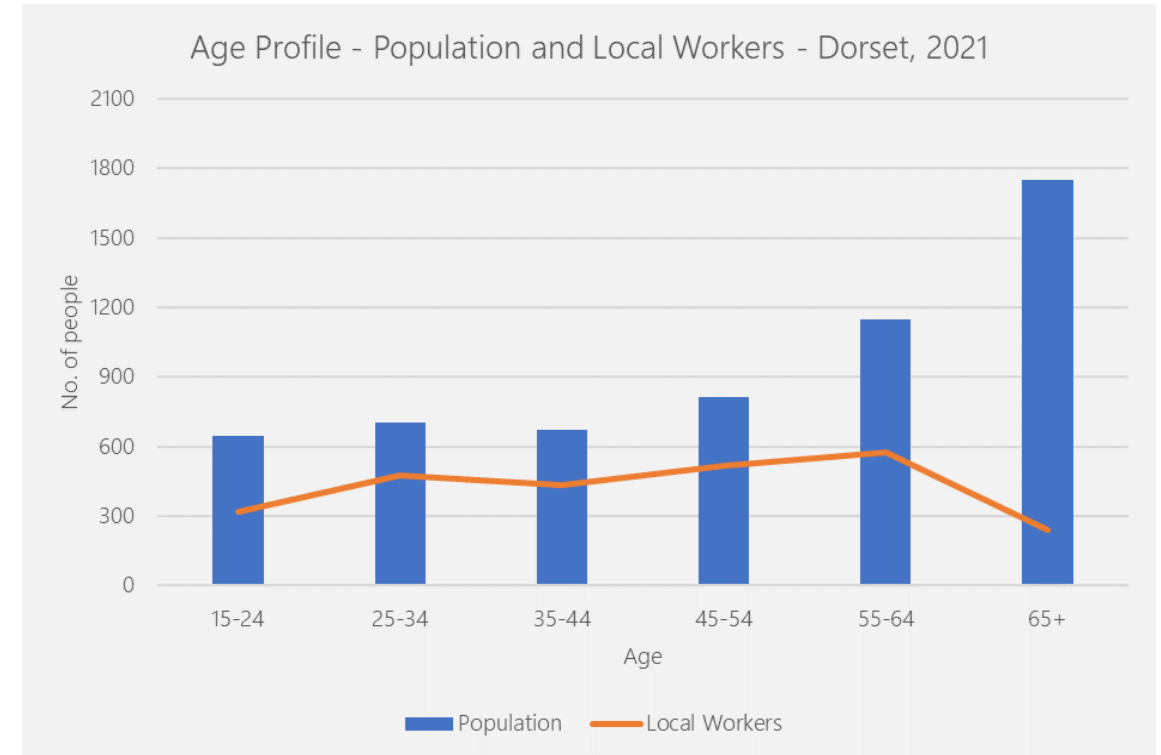
- Between 2016 and 2021
  - Workforce participation rate increased by 2% to 53%
  - Slightly lower rate than for Northern Tasmania (57%) and Tasmania (58%)
  - Those not in the labour force decreased by 3% to 39%
  - Greater decline than Northern Tasmania and Tasmania
- Lower participation rate may partly reflect the population age profile
  - Larger proportion of population aged 65+ (26%) than Tasmania (21%) or Northern Tasmania (22%)



[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021.](#)  
[Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\).](#)

# Workforce Profile

- Over 65s are largest population group (for those 15 years and over) not in the labour force
  - Grew from 55% to 58% between 2016 and 2021
  - Reflects a similar rise in Northern Tasmania and Tasmania
- Those not in the labour force aged 15 to 64 years fell by 9% between 2016 and 2021
  - More significant decrease than experienced by Northern Tasmania (-1%) and Tasmania (-2%)



Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021](#).  
Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

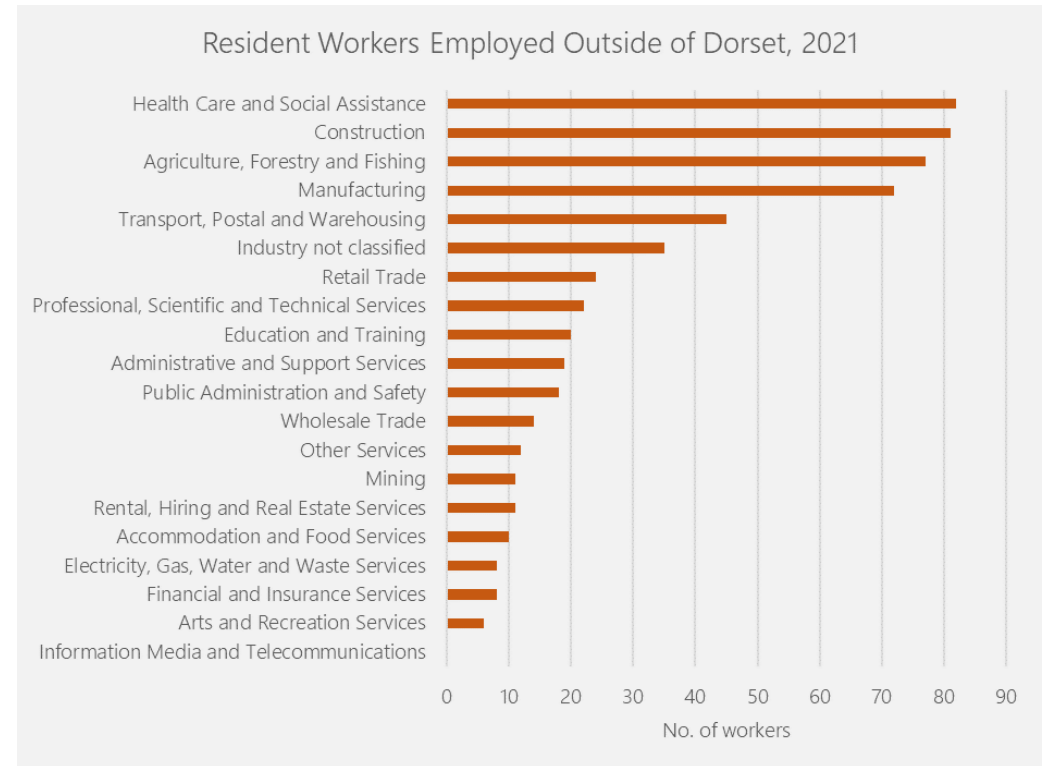


# Workforce Profile

- Some 13% of local workers come from outside Dorset
- Some 22% of resident workers work outside Dorset



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

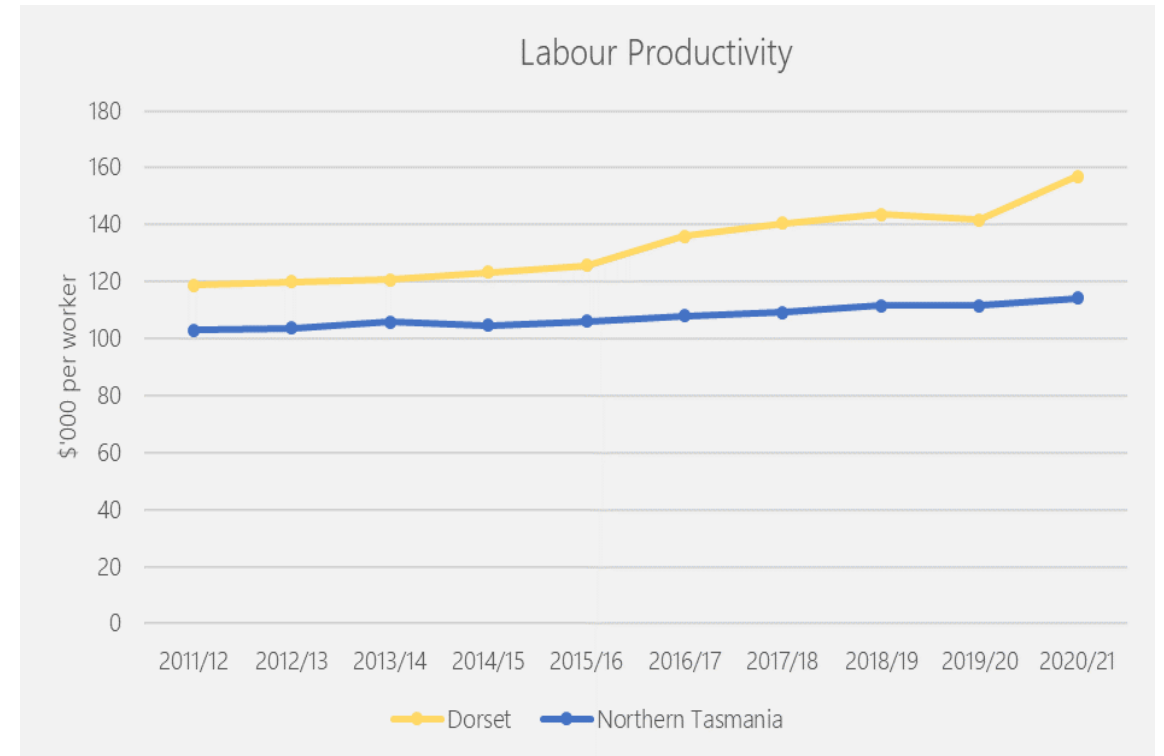


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Workforce Profile

- Labour productivity is higher than Northern Tasmania
  - Increased at a greater rate since 2016/17
- Between 2011/12 and 2020/21
  - Workers in financial and insurance services had the highest productivity - \$336,321 per worker
  - Workers in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry were the next most productive - \$310,626 per worker

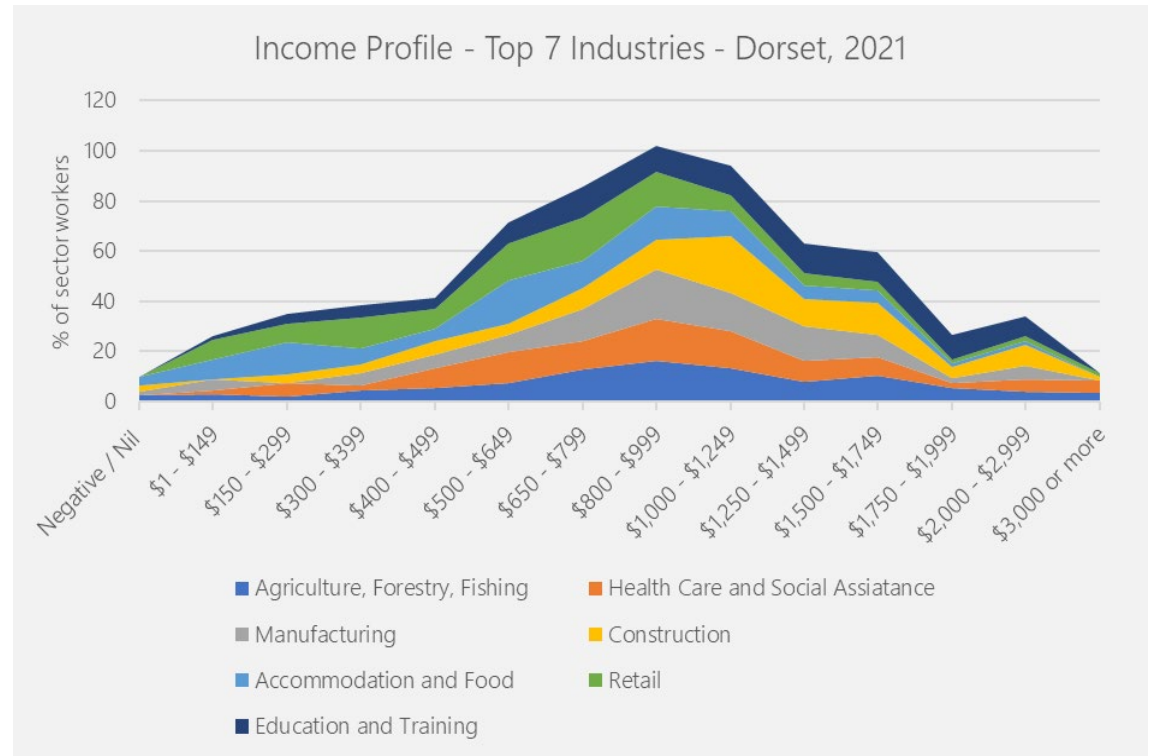
*Note: Labour productivity is the industry value add divided by the number of persons employed in that industry*



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Workforce Profile

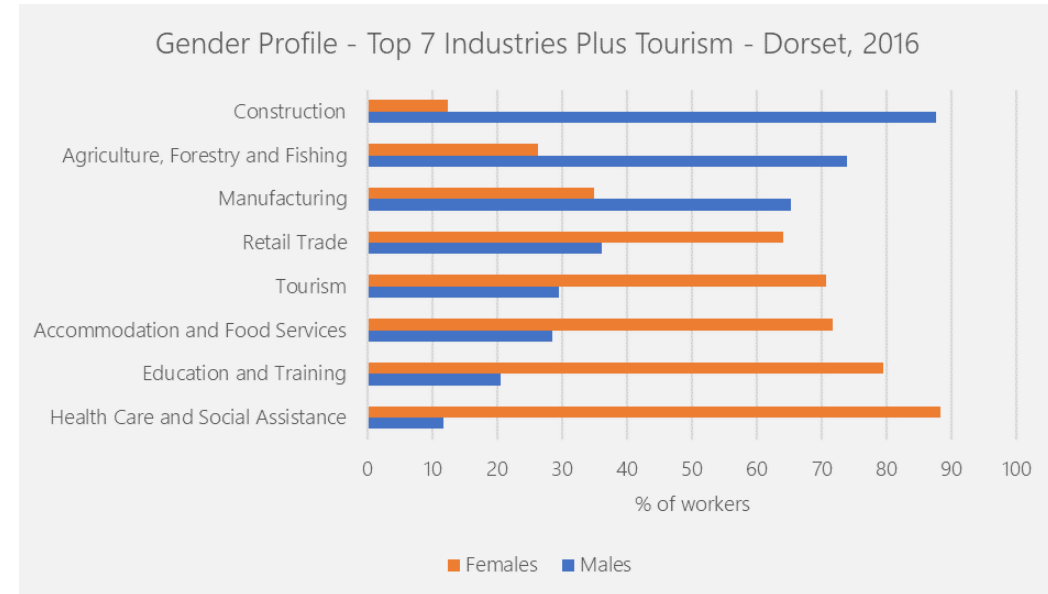
- 60% of workers are employed full time
  - Almost 40% of workers in both agriculture, forestry and fishing and construction industries work more than 40 hours a week
- Dorset's workforce income tends to be slightly less than for workers in Northern Tasmania
- Of the top seven industries
  - Incomes for workers in construction, manufacturing, and education and training are significantly higher than the other sectors
  - Accommodation and food workers and retail trade workers tend to be lower paid



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021  
Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Workforce Profile

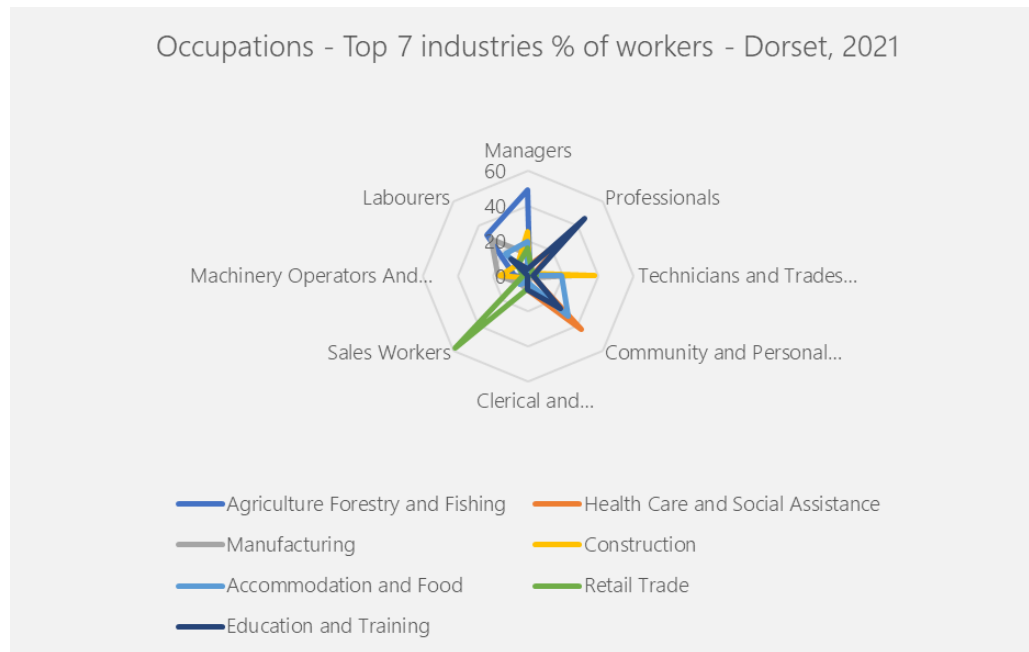
- 3 male-dominated industries
  - Construction - 88%
  - Agriculture, forestry and fishing - 74%
  - Manufacturing - 65%
- 5 female-dominated industries
  - Health care and social assistance - 88%
  - Education and training - 79%
  - Accommodation and Food Services – 72%
  - Tourism – 71%
  - Retail Trade – 64%



[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\). Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\).](#)

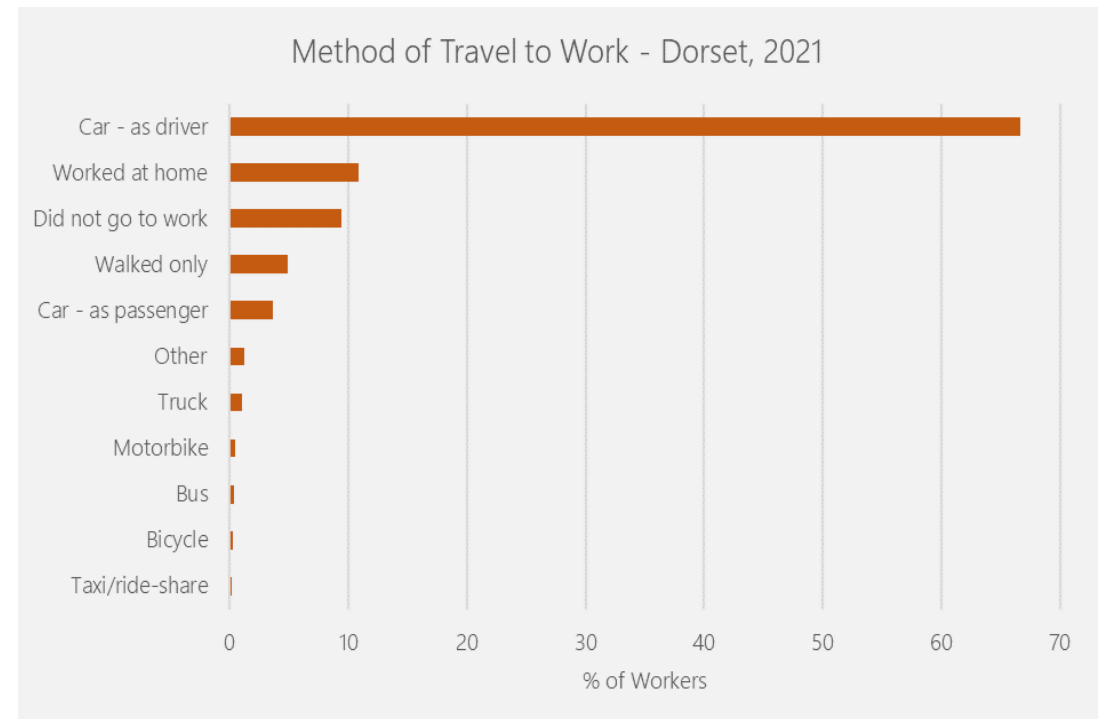
# Workforce Profile

- Managers, labourers, and technicians and trades workers are the most prevalent occupations



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

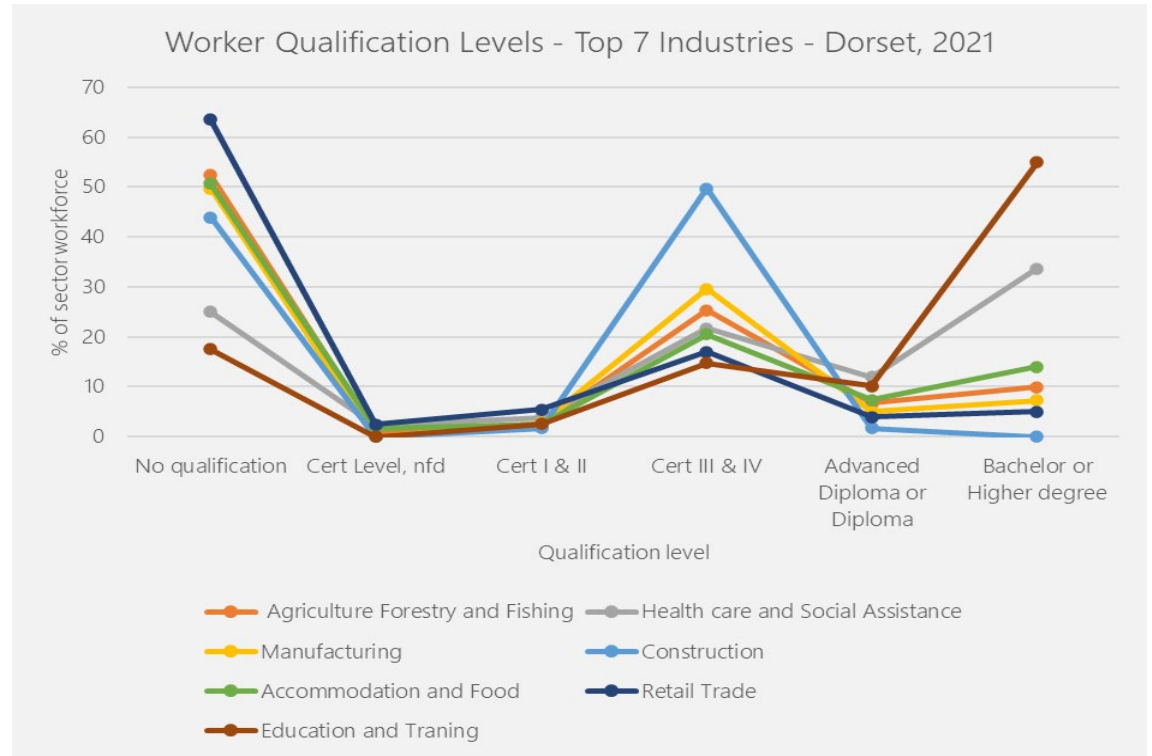
- Unsurprisingly, most workers travel to work by car



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

# Skills and Training Profile

- Workforce is less qualified compared with the Northern region and Tasmania
  - 44% have no formal qualifications (32% for Tasmania and 35% for Northern Tasmania)
  - 15% have a bachelor or higher degree (29% for Tasmania and 25% for Northern Tasmania)
- Top 7 industries
  - Most common are VET qualifications - particularly Certificate III and IV
  - Few have tertiary qualifications except in education and training (55%) and health care and social assistance (34%)

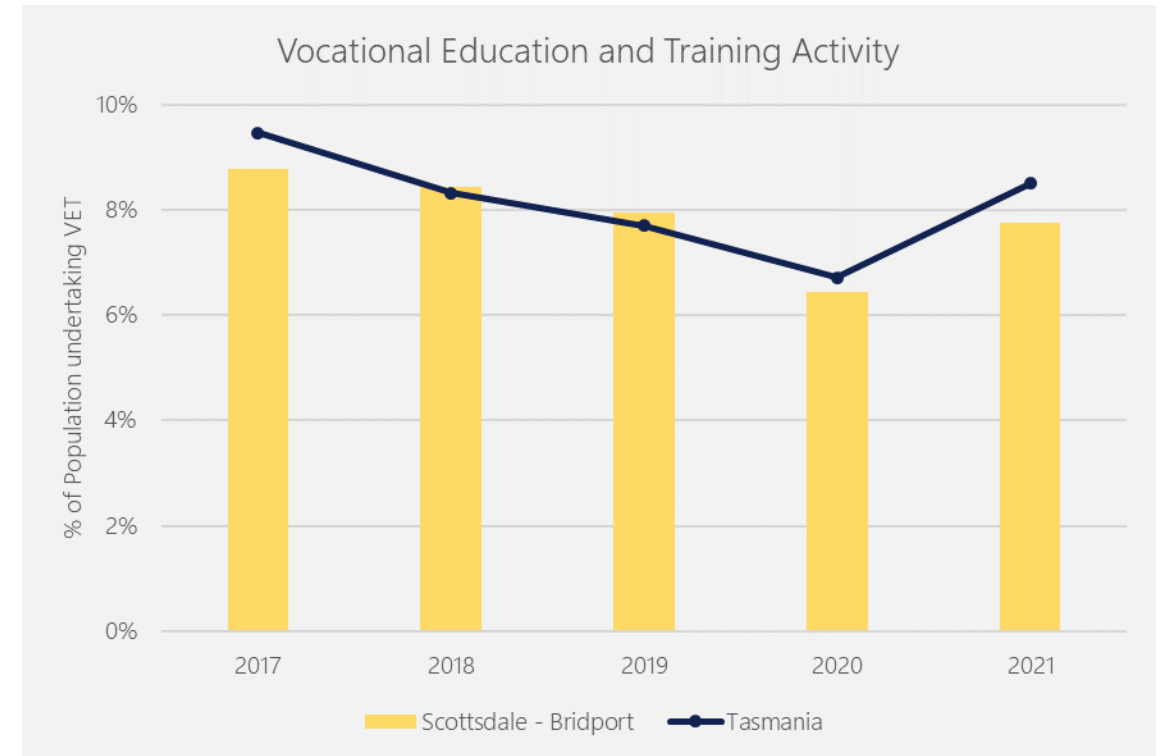


[Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021.](#)  
[Compiled and presented by .id \(informed decisions\)](#)

# Skills and Training Profile

- The proportion of Dorset residents undertaking VET activity declined between 2017 and 2021, before rebounding
  - Similar to the rest of Tasmania
  - Can be partly attributed to COVID, however the decline was evident prior to that

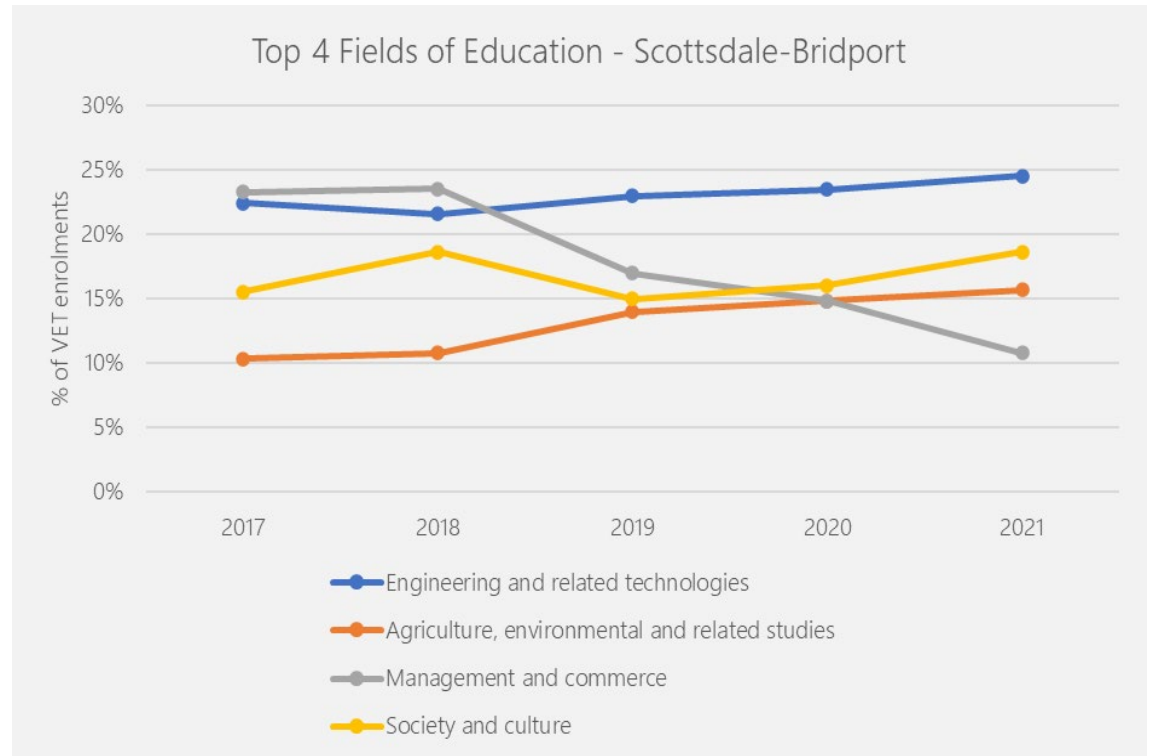
*Note that NCVET reports training data for the ABS Scottsdale – Bridport SA2 geographical area rather than the Dorset LGA area - these areas are closely aligned, but not identical*



[Source: NCVET Databuilder, Total VET students and courses 2021: program enrolments, ABS, Regional Population, 2021](#)

# Skills and Training Profile

- Around 70% of VET activity between 2017 and 2021 focused on
  - Engineering and related technologies
  - Agriculture, environmental and related studies
  - Management and commerce
  - Society and culture
- Engineering and related technologies training has been consistently the most popular choice
- Management and commerce training has been steadily declining

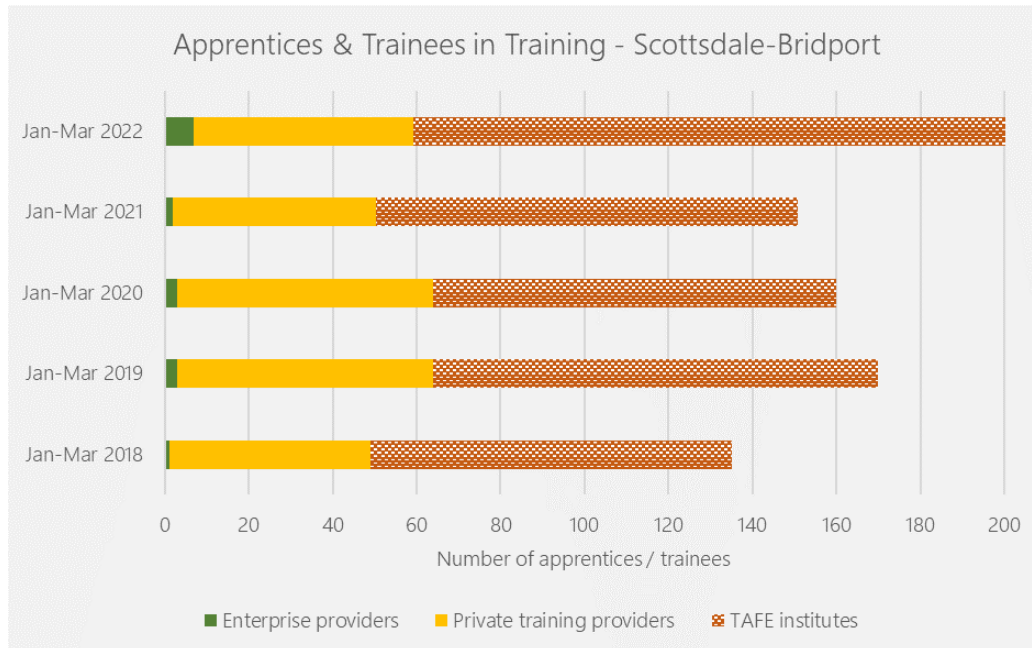


Source: [NCVER, Total VET students and courses 2021: program enrolments](#)



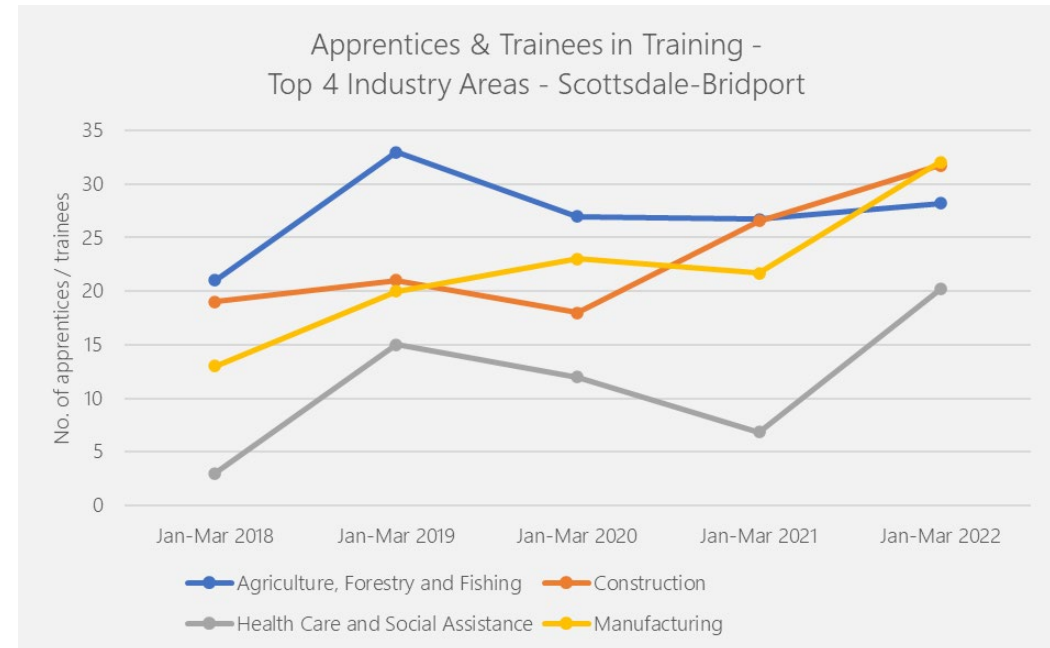
# Skills and Training Profile

- Apprentice/trainee numbers have increased following a decline in 2020 and 2021
- TAFE institutes are the main providers



Source: [NCVER, Apprentices and trainees in training](#)

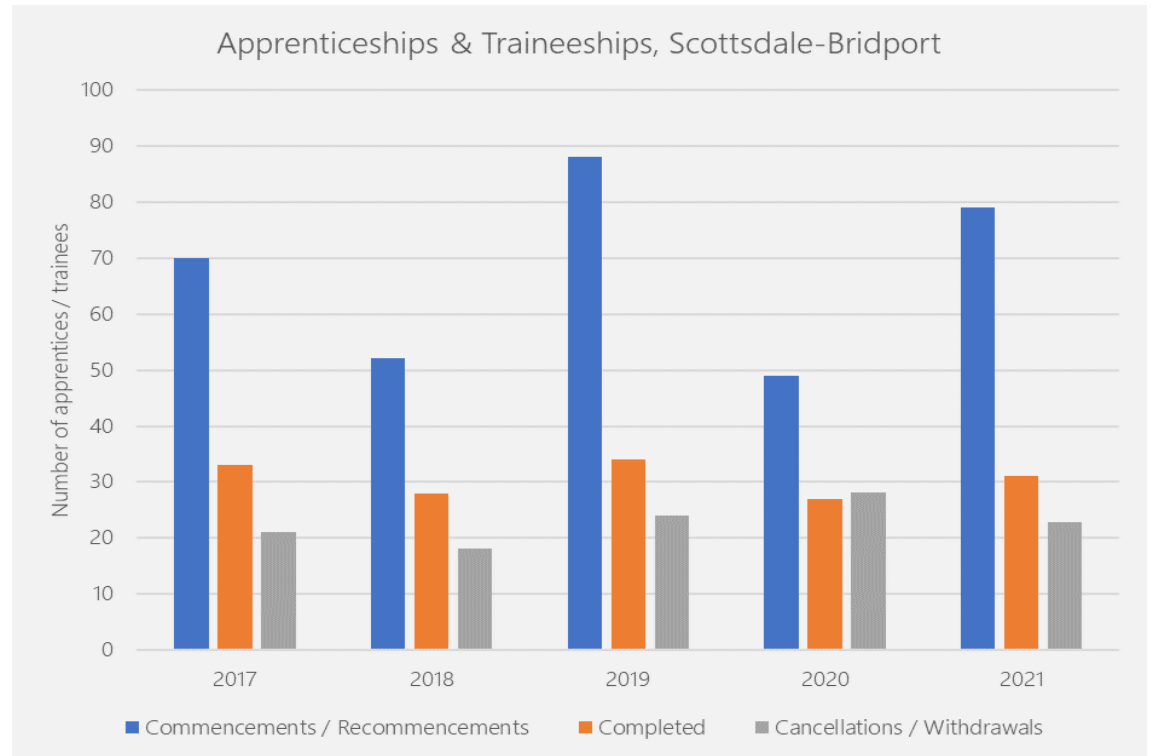
- Key employers of apprentices & trainees
  - Construction; Manufacturing; Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Health care and social assistance



Source: [NCVER, Apprentices and trainees in training](#)

# Skills and Training Profile

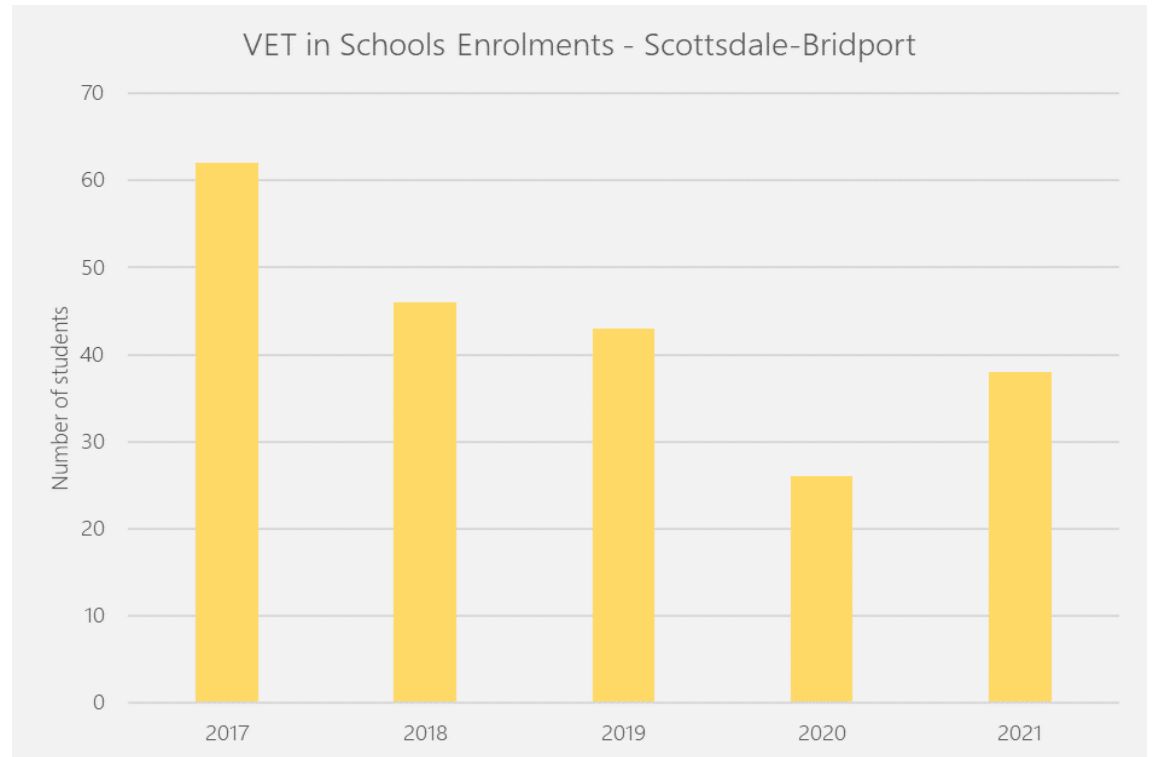
- The total number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements / recommencements by Dorset residents has fluctuated over the past 5 years
  - Fell in 2018 and 2020; rose in 2019 and 2021
- Completions have also fluctuated, but not to the same degree
- Withdrawals and cancellations increased in 2019 and 2020, but fell back in 2021
- In 2021, males accounted for
  - 61% of commencements / recommencements
  - 68% of completions
  - 73% of cancellations and withdrawals



Source: [NCVER, Apprentices and trainees in training](#)

# Skills and Training Profile

- VET in Schools enrolments have declined since 2017, despite a 46% increase between 2020 and 2021
- Enrolments between 2017 and 2021
  - Hospitality (19%)
  - Automotive (17%)
  - Agriculture (12%)
  - Engineering (11%)
  - Construction (7%)
  - Fitness, sport and recreation (6%)



[Source: NCVER, VIS program enrolments 2006-21](#)

# The Lived Experience

---



# The Place

---

- Loss of industries and jobs still keenly felt – *they've lost so much... nearly wrecked the North East... cash and skills have been drained from our community...*
- Almost too close to Launceston – *it increases the inequality gap... professionals live in Launceston and commute...*
- Isolation and remoteness an issue – *Gladstone is a long way from Scottsdale... there's a lack of access to health services... remote learning is a challenge...*
- Homes to rent or buy are scarce and often unaffordable – *people would come here if housing was available... short term rentals have had an impact...*
- Significant differences and opportunities between towns – *the culture of towns is changing... we can leverage local benefits...*



# The People

- Dorset is a tale of two halves – *there's wealth in agriculture, and families with genuine struggles... there's a lot of poverty...*
- There are some deep-seated cultural issues – *we're dealing with small town prejudices and some employer narratives... some think Year 10 is enough...*
- Population is ageing and young people move away for higher education – *retired and semi-retired people bought houses... people are coming here for a quieter life taking houses needed for workers*
- Connections and relationships are strong – *a lot of people are really motivated to improve our community... the community is really supportive...*
- The community rallied to address mental health and suicide – *suicide affects the whole community... mental health issues are huge – online doesn't work for our families...*



# The Schools

- School is the hub of the Winnaleah community – *we support families as well... some students have limited networks of support...*
- Demographics at Scottsdale HS have changed – *we can't compete with Years 11 & 12 offerings in Launceston... none of the school leaders stay for high school...*
- Schools aim to set students up for success but – *a lot of kids have anxiety... students are not as resilient as in the past...*
- Local industry is committed to local schools – *I help out with mock interviews... we do Cows Create Careers, Women in Agriculture, local school tours...*



# The Schools

---

- Work experience and school-based apprenticeships are important – *we're trying to support school-based apprenticeships and work experience... schools are genuinely proactive, especially in the trades sector... 16 have intentions to get an apprenticeship*
- Scottsdale Trade Training Centre provides opportunities but there are challenges
  - Currently provides Certificate II in Agriculture, Engineering and Automotive in partnership with TAFE; some Certificate III courses offered pre-COVID with good employment outcomes





# Skills and Training

- On-the-job training predominates
  - Workers often have to get a job to get training
- Collaboration and flexibility across the training ecosystem is important
  - Trades Training Centre, TasTAFE and RTOs
- “Soft skills’ are highly sought after – *they’re doing their best to provide the course work but not the social skills to out into the wider world...*
- Costs to train and retrain are high – *it’s a nightmare to retrain, better if you just have to tweak... we sent 20 to Mowbray at \$600 per person... training needs to go where the work is...*



# Skills and Training

---

- Employers can be cynical about institutional training – *I've lost faith in the training institutions... we need farmers teaching farmers... TAFE training courses are a waste of time*
- Employers offer apprenticeships and school-based apprenticeships but have difficulties – *we advertised extensively for an apprentice and got just four replies*



# The Employers

---

- Are desperate for employees – *I didn't buy a business to be a slave to it... this year we're struggling for staff... we're overwhelmed with work*
- Prefer word of mouth to recruit but try everything – Jora, Facebook, Seek, North Eastern Advertiser, Gumtree, recruitment agencies, posters
- Love people walking through the door – *they've made the effort, we see them, we speak with them... I want to see people – first impressions... it's hard to get young people, they need to make an approach*
- Like to train their own staff – *we get them young and train them ourselves... we train people across all departments*
- Want to employ locals – *we've had some wonderful local staff... to employ locals is nearly impossible – can't rustle them up*



# The Employers

---

- Want to employ young people – *our average age is 50, we want to attract young people... the trouble with us is we're all in our 60s... we want young people to show interest*
- Offer a huge range of opportunities – *Jobs are coming back but it's a different mix... we need bike mechanics, it's a genuine career move... we're short of maintenance people... always after process operators... there's jobs in cleaning, hospitality, bus driving, chefs, bicycle repair*
- And there's a need for change – *traditional ways are just not going to work any more... farmers are trying to be creative, even asking what hours employees want... SMEs generally good at business but not formally trained in managing people*



# The Workers

- Dorset is a destination for backpackers/internationals
  - Filipinos work in meat processing, Nepalese in aged care and hospitality, Pakistanis and European 'backpackers' in agriculture and hospitality
- There's not a lot of job seekers – *last 12 months lucky to get applicants... the market is tight, we're not seeing a lot of young people come to the area*
- Workers have needs and expectations – *kids don't want to work weekends... expectations of work environment very different in young people... COVID changed the movement of staff and changed expectations*
- Workers may not be seeing career pathways – *they don't see how advanced farm work is, the range of skills... hospitality can be a career where you earn good money...*
- Some local workers lack confidence – *some employees are self-defeating, coming into jobs to fail... it's hard to get young girls with confidence*



# The Barriers

- Lack of transport, particularly access/cost to get a driver's licence – *often jobs going but can't get there... bus service stops at Derby and there are only two services a day...*
- Lack of childcare – *it took 9 months to get my child into day care... there's no after school care, no family day care, you have to travel to Scottsdale or Bridport... childcare not a good option for dairy*
- Housing – *can't employ from the outside because there's no accommodation or its very expensive... we're considering buying land and building something for our employees*
- Perception of agriculture – *there's a lack of knowledge of the agriculture world... there are industry challenges about the way we attract people... dairy's not that dirty a job, you need to be highly skilled*



# The Barriers

---

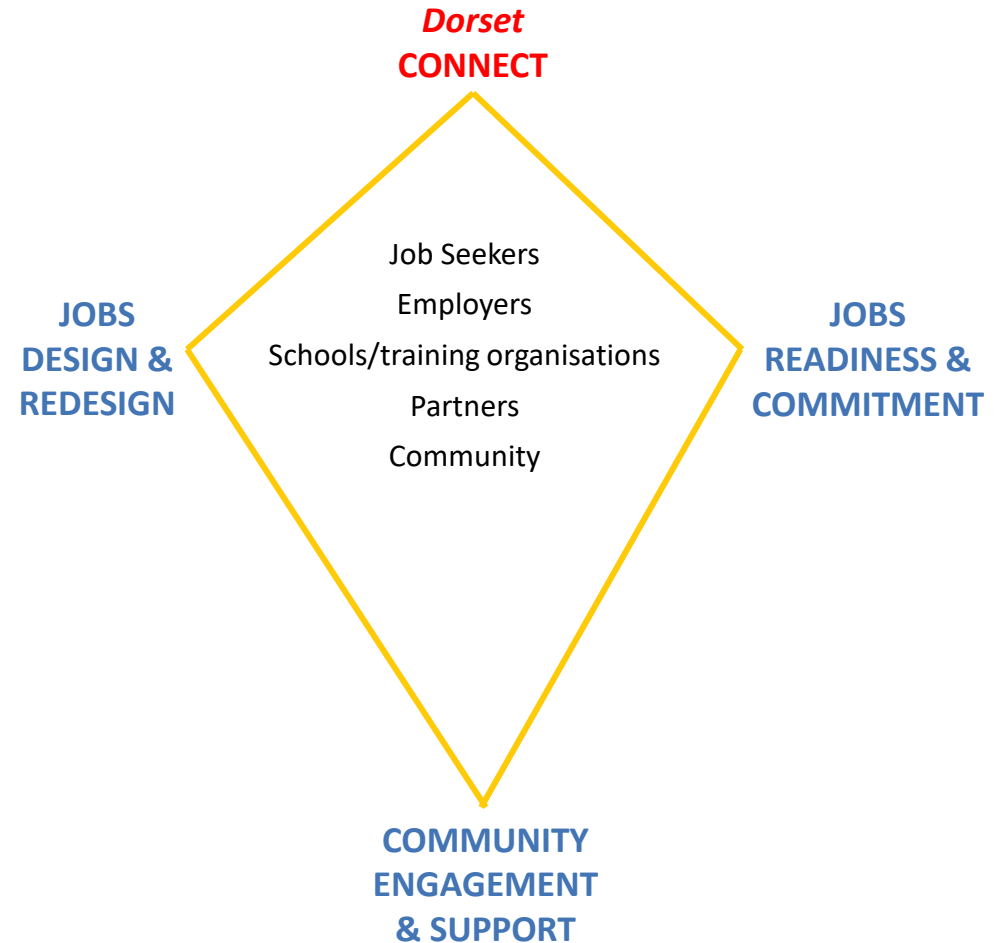
- Many local workers not 'workplace ready' – *I'm happy to employ young people but I can't parent them... it's about values and soft skills – who they are and what they've done... they're doing their best to provide the course work but not the social skills out into the wider world...*
- Locals often don't have the necessary skills – *as you go up the technical pyramid, it gets hard to get people... my challenge is to find locals who can do the job...*
- Low literacy and numeracy – *significant number of young people with low literacy and numeracy... literacy and numeracy an issue with older people 40+*
- Confidence and trust – *I tried to put on a work experience student but they lacked confidence... we want young people to show interest*
- Mental health is a big thing – *there's a stigma around mental health...*

*“I think the barrier's  
yourself...”*

# “Dorset CONNECT”

---

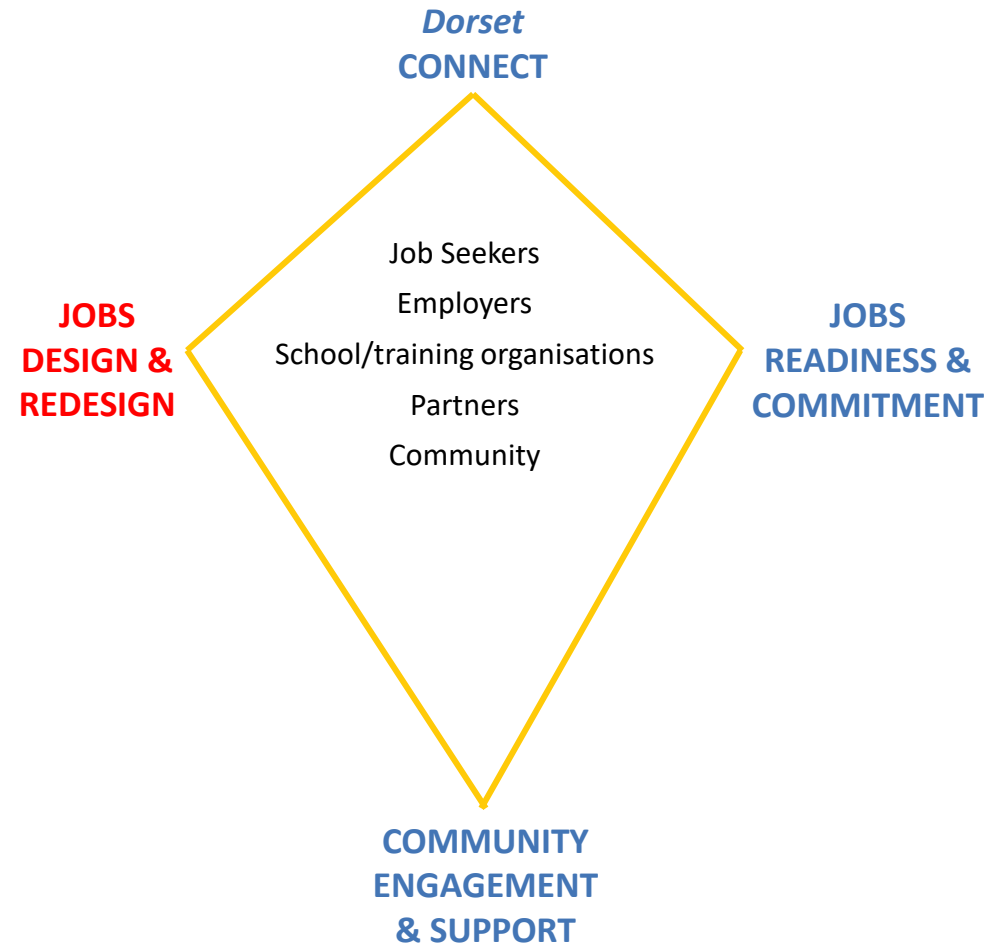
- Characteristics
  - *Relationship-based*
  - *Roving*
  - *Changing conversations*
  - *Building on strengths*
  - *Entrepreneurial*
  - *Opportunistic*
  - *Collaborative*
  - *Open-minded*
  - *Flexible*
  - *Creative*





# “Dorset CONNECT”

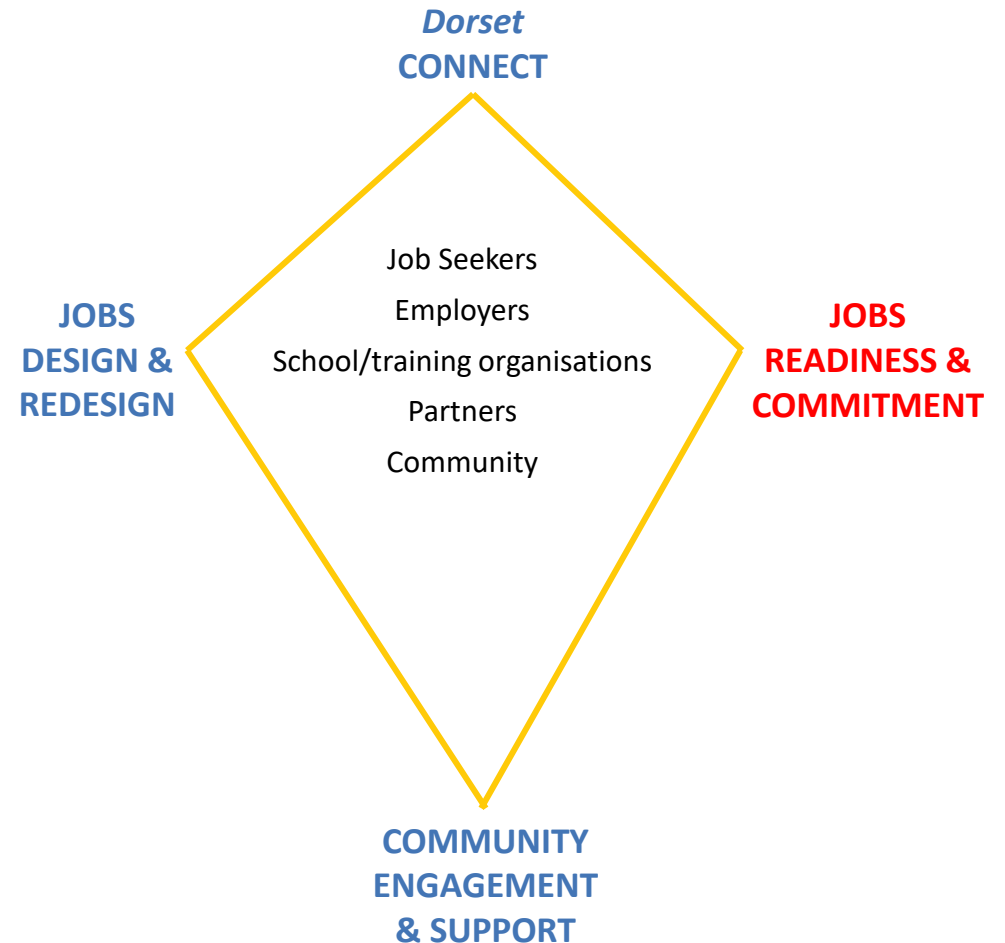
- Jobs Design & Redesign
  - Work with employers, employer organisations and other partners to better align jobs to opportunities, career paths and expectations
    - Support the design of jobs with appeal to different ages, particularly where there is capacity to grow employment (55+)
  - Facilitate increased collaboration across employers to provide more secure, ongoing employment especially relating to seasonality
  - Grow apprenticeship/traineeship and school-based apprenticeship opportunities
  - Grow the appeal of, and promote opportunities available in, Dorset’s primary industry sectors with active partners – Women in Agriculture, TFGA, Rural Youth, Agriculture Centre of Excellence, Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group



# “Dorset CONNECT”

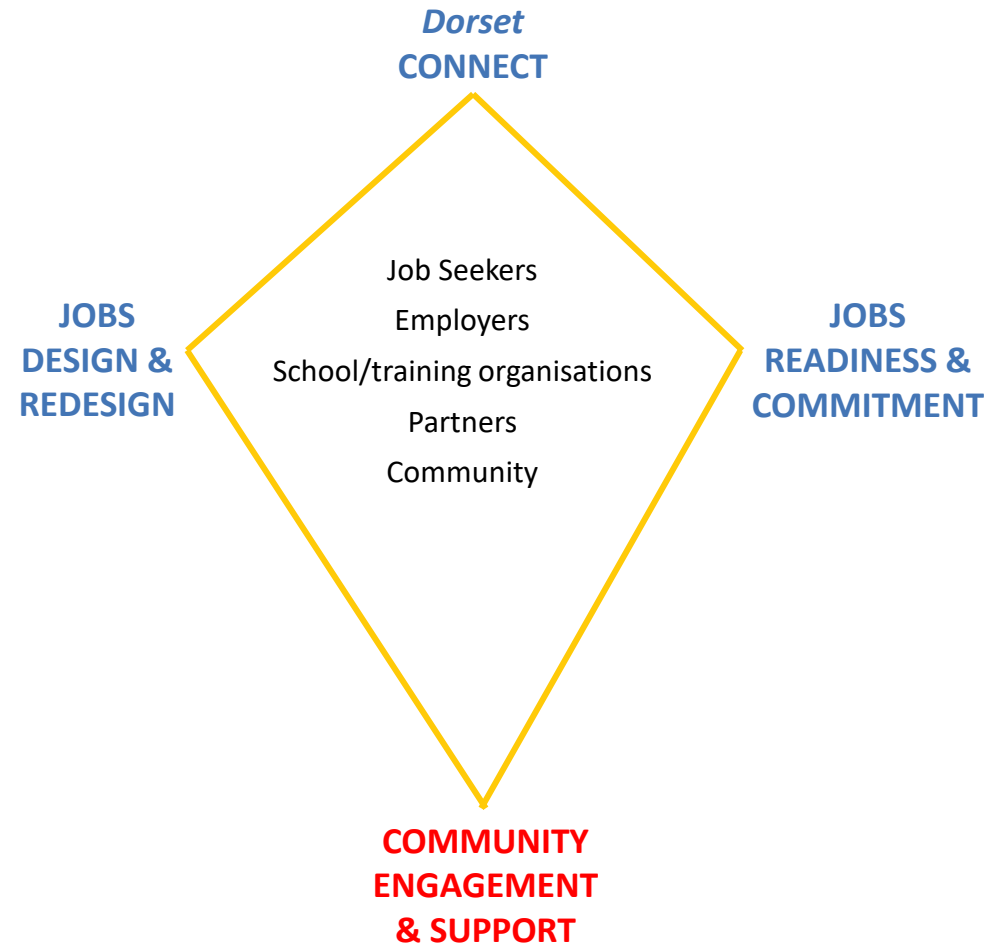
---

- Jobs Readiness and Commitment
  - Work with schools and training organisations to increase tailored training matched to local job opportunities and employer needs
  - Explore ways to build ‘soft skills’ and confidence, and commitment to and understanding of, job requirements – tailored training, employer involvement in mock interviews and setting expectations, and work experience
  - Tap into local knowledge and skills to support local mentoring and other knowledge transfer opportunities
  - Work with local employment agencies to develop responses that help to address barriers to employment for individuals



# “Dorset CONNECT”

- Community Engagement and Support
  - Work with the Community House and schools to increase community understanding of job readiness
  - Investigate opportunities to address transport barriers – CTST, driver licencing access
  - Identify and support development of childcare services especially through training
  - Work with schools, 26TEN and others to increase literacy and numeracy skills
  - Engage with service providers including mental health practitioners to increase understanding of, and support for, job seekers as required
  - Engage with influencers in towns across Dorset to tailor and refine the opportunities



## APPENDIX 3 – DATA SOURCES AND GLOSSARY

### Data sources

Data used in the compilation of this report included publicly available data from:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data (2011, 2016 and 2021)
- The National Centre for Vocational Education Research
- Real Estate Institute of Tasmania
- economy.id.com.au – including National Economics (NIEIR micro simulation model); Australian Bureau of Statistics Business Register, Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data

At the time of preparation of the report, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data for 2021 was progressively being released. The data in the report reflects the data available as of early December 2022.

### Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
BODEC	Break O'Day Employment Connect
DIDO	Drive in drive out
LGA	Local Government Area
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SEIFA	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage
SHS	Scottsdale High School
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TTC	Trade Training Centre
VET	Vocational education and training
WOM	Word of mouth

## APPENDIX 4 – ENDNOTES

---

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 & 2021
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 4 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 5 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 6 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, 2016 to 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 7 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour force survey catalogue number 6202.0, and Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).
- 10 Real Estate Institute of Tasmania > Market Facts > Suburb Reports ([reit.com.au](http://reit.com.au))
- 11 Real Estate Institute of Tasmania > Market Facts > Suburb Reports ([reit.com.au](http://reit.com.au))
- 12 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 13 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 14 Local workers qualifications, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 15 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)
- 16 NCVER, Total VET students and courses 2021: program enrolments
- 17 NCVER, VIS program enrolments 2006-21
- 18 NCVER, VIS program enrolments 2006-21
- 19 NCVER Databuilder, Total VET students and courses 2021: program enrolments, ABS, Regional Population, 2021
- 20 NCVER, Apprentices and trainees in training
- 21 NCVER, Apprentices and trainees in training