

REGIONAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY SKILLS AND TRAINING AUDIT

LITHGOW'S MANUFACTURING SKILLS STRENGTHS AND GAPS

The *Regional Manufacturing Industry Skills and Training Audit* provides a snapshot of Lithgow's current manufacturing capabilities, training infrastructure, and future workforce needs.

Key findings

- Lithgow has a strong base in advanced manufacturing, with major employers like Thales showcasing high-skill production capacity.
- The region faces challenges in workforce retention, skills gaps in emerging technologies, and underutilised training facilities.
- Growth opportunities exist in the proposed Greenspot industrial precinct, STEM-focused training, and on-the-job learning models.

Training infrastructure

- Lithgow hosts a TAFE campus, a university clinical school, and two high schools with trade training centres.
- Facilities include engineering workshops, electrotechnology labs, and simulation spaces for aged care and nursing.
- Despite this, many programs experience low enrolment and completion rates, particularly in high-demand areas like welding and digital skills.

Workforce needs

- Employers report a need for advanced manufacturing skills, including robotics, CNC machining, and composite materials.
- Hands-on training is preferred, with many employers favouring workplace-based learning over classroom-only models.
- There is a growing demand for STEM and digital literacy, alongside foundational skills and career readiness.

Recommendations

- Strengthen coordination between training providers and employers.
- Expand STEM and advanced manufacturing offerings.
- Promote local career pathways and apprenticeships.
- Address barriers to training for underrepresented groups.

Strategic investment and collaboration are essential to ensure Lithgow's manufacturing workforce is equipped for future opportunities.



Strategic investment and collaboration are essential to ensure Lithgow's manufacturing workforce is equipped for future opportunities.

PLANNING FOR LABOUR MARKET CHANGE AND ENERGY TRANSITION IN LITHGOW

REPORT

The *Planning for Labour Market Change and Energy Transition in Lithgow* report provides a strategic framework to guide the region through its energy transition, anticipating significant workforce impacts from the decline of coal and coal-fired power generation as Australia transitions towards net zero goals.

It outlines opportunities for industry diversification, workforce reskilling, and community resilience, with a focus on building Lithgow's adaptive capacity – its ability to respond to change by leveraging its financial, human, institutional and natural resources.

Commissioned by Lithgow City Council and prepared by the University of South Australia, the report was led by Professor Andrew Beer – one of Australia's foremost experts in regional labour market transitions. It contains five essential reports which each address a critical component of Lithgow's workforce transition, ensuring that planning is both strategic and responsive to local needs:

01 Regional Manufacturing Industry Skills and Training Audit

Identifies current and emerging skills gaps in manufacturing, helping align training programs with industry needs and investment opportunities.

02 Regional Workforce Adaptive Capacity Plan

Assesses the region's ability to respond to economic change, focusing on resilience, transferable skills, and systems that support workforce agility.

03 Long-Term Regional Workforce Plan

Provides a strategic roadmap for workforce development over the next 10–20 years, ensuring alignment with future industries and demographic shifts.

04 Long-Term Education and Training Pathways Plan

Maps out clear, accessible pathways from school to employment, helping young people and career changers navigate evolving job markets.

05 Rapid Response Plan

Ensures the region is prepared to act quickly in the event of sudden closures or job losses, minimising disruption and supporting affected workers.



The report recommends a place-based, community-led approach as key to successfully navigating major economic transformation.

