

Invitation to:

Contribute to the development of the Central West Queensland Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries Workforce Plan

RAPAD is partnering with Jobs Queensland to develop a workforce plan to support a ‘grow your own’ workforce for the arts, cultural and creative industries in central western Queensland.

There will be a focus on industry-led, community centred approaches to drive local solutions to workforce challenges. The Grow Your Own Regional Workforce model is about looking at the workforce that is available locally and upskilling, reskilling and developing them to address the workforce needs collaboratively and locally.

Who is Jobs Queensland?

Jobs Queensland provides strategic advice to the Queensland Government on future workforce planning and development. Their future-focused and place-based work and engagement brings together industry, regions, employers and the community to identify and address future workforce demands.

Why the arts, cultural and creative industries in CWQ?

Research by the Regional Australia Institute highlights a clear link between the presence of creative industries in small to mid-sized towns and improved perceptions of liveability. This underscores that workforce planning in the arts, cultural and creative industries in CWQ is not only important for the industry itself, but also vital to the long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the region.

Workforce planning will help address a range of industry-specific challenges. The industry encompasses a highly diverse array of roles, from individual practitioners to larger organisations employing many people. A strategic workforce development plan will support this diversity while also responding to persistent issues, including the high levels of unpaid and voluntary work and the strongly gendered nature of the workforce, where women are significantly overrepresented. These dynamics raise important considerations regarding remuneration, recognition, visibility and the broader value placed on creative work.

The plan will also explore opportunities to build a more inclusive industry, one that better reflects and supports First Nations communities and people with disability.

A locally led workforce plan, grounded in regional strengths and aspirations, is essential. By leveraging the unique landscape, cultural richness, remoteness and strong community spirit of CWQ, the plan can attract, retain and support a skilled creative workforce, from both within the region and beyond. This is a powerful opportunity to ‘grow our own’ workforce and secure the future of arts, culture and creativity across the region.

Why we need your input

It’s important to develop a workforce plan which is reflective of the needs of the industry and communities in our region. To achieve this, we want to hear your insights into the industry and those of your community, focussing on workforce skills and priorities.

What will be discussed?

- During the forum we will present the findings of recent research and analysis into the region and industry. We will be exploring your thoughts around: The workforce skills that are emerging or exist for the arts, cultural and creative industries now, and in the future.
- The skills that need to be planned for.
- The support required to attract and keep people to the region and industry and strategies that you have seen working.
- Training and education gaps and supports.
- Emerging trends that might impact skills needs in the future.
- How best to support, grow and develop local businesses.

RAPAD Region Arts, Cultural and Creative workforce

Central Western Queensland has a rich and diverse arts, cultural and creative heritage shaped by its striking landscape and the resilient of its communities. The region's creative industries are broad and multifaceted, encompassing a mix of full-time employment, business ownership, volunteerism and leisure-based participation. Arts, culture and creativity are deeply woven into the social, economic and environmental fabric of the region, making a significant contribution to community identity, wellbeing and resilience.

- **Workforce under-representation:** Activity within the arts, cultural and creative industries in the RAPAD region does not match the workforce profile, which is consistent with findings across Australia. Creative work may be project based, seasonal and very often undertaken alongside other forms of employment and thus under-reported in census data.
- Indigenous representation in the workforce: Census data indicates there are no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples

employed in arts and recreations services in the RAPAD region. This data is contrary to what is anecdotally reported where we know artists are actively working within the industry.

- **Volunteer trends:** Volunteerism is common within the sector, with reports that unpaid creative work takes as much time as paid work, that work is undertaken for little or no financial gain and that education and training is ongoing but undertaken in time outside of paid employment. The industry relies heavily on volunteers who are significant contributors to the arts, cultural and creative landscape across the region.
- **Age distribution:** The age of the arts, cultural and creative industries workforce in the RAPAD region reveals key trends in participation. The largest cohort is workers ages 25 to 34 years, reflecting early to mid-career engagement with the industry. There is a noticeable dip in the 45 to 54 years age group, followed by a resurgence in participation among those aged 55 to 64 years.
- **Gender representation:** Within the RAPAD region's arts and recreation services workforce, females slightly outnumber males, comprising 53.4 per cent of workers compared to 46.6 per cent male representation. However, gender representation varies across age groups, with some cohorts showing more marked imbalances.

Education and skills development

- **Path of lifelong learning:** Creative workers nurture talent and career opportunities through education and training. Increasingly, many people turn to alternative forms of learning and beyond formal qualifications in fine arts, performing arts or cultural management of more traditional pathways.
- **Levels of qualifications and pathways:** There are a range of options for training and education from certificate level through to post graduate studies and census data indicates that often more formal qualifications are the basis of lifelong learning.

Labour market dynamics and challenges

- **Growth sectors:** A mixed outlook for the sector growth is anticipated in museum operation based on the regions strong tourism industry. Other growth areas are in manufacturing including niche or artisanal production and in professional, scientific and technical services often in a freelance or consultancy capacity.
- **Specific labour shortages with the industry:** The region lacks technical and production expertise that is costly to import.

Future Directions and skills needs

- **Workforce development focus:** Future workforce strategies should focus on creative entrepreneurship, leveraging digital technologies and diversifying income.
- **Pathways:** Future workforce planning should include development and support of career pathways including mentoring opportunities.

Opportunities

- Strengthen regional cultural identity through innovation
- Growing cultural tourism and heritage arts
- Linking arts and health
- Educational pipeline development

- Transitioning skills from declining to growth industries
- Leveraging major projects and infrastructure developments

Enablers

- Continued funding to sustain creative initiatives and innovation
- Access to broader markets and networks for regional artists and organisations
- Improved infrastructure such as housing, transport and internet connectivity
- Support for collaboration and cross-sector partnerships, especially with tourism, health and education.

Implications for workforce planning

The combination of industry-specific barriers and regional structural challenges means that a coordinated approach is needed to address labour shortages. Solutions may include:

- Targeted upskilling in technical and event related fields.
- Investment in digital infrastructure and flexible training delivery.
- Development of regional career pathways and mentoring opportunities to retain talent.
- Broader support for housing, childcare and transport to improve regional liveability.
- Stronger support for creative entrepreneurship, allowing practitioners to build sustainable careers without leaving the region.

This is just the beginning, and we want to know more! We look forward to sharing further insights from our research and hearing directly from you as we develop a workforce plan that reflects our region, our communities, our people and arts, cultural and creative industries in CWQ.

Be a part of developing our Central West Queensland Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries Workforce Plan

Community consultation dates and locations:

Thursday 17 July 5:30pm – 7:30pm	Friday 18 July 10am – 12pm	Wednesday 23 July 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Barcaldine Council Chambers	Alpha Council Chambers	Tambo Grassland Gallery
Blackall Cultural Centre	Aramac Council Chambers	Details coming soon for: Bedourie Birdsville Boulia Jundah
Jericho Shire Hall	Blackall Cultural Centre	
Longreach The Drivers Place	Longreach The Drivers Place	
Winton Neighbourhood Centre	Winton Neighbourhood Centre	

Light refreshments served

Please register here: bit.ly/GrowYourOwn-CWQWorkshops

Or scan:



Contact:

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