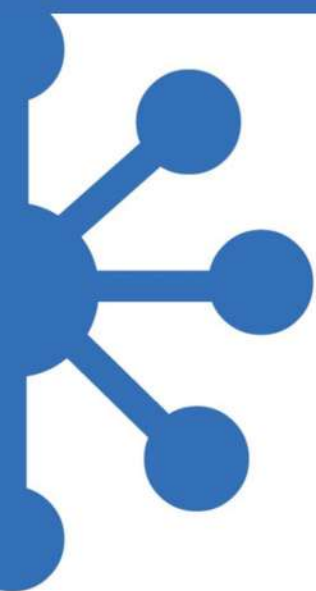




M I D C O A S T  
**connect**  
opportunities for youth

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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# OUR STORY SO FAR



## Our Vision

To be a community leader facilitating quality and sustainable opportunities, for young people.



## Our Mission

To provide effective education, training and employment partnerships for young people.



## Our Values

We will always:

- nurture opportunities for lifelong learning.
- strive for the best stakeholder outcomes.
- act with honesty and display ethical behaviour.
- demonstrate leadership in the community.



## Our History

Mid Coast Connect, originally known as Hastings Workplace Learning, started in 1997 through a school-business collaboration to coordinate mandatory industry-specific work placements in HSC Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses.

Program delivery expanded from Kempsey to Taree in 2006, bringing the more appropriate name of Mid Coast Youth Career Services. Programs continued to include Work Placement, with the addition of the Local Community Partnership initiatives, Career and Transition Support and the Adopt-a-School program.

In 2010 Local Community Partnerships were replaced by the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program. The service delivery region further expanded to Bulahdelah, and we changed our name to Mid Coast Connect.

Mid Coast Connect merged with Youth Directions in 2016 which allowed Work Placement to be delivered in the Coffs Coast area for the next year. Mid Coast Connect also supported youth employment through the Regional VET Pathways initiative which ran as a pilot program for seven years, including an expansion to the Coffs Coast in 2021.

Over the past 25 years, Mid Coast Connect has delivered a range of career and transition programs including Apprentice mentoring, Links to Learning, and Indigenous Youth Career Pathways. Mid Coast Connect also operated as a Group Training Organisation from 2014 to 2020.

In 2022 Mid Coast Connect delivered Work Placement Coordination Services and the Get Back in the Game initiative for the Department of Education, as well as a number of career pathways initiatives.



# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Mid Coast Connect supports young people with their transition from school into further education, training and employment.

Current Government-funded programs include:

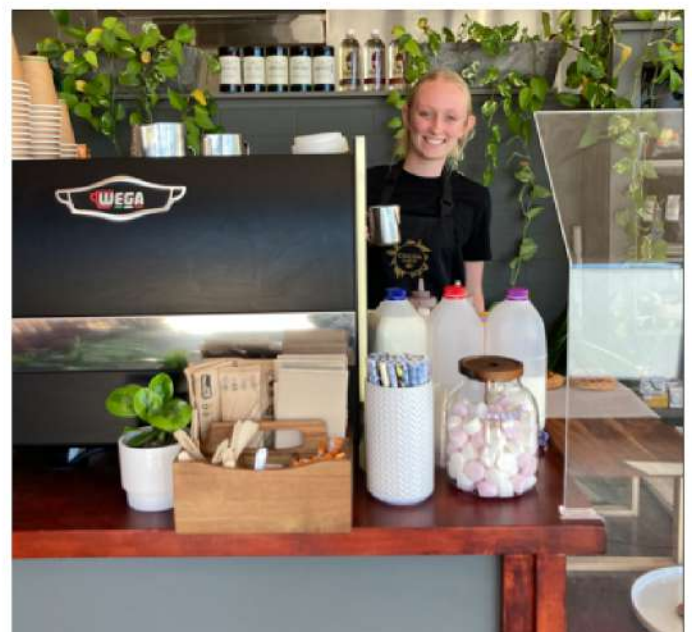
- Work Placement Coordination Services (Kempsey to Bulahdelah)
- Career Connect Program (Coffs Harbour to Bulahdelah)

Mid Coast Connect works with every high school and TAFE campus in the region. We provide workshops, presentations and industry guest speakers to help prepare young people for successful participation in the workplace. We also provide resources and professional development opportunities for teachers.

Mid Coast Connect supports employers to connect with young people to increase opportunities for employment, apprenticeship and traineeship pathways, as well as providing workplace learning experiences.

Through our community partnerships, Mid Coast Connect is well supported by other service providers, training providers and local businesses to deliver a range of projects and activities to support young people's career pathways.

In 2022, this included additional work experience and work readiness programs, access to Construction training and the local Country Education Funds for the Hastings, Macleay and Great Lakes areas.





# OUR BOARD

Mid Coast Connect is a not-for-profit, incorporated association and charity.

Mid Coast Connect is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as well as NSW Fair Trading. Mid Coast Connect fully complies with the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 1990. As a Public Benevolent Institution with Deductible Gift Recipient status, Mid Coast Connect also benefits from applicable tax concessions.

Mid Coast Connect is governed by a local Board of management with nine representatives from business and industry, education and training and community organisations. Board members are drawn from throughout the service region and serve on a voluntary basis without remuneration.

The Board Executive in 2022 comprises of Ian Chegwidden (Chair and Public Officer), Kellon Beard (Deputy Chair), Graham Morgan (Secretary) and Frances Sargent (Treasurer). Additional members include Stephen Pares, Mick Eller, Maura Luxford, Kerrie Clark and Mark Nunan.

The Board is responsible for leading Mid Coast Connect's strategic direction, monitoring its implementation and fulfilling stakeholders' expectations. The Board is accountable for Mid Coast Connect's overall performance, compliance with relevant laws, codes of conduct and ethical standards and for the oversight of its risk management.

The Board empowers the Chief Executive Officer to manage the operations of the organisation within the limitations set by the Board.



# CHAIR REPORT

As Chair of Mid Coast Connect during 2022, I am pleased to report on another successful year of operation. This is the 25th year, since the inception of our organisation, then known as Hastings Workplace Learning. We have assisted many thousands of young people with their education, training and careers during this time.

We have continued the successful delivery of the Work Placement program, now in its second year of the current 5-year contract. The continuation of the program has been our core business and the basis for the establishment of our organisation, in 1997.

2022 has also seen the conclusion of the Regional VET Pathways program and the introduction of the 'Get Back in the Game' program. This initiative is designed to assist young people disengaged from education to either re-enter education and training or transition into employment. Once again this is a challenging program to deliver, however, it provides the opportunity for some rewarding outcomes.

This year has seen the resumption of our Careers Expos, both in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie, following cancellations during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. In excess of 1100 young people attended the Port Macquarie event, and 600 attended Coffs Harbour. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the organisations, businesses and staff that gave up their valuable time to attend these days and provide this information and guidance to our young people.

As noted elsewhere in this Annual Report, NorthCorp carried out the annual audit, with the report once again finding that Mid Coast Connect has been well-managed and is in a sound financial position.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their considered and wise advice, direction and leadership, as well as their ongoing support and volunteered time throughout 2022.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to express my personal thank you as well as the gratitude of the other members of the Board, to all of the staff of Mid Coast Connect for their continued efforts and dedication to assisting our young people with their education, training, and employment and ultimately their future. The continued success and reputation of Mid Coast Connect is a direct result of the expertise and dedication of our staff and the management and leadership of our CEO, Jenny Fraser.

**Ian Chegwidden**

CHAIRPERSON





# CEO REPORT

We are extremely lucky to live in communities where employers see the value of supporting young people to take their first steps on their career journey, whether it's work placement or paid employment. Mid Coast Connect's start to the year was uncertain as COVID continued to impact our work. We experienced challenges early in the year with schools limiting access and work placement activities as part of their COVID Smart Strategies. Many businesses suffered ongoing staff shortages and interruptions. However, I must say that it continues to amaze me year after year just how supportive our business community members are. Despite experiencing their own business pressures, we have many employers putting up their hands to give young people an opportunity.

Work Placement has been our foundation program and our long-standing relationships provide opportunities to connect with schools and employers to offer more activities. Additional team members this year enabled us to conduct Teacher Industry Days, work readiness workshops and work experience opportunities. We now have the capacity to offer programs and activities on a cost-recovery basis, which has been well-received by the Department of Education and a number of individual schools.

The Regional VET Pathways pilot came to an end after seven years and numerous contract extensions. We successfully tendered for the replacement program, Get Back in the Game and branded it as Career Connect. This also allowed us to continue our commitment to the Coffs Coast. We increased our service delivery and more team members were appointed to ensure that we are better able to support the whole region, particularly the Macleay and Nambucca Valleys.

Like many businesses, this year we experienced a number of staff moving on from Mid Coast Connect. This is also one of the disadvantages of relying on government grants and the result of having a team that's well connected with their community and the opportunities we provide for transferrable skill development. However, I must say that this did not hold us back. Working with our ever-supportive Board, we took some time to review and refresh, resulting in our new staffing recruitment and retention strategy. We are extremely lucky to have grown a team of dedicated professionals who are working hard to make the most of whatever the situation is, with our young people always at the centre of our work. It's rewarding to see the real difference our team makes in the lives of our young people, as well as the impact we can have on our community, particularly through the difficult times.

**Jenny Fraser**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





# OUR TEAM





# WORK PLACEMENT

Work placement is a mandatory component of industry-based Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, that students can choose as part of their studies for the Higher School Certificate. Mid Coast Connect coordinates the placement of students from schools and TAFE campuses, with host employers in 21 specified industry areas for a minimum of 70 hours over Years 11 and 12. Work placement allows students to practice and develop their industry competencies and employability skills in a real work context.

Work placement for 2022 still felt the impact of COVID, with less than 400 active employers available. However, by the end of the year, we had doubled our available host employers, with 797 to support the program. This included 96 new employers who had hosted their first-ever student. This reflects the team proactively working with all stakeholders, visiting employers, and supporting new employers.

The Work Placement team worked closely with all the schools, delivering work readiness sessions and ensuring all students needing work placement met their required placement hours. Employers as well as schools provided good news stories from their experiences. A testament that 'work placement works', many students gained apprenticeships, traineeships, and casual work.

The Work Placement program delivery is supported by a Reference Group, which meets at least twice a year. The purpose of the meetings is to encourage feedback from education and training providers, host employers, and other key stakeholders to support monitoring, review, and continuous improvement of work placement delivery. It's a good opportunity to address the challenges experienced at a local level, as well as encourage communication and networking between those in attendance.

In 2022, Reference Group meetings continued to be conducted via Teams, which allowed greater participation from schools and employers from across our region. Presentations were then emailed to all invited to ensure good communication. Attendees included Beth Bailey, Graham Bramley, Jian Cong, Joe Currall, Linda Drenkhahn, Greg Glanville, Damien Keen, Erin Lute, Karen McCann, Mark Nunan, Sally Shaw, Amanda Thompson, Grant Weatherby, and Mid Coast Connect staff.

**Sandra Slattery**

SCHOOL TO WORK MANAGER







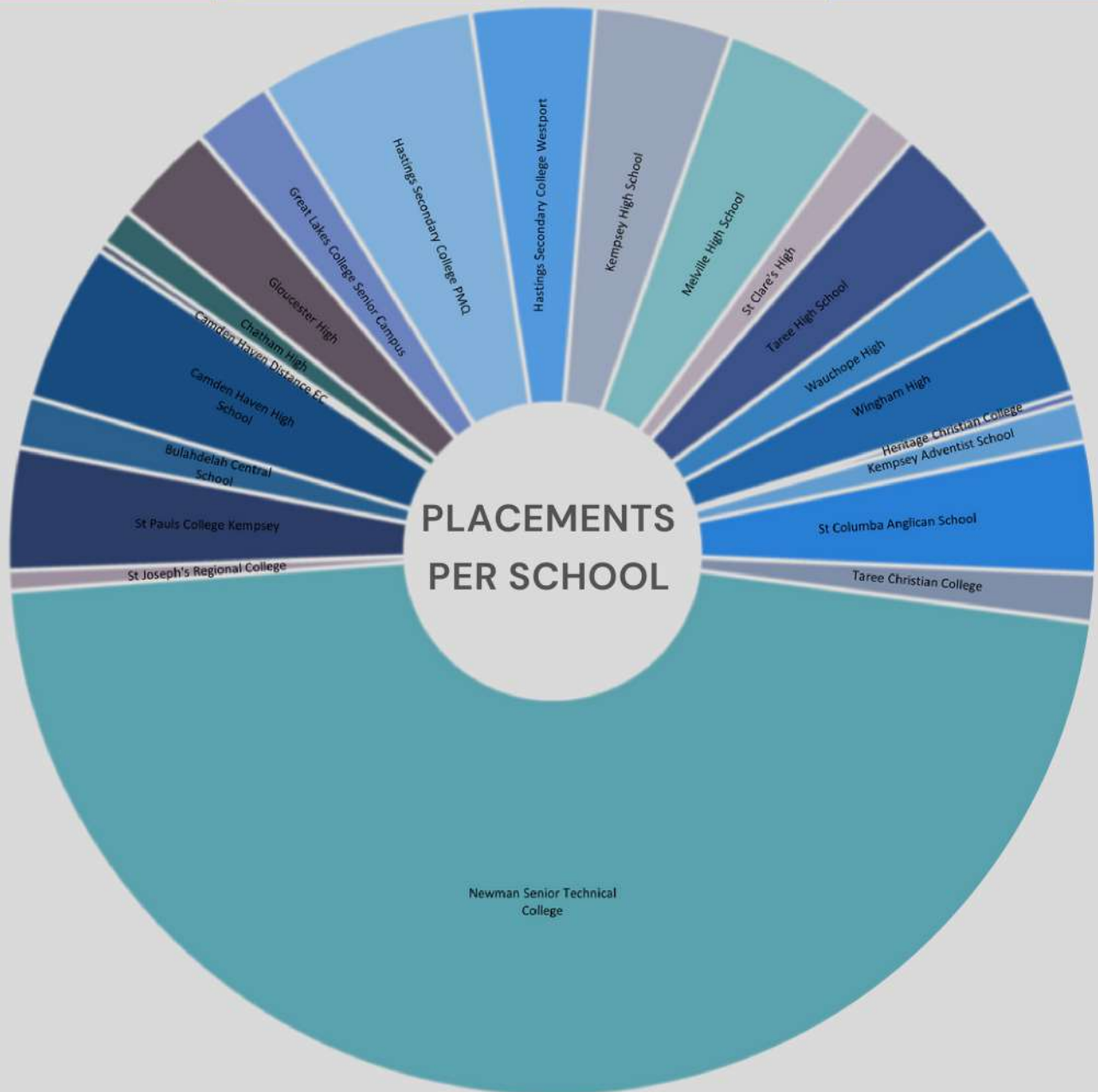


**21**  
schools

**5**  
TAFE campuses

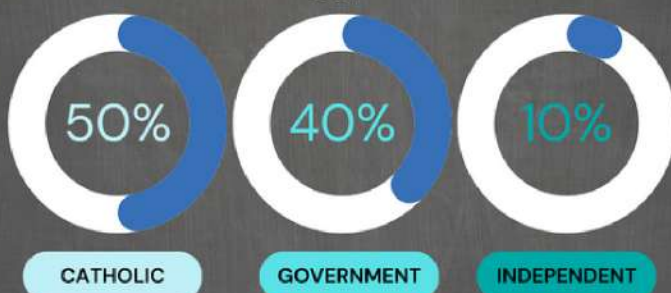
**1032**  
students

**2155**  
placements



### PLACEMENTS PER SECTOR

2022



### INDUSTRY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS (ICF)

BOARD ENDORSED COURSES (BEC)

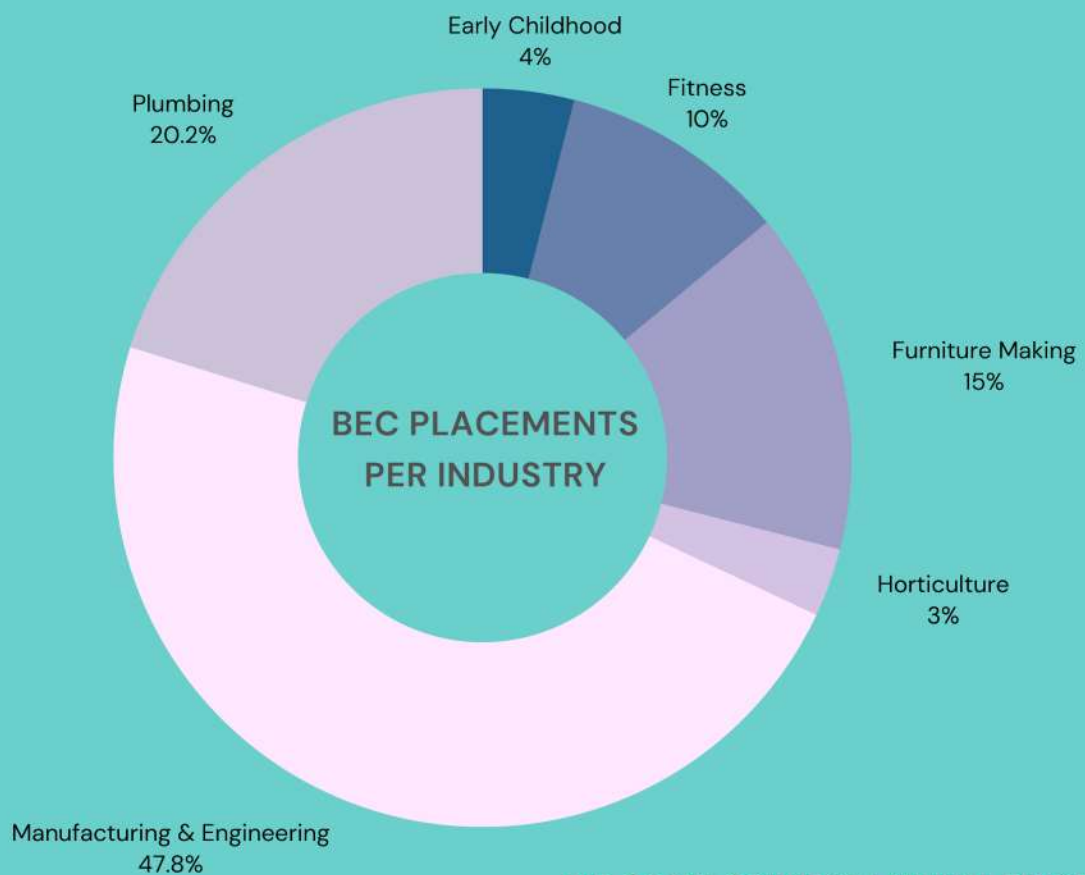
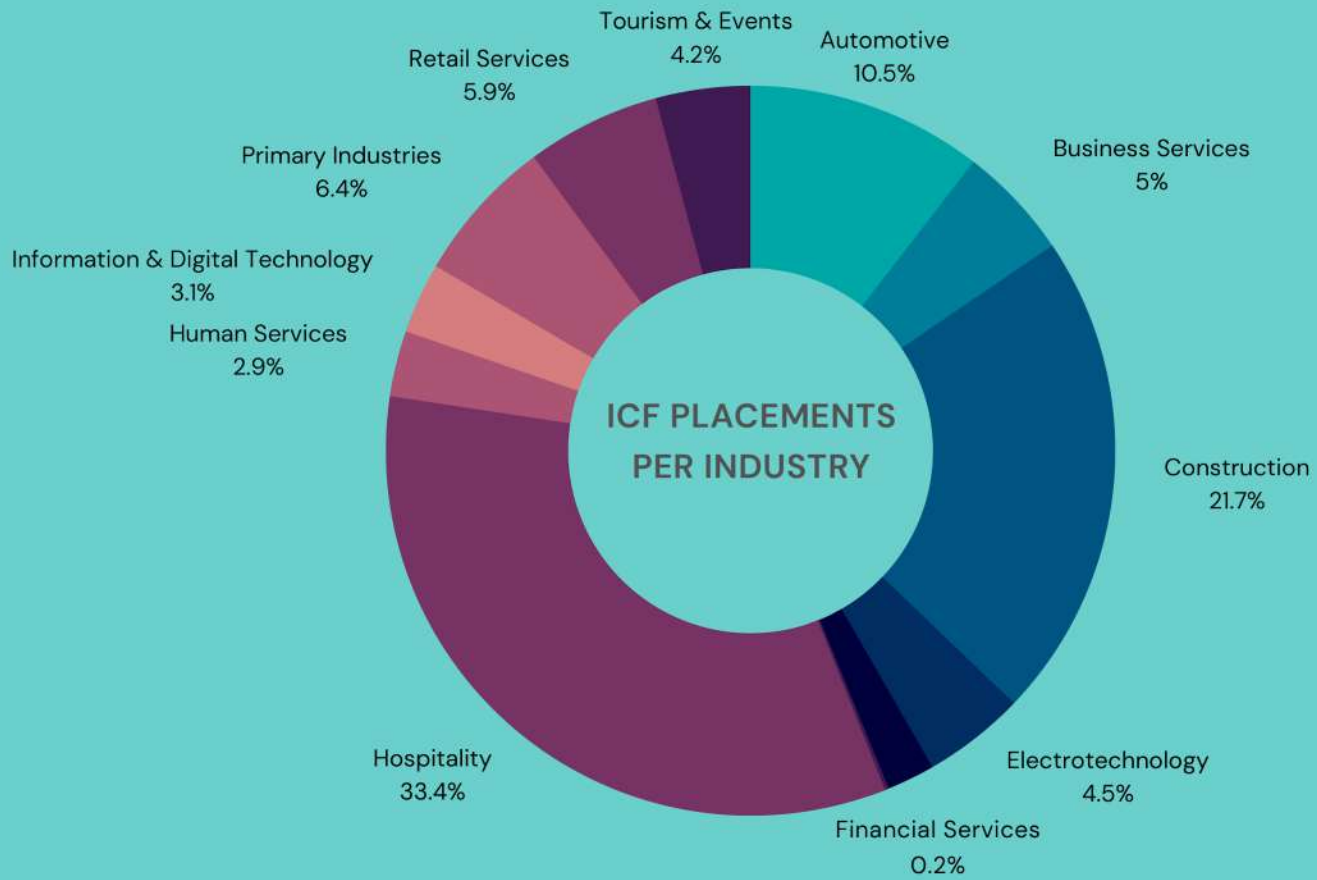


**33%**  
hospitality

**22%**  
construction

**11%**  
automotive

**6%**  
primary industries





# Work Placement is Roaring!

After two years of having to postpone the event due to COVID and floods, finally Nitro Circus: You Got This Tour arrived in Port Macquarie on Friday 18 March 2022. An explosive, high-adrenaline action sports spectacular featuring some of the best action sports athletes from around the globe were in town for one night only. This event had a crowd of 8000 people, one of the biggest shows to come to Port Macquarie.

Mid Coast Connect was thrilled to be contacted by Craig Gibson the Director of Regional Touring from Thrill One Sports & Entertainment. We were approached to see if we had anyone interested in helping with pre and post-event set up and pack up, and to help on the evening with, ushering & scanning of tickets.

This was a perfect work placement opportunity for students studying Entertainment, and Travel, Tourism & Event. Ten St Columba Anglican School students volunteered to participate in this work placement experience. Craig, who lectured Events Management at SCU in Coffs Harbour for over 10 years, and the Nitro Circus Production Manager Michael took the students under their wings to provide a positive learning environment and gave them an amazing opportunity to work at a real-life entertainment event.

Work placement allows students to practice their classroom learning in the real world of work. 'In terms of your students, I can't speak highly enough of their efforts and enthusiasm in assisting us to put on the show on Friday,' said Craig. 'I had the manager of Ticket Master compliment the ticket scanners on their performance and mentioned they were up with the best he has worked with.'





## Work Placement Works

Finding new employees and giving back to the community are some of the benefits of hosting work placement students.

Madi, from Kempsey High School, completed her work placement week with LJ Hooker. It was a good match, with Madi having a work trial and being offered a full-time job. 'It's good to give back to the community and for the students to see what it's like in the real world.' said Tracy Smith, Office Manager. 'It was a great outcome for us and Madi. We found a great new receptionist and she found a job'.

HEM Property at Port Macquarie is another exemplary workplace that gives students the chance to take the skills they have been learning in the classroom and put them into use in the office environment. From work placement, Inez was offered a school-based traineeship. However, she decided to leave school and enquired if they had a full-time position available.

Naomi, one of the Directors said 'It was a no-brainer. Inez did so well in both her placements and her diligence was on point. Needless to say, we hired her as an assistant.' Inez has held that position for 12 months and is now a leasing consultant with a company car.

Work Placement Coordinator, Denise Moore said 'It is wonderful when you hear students have had success from their placements and gained employment as a result.'





# CAREER CONNECT

Mid Coast Connect delivers services to support young people, aged 15 to 19, who are disengaged from education and training and struggling to make effective transitions into sustainable employment. We work one-on-one to help participants re-engage in education and training and support their transitions to employment.

After seven years, 2022 saw the finalisation of the Regional VET Pathways pilot and the successful commencement of the Get Back in the Game program which was branded as Career Connect. The Career Connect program is a career planning and work readiness program for young people, helping young people who have left school and looking for training or work. The program focuses on providing individual case management, mentoring support, work experience and group activities. The new program provides a broader range of activities, greater flexibility, and longer-term support for participants to successfully continue their studies and work.

In 2022, we continued the Job Connect program to assist employers to find suitable apprentices and trainees, by promoting vacancies as well as matching positions to work-ready candidates. In response to the region's limited transport availability, we expanded the Drive Connect program to enable participants to obtain their learner driver licence and undertake professional driving lessons. We partnered with a number of training providers to deliver fee-free training options not previously available to young people, including Construction Pathways, Civil Construction and the Traffic Control course. We also accessed clothing suitable for interviews and work, as well as PPE. Our strong, established collaboration with community experts ensured barriers to engagement were addressed early to give participants the best career start.

## Scott Russell

PATHWAYS PROGRAM MANAGER



**125**

engagements

**42%**

undertook VET  
training

**34%**

entered the  
workforce

**14%**

reengaged with  
school

**62%**

5 days study or  
work

**30%**

3 months study  
or work

**19%**

6 months study  
or work

**69%**

no licence or  
transport



## Partnership Pathways – Under Construction

Mid Coast Connect partnered with Global Skills Development, to provide practical training for 14 Kempsey participants of the Career Connect program. Undertaking the Introduction to Civil Construction course they completed multiple qualifications, including white card, hand and power tools, and basic levelling.

Participants then moved to the second stage of their course to be trained in the use of machinery, including roller and skid steer operations. Practical modules using the machinery was undertaken at the new Kempsey YPSpace Caravan Park, 'The Park'. Here, the participants helped in the clean-up of the site and preparation of pathways for the cabins to arrive.

All participants have enjoyed the course, become more confident in their abilities, and are now ready for work. It's also good to know that their learning has contributed to providing homes for young people.





## Cooking Up A Career

Jacob has gained his dream job, working as an Apprentice Chef at the retro-styled 1950's American diner, Metro Diner, in the busy main street of his hometown Taree.

Jacob met with Mid Coast Connect's Pathways Coordinator, Andrew, after deciding to leave school to start working in hospitality on his way to becoming a chef. After working with Andrew to revise his resume, Jacob took the initiative to deliver these in person to restaurants around town, including to James at Metro Diner. After meeting Jacob, James decided to give him a work trial to see if it was the right fit for both of them. Jacob so impressed the owners, James and Kim, with his dedication, ability to follow instructions and genuine enthusiasm, they offered him an apprenticeship as a chef.

Jacob is now working alongside James, a qualified chef, making the restaurant's signature milkshakes, toasties, hot dogs, burgers, all-day breakfast and other American-style favourites. Jacob said 'I'm thrilled to be working in a job with great people and building a career as a chef. I really appreciate the support Mid Coast Connect provided as well as Metro Diner for putting me on.'

Jacob has also been working hard to get his licence, with Andrew assisting him through our driveCONNECT program. Jacob undertook the Driver Knowledge Test and completed it in under ten minutes with a perfect score!

As you can see by Jacob's grin, he's ecstatic to start driving to his dream job each day, and we're pleased to have helped him on his career journey.





## Job Alerts

With an abundance of employment opportunities available for young people, Mid Coast Connect continues to promote our job vacancy system – Job Alert.

Each week Mid Coast Connect collaborates with local employers to advertise apprenticeships and traineeships, entry-level, and other suitable employment opportunities for young people. This results in an email blast which is then shared on our social media platforms.

We have become a key point of contact to promote local opportunities for young people. This free service assists employers in finding suitable candidates and offers young people an opportunity to gain employment.



## Drive Connect In Action

Jade is now well and truly on her way to becoming a mechanic, as she recently passed her Driver Knowledge Test with flying colours.

After being recommended by a friend, Jade met with Andrew, our Pathways Coordinator. Whilst discussing her options, it came to light that Jade has a passion for all things cars. Jade enrolled at TAFE Taree where she is studying a Certificate I in Auto Vocational Preparation and also spent her spare time practicing for her Driver Knowledge Test. She sat for the test and passed the first attempt.

Now spending all her spare time in and around cars, Jade said 'I'm thrilled with the support Mid Coast Connect provided me and I'm excited to move onto the next phase.' Mid Coast Connect would like to congratulate Jade and we're proud of her achievements.





# APPRENTICESHIPS

With over 100 years of experience in sawmill equipment, AE Gibson & Sons Pty Ltd is a high-tech, innovative business with two large-scale manufacturing centres. Gibsons provide efficient, local, high-capacity structural steel fabrication services to the Mid North Coast construction industry.

Based at Kendall, Gibsons have been working with Mid Coast Connect for the past 25 years. Every year, they create new jobs for the local community through their Apprenticeship and Graduate Engineering programs. They provide work placement for Manufacturing & Engineering students as well as apprenticeship opportunities.

We love partnering with like-minded businesses to support local young people. Gibsons understand the importance of growing the next generation of skills and innovation for the business and the importance of local jobs to a regional community.





# TRAINEESHIPS

Mid Coast Connect promotes employment opportunities and provides assistance with recruiting and mentoring Apprentices and Trainees.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships combine training and work to lead to a nationally recognised qualification. School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships combine paid part-time work with industry-recognised training as part of the HSC.

Mid Coast Connect promotes apprenticeship and traineeship pathways to students as a hands-on way of learning. Many of our senior students who have undertaken work placement progress to apprenticeships and traineeships after school.

We also help employers with advertising vacancies, screening candidates and organising work trials, as well as sign-up information and ongoing employment support.

Nick from New Image Tree & Property Service was one of our employers to benefit from this extra support provided by Mid Coast Connect. We connected Nick with VERTO, to sign Bailey into his traineeship for Certificate II Arboriculture. Mid Coast Connect also arranged for Bailey to obtain a WHS White Card and provides ongoing mentoring support and information to maintain Bailey's employment.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Mid Coast Connect recognises that the success of our programs and service delivery depends on stakeholder relationships and engagement with our community. Without the assistance of the community and other local organisations, we cannot fully support our young people and help them on the path to a successful future.

In 2022 participation included:

- Business Port Macquarie
- Careers Adviser's Association
- Chambers of Commerce – Coffs Harbour, Wauchope, Macleay Valley, Greats Lakes, Taree & Forster
- Coffs Coast Business Women's Network
- Great Port Macquarie Tourism Association
- Hasting, Macleay & Great Lakes Education Funds
- Hastings Business Women's Network
- Hastings Disability Network
- Headspace
- Luminosity Youth Summit
- Macleay Valley Business Network
- Mid Coast Women in Business
- MNC Ignite
- Regional Development Australia
- YPSpace





## Community Service Awards

Mid Coast Connect is very lucky to have our Program Manager, Sandra Slattery, working with us as well as in our local community. In 2022 Sandra was awarded the Wayne Jackson Outstanding Community Service Award as well as being recognised as Surf Life Saving's Volunteer of the Year.

Sandra is a patrolling member of the Tacking Point Surf Club. She has a position on the Club Board of Management as Director of Finance and also holds the role of Surf Sports Director on the Branch Board of Management.

Sandra is also a Trainer and Assessor for both the club and branch, educating new members to gain awards so they can patrol and keep members of the community and visitors safe at the beach. Sandra also assists with the Nippers program which trains young people in surf awareness and skills as well as paving the way for future life savers.

Business Port Macquarie and the Jackson Family honour the memory of the late Wayne Jackson, a local businessman who gave selflessly to his community, by acknowledging an individual for their contribution and inspiration to the community. Sandra said 'I'm very humbled to receive the award. I personally knew Wayne and he always encouraged me to never give up'. It was because of Wayne that Sandra also trained and completed the Port Macquarie Iron Man swim event, wearing a swim cap Wayne had given her. 'Wayne inspired me to enter the iron man event, something I thought would never be achievable'.





# Welcome Back Ironman!

After a long wait from having to postpone this event due to COVID and floods, finally, IRONMAN arrived back in Port Macquarie on Sunday 1st of May 2022. The town was buzzing with approximately 3000 competitors and their families. On its 35th anniversary, this Australian IRONMAN event was the first to host international competitors since the COVID lockdowns.

Mid Coast Connect was excited to work in conjunction with the event organisers, to have Travel Tourism & Event students from Newman Technical College volunteer to take part in a work placement experience. The event was a wonderful learning environment and gave the students an amazing opportunity to work at a large-scale real-life event situation.



# Bowraville Community Cup

The Bowraville community came together for a day of sport, education, and honour to remember the lives of three young children whose lives were cut short in the town 32 years ago. Mid Coast Connect joined over a dozen marquee displays to focus on careers and training opportunities for young people.





# Tradie Thank You

Mid Coast Connect hosted an 'Our Shout' afternoon to thank all our wonderful tradies for their support of our programs!





# PARTNERSHIPS

## Workplace Learning Network

Mid Coast Connect continues to be active in the Workplace Learning Network and our CEO, Jenny Fraser, is a founding member of the committee, holding the office of Secretary. The Workplace Learning Network provides a platform for member organisations to improve workplace learning and transition outcomes for all young people in New South Wales. This is achieved through the development of strategic partnerships with key industry peak bodies, education leaders, and government agencies.

The Work Placement Coordination service we provide, funded by the NSW Department of Education, is our common thread. However, like the majority of members, Mid Coast Connect has developed and delivered a suite of career development programs that link young people to industry and career pathways. The Workplace Learning Network recognises that young people experience challenges when navigating their transition from school to the workplace, and that many industries experience challenges in sourcing talent for their future workforce. Together the member organisations provide localised workplace learning and career development services to meet the needs of young people across NSW.





# Building Knowledge & Opportunity

Mid Coast Connect was represented at a number of expos across the region in 2022 and welcomed the opportunity to promote our services and programs.

The Mid North Coast Post Secondary School Options Expo was held at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus. Over 1200 students, teachers and support staff from Maclean and to Macksville attended. The aim of the expo was to work collaboratively with stakeholder groups to strengthen partnerships between industry and education, to increase knowledge and opportunities for careers, and further education for youth.

Mid Coast Connect also supported the inaugural CareerQuip event at Taree. As a response to COVID style restrictions and a genuine desire to involve all of the community, the 2022 Lower North Coast Careers Expo, previously held at Chatham and Camden Haven High Schools moved beyond the school environment to become CareerQuip. Taree University Campus' soon-to-be new location was at the centre of the event.

The upscaling of the job fair allowed all community members, not just high school students, access to professional careers information and to seek out new opportunities in skills shortage areas from a plethora of providers.

Program Manager, Scott Russell said 'These events are an excellent opportunity to showcase Mid Coast Connect's support programs for young people, and it's great to network with the other exhibitors.'





# BiG Day In

Sandra Slattery, our Program Manager, represented Mid Coast Connect at the BiG Day In, hosted by Charles Sturt University. BiG Day In is an event designed by the Australian Computer Society Foundation and aims to showcase IT careers to regional high school students so they can explore different career pathways and opportunities.

Charles Sturt University has hosted the event for the past eight years, however, this is the first time it has been held at the Port Macquarie campus. Students from Newman Senior Technical College, Port Macquarie TAFE, Bishop Druitt College, Coffs Harbour Senior College, Woodlawn, Kempsey Adventist School, and St Columba Anglican School attended the event.

The students heard from several industry professionals, including local company Integer IT's managing director Garry King, Royal Australian Navy Defence Force Recruiting and global tech firm Axiom Connected.

Events such as the BiG Day In provide young people with real-world information about potential career opportunities and jobs for the future.





# Primary Industries Day

Mid Coast Connect's Industry Days for teachers are a highly regarded Professional Development activity. The escorted industry tours provide an opportunity for VET teachers to network with their Department of Education colleagues from across the northern NSW region. The information and hands-on experiences provided by employers during the site visits also contribute to industry currency knowledge and assist in meeting mandatory learning outcomes.

In 2022 Mid Coast Connect conducted the first tour since the COVID lockdowns. Fourteen teachers of the HSC vocational course, Primary Industries, met at Port Macquarie to participate.

Three supportive agriculture-based businesses were identified from our work placement program to share their industry knowledge on the day.

Chris Eggert, from Oxhill Organics provided a tour of their certified organic farm. A fourth-generation farming family, Chris explained the dairy industry deregulation in 2000 resulted in the decision to convert the farm to organic production. The farm produces 1.3 million litres of organic milk a year, as well as pasture ranged eggs and organic meat.

Ian Mobbs, from Bago Vineyard and Maze, provided a tour of their family farm with a vineyard and winery. Ian explained how their first Chardonnay vines were planted in 1985 and Bago Vineyards was born.

Jody Perkins, Managing Director, Meltique Beef Hokubee Australia Pty Ltd gave a tour of the Wauchope facility which was established 20 years ago and is the only one of its kind in Australia. They process 10.5 tonne of beef daily using a French technique called 'pique' which introduces fat into whole muscle red meat to enhance flavour and tenderness.

The day was a huge success with very positive feedback from teachers and host employers. Teacher Craig Hundle from Coffs Harbour High School was quick to follow up on the new-found connections. Plans are now underway for an excursion to Port Macquarie so students can have a similar experience.





# Taree University Campus Mentoring

In 2022 Mid Coast Connect's reputation for providing quality mentoring and individual student support extended to Taree University Campus. Scholarship student Jazmin is studying Agriculture at UNE and undertaking project work with her sponsor, Hunter Local Land Services. Mid Coast Connect provided workplace liaison and communication support as well as assistance with work placement and practical activities.



**Taree  
Universities  
Campus**



# Northern Work Placement Service Providers Meeting

Mid Coast Connect's Work Placement team were excited to again be able to attend the 2022 Regional Work Placement Service Providers Meeting in Coffs Harbour. The two-day event, led by Mid Coast Connect, brought together CEOs, Work Placement Managers and Coordinators from the five northern NSW service regions. This valuable professional development opportunity provided direct access to the contract management group, consisting of key representatives from the Department of Education, Catholic Schools NSW, the Association of Independent Schools and TAFE. Sessions included sector updates, resource and information sharing, host employer feedback, and discussions about the successes and challenges of delivering the work placement program.

The meetings are always a great opportunity to network and share resources and examples of best practice. The open and honest collaboration with the contract management group is always helpful and provides better understandings of program delivery. This year items for discussion also included student preparation, data, trends and benchmarking, and catering for TAFE-delivered courses.





# CHALC Industry Day

Mid Coast Connect's Work Placement Coordinator, Jo Everson has been working with the Camden Haven Alternative Learning Classroom (CHALC) to provide work experience for students one day per week. In June 2022, the program expanded with the addition of an Industry Day. Jo organised and accompanied the students and their teachers on an excursion to learn more about the real world of work from some of Mid Coast Connect's supportive host employers.

At Designer Living Kitchens, Todd Barnes talked about the history and future plans for the company. Todd outlined the day-to-day practices and processes in manufacturing and installing the kitchens. He also explained the different jobs and career paths available and took us on a tour of the facility.

The next stop was the Koala Hospital, where we had the opportunity to meet our volunteer tour guide, Margaret. Most of the staff at the hospital are volunteers and the students learned how volunteering skills could link with careers in areas such as travel, tourism, animal services, and retail. The visit was extra special as the proceeds from the students' fundraising at the start of the year had gone to the Koala Hospital.

The day ended at Laurieton United Services Club (LUSC) where the General Manager Rob Dwyer, took us on a tour of the Club. He then spoke with the group about job opportunities and career paths with the LUSC. He highlighted many opportunities and careers to consider, including hospitality, administration, and events.

The Industry Day highlighted some potential workplace experiences and employment opportunities for the students to consider.





# Circle of Good

Mid Coast Connect continues to work with Good360, a charity working to ensure that the excess goods and services businesses produce every year flow to people in need rather than going to waste. We gladly accept products that can be of benefit to our young people as they pursue their education, training and employment goals. The result is a 'Circle of Good' that reduces need and waste in our communities at the same time, so everyone benefits – from young people to the planet.

In 2022 Good360 provided Mid Coast Connect with a range of personal care products and stationery items. We used them to fill 100 backpacks which were distributed to school leavers as part of our Career Connect program.



As an organisation supporting students and their education, Mid Coast Connect welcomed the provision of Optus SIM cards through our partnership with Good360. Many of the young people we work with struggle to afford data, and often don't have enough data to use for educational purposes. This impacts their ability to effectively complete their studies and do well at school or in their training courses.

The Optus SIM cards, with 12 months of free calls, texts, and generous amounts of data, were warmly welcomed. Mid Coast Connect was glad to be able to provide some practical assistance and spread the generosity of the Optus 'Donate Your Data' campaign throughout our community.





# Mid Coast Connect Careers Market

A highlight of the year was the return of our Mid Coast Careers Market in June. We saw this as a significant achievement and an opportunity to celebrate the opening of businesses post-COVID lockdowns. We were very well supported by schools, employers, and service providers from across the region who welcomed the opportunity to attend face-to-face events.

Pleasingly, the Mid Coast Carers Market experienced the highest number of students in attendance since we started back in 2007, with over 1100 students from 12 schools. Students obtained information on industry-specific employment, training requirements, and locally available job opportunities.

The Mid Coast Careers Market also provided a 'one-stop shop' for information about local businesses and training providers. 80 exhibitors provided real-world advice, practical demonstrations, and hands-on activities for the students.





# Coffs Coast Careers Connections

Coffs Coast Career Connections, held in May, provided a fantastic opportunity to promote local opportunities for employment, study, and training, as well as showcasing businesses to the community. The event, for over 600 young people from 18 schools, provided a broader awareness and understanding of locally available career pathways, employment, and training opportunities.

Career champions from the health and professional services sectors showcased careers in their industries as well as the associated learning pathways and support services.





# GOVERNANCE

Mid Coast Connect meets the Australian Charities & Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) Governance Standards. The Standards require Mid Coast Connect to remain charitable, operate lawfully, and be run in an accountable and responsible way. This helps maintain public trust in charities and helps charities continue to do their charitable work.

## ***Standard 1: Purposes and not-for-profit nature***

Mid Coast Connect is a not-for-profit Incorporated Association. We are a registered charity working to support disadvantaged young people with their transition through school and from school into further education, training, and employment. Mid Coast Connect provides assistance to young people who experience socio-economic disadvantage, disability, mental health issues, isolation, behavioural and family issues.

## ***Standard 2: Accountability to members***

Mid Coast Connect has a Board that meets a minimum of five times each year. Formal reports provide information on our activities and finances. Mid Coast Connect is governed by a constitution that has a clear process for appointing Board members who are also registered as Responsible Persons with the ACNC.

## ***Standard 3: Compliance with Australian laws***

Mid Coast Connect complies with Australian laws and has documented policies and procedures in place to ensure we meet our legal obligations and protect our charity's finances and assets.

## ***Standard 4: Suitability of Responsible People***

Mid Coast Connect takes reasonable steps to ensure that Board members are not disqualified from managing a corporation under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) or disqualified from being a Responsible Person of a registered charity by the ACNC Commissioner.

## ***Standard 5: Duties of Responsible People***

Mid Coast Connect Board members undertake to:

- act with reasonable care and diligence
- act honestly and fairly in the best interests of Mid Coast Connect and for its charitable purposes
- not misuse their position or information they gain as a Responsible Person
- disclose conflicts of interest
- ensure that the financial affairs of the charity are managed responsibly, and
- not allow the charity to operate while it is insolvent.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mid Coast Connect is audited annually by NorthCorp to produce the Special Purpose Financial Report. The following financial contributions were provided to support our programs and activities in 2022.

PROGRAM	FUNDING	SOURCE
Work Placement Coordination Services	\$608,235	NSW Department of Education
Regional VET Pathways	\$527,205	NSW Department of Education
Get Back in the Game	\$59,439	NSW Department of Education
'Get That Job' Masterclass	\$6,000	Regional Industry Education Partnership

Mid Coast Connect would like to thank the following schools and colleges for their ongoing support and participation in our programs and activities:

- Bellingen High School
- Bishop Druitt College
- Bowraville Central School
- Bulahdelah Central School
- Camden Haven High School
- Chatham High School
- Chrysalis Steiner School
- Coffs Harbour Christian School
- Coffs Harbour High School
- Coffs Harbour Senior College
- Dorrigo High School
- Gloucester High School
- Great Lakes College
- Heritage Christian School
- Hastings Secondary College
- Kempsey Adventist School
- Kempsey High School
- MacKillop College
- Macksville High School
- Macleay Vocational College
- Manning Valley Anglican College
- MidCoast Christian College
- Melville High School
- Nambucca Heads High School
- Nautilus Senior College
- Newman Senior Technical College
- Orara High School
- St Clare's High School
- St Columba Anglican School
- St Joseph's Regional College
- St John Paul College
- St Paul's College
- TAFE NSW
- Taree High School
- Toormina High School
- Wauchope High School
- Wingham High School
- Yulinbal College



# EXCELLENCE IN VET AWARDS





# How you can help

We work closely with schools, education and training providers and businesses to provide the stepping stones that will help prepare young people for productive futures.

We invite you to partner with us to further develop education, training and employment opportunities for our local youth.

Our partnerships can help businesses meet workforce needs and provide real-life career pathway information, to prepare young people for their successful participation in the workforce.

Our programs and activities can provide positive benefits to your organisation as well as making a real difference in the life of a young person.





M I D C O A S T  
**connect**  
opportunities for youth

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