

COFFS COAST CAREER CONNECTIONS



2026 SUMMARY REPORT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

*Building Pathways to Employment, Education and
Training Across the Coffs Coast*

Delivered by Mid Coast Connect in partnership with:



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations



Southern Cross
University



EVENT OVERVIEW

CREATING CONNECTIONS INSPIRING FUTURES

Coffs Coast Career Connections 2026 brought together students, attendees, employers, industry representatives, training providers, universities, community organisations and government agencies to support young people in exploring future education, training and employment opportunities.

The event provided a unique opportunity for students to engage directly with local employers and industry professionals, helping them gain a better understanding of career pathways and workforce opportunities available within the region.

Feedback from students, exhibitors and schools reinforced the value of face-to-face engagement in supporting informed career decision-making and strengthening local workforce development.

2026 AT A GLANCE

BY THE NUMBERS

1,188

STUDENTS
AND
ATTENDEES

90

EXHIBITOR
STANDS

53

ORGANISATIONS
REPRESENTED

38

SPONSOR
STANDS

20

EDUCATION AND
TRAINING

17

LOCAL
EMPLOYERS

14

SCHOOLS
PARTICIPATED

5

GOVERNMENT
EXHIBITS

OUR PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Together, these organisations invested in creating opportunities for young people to connect with local industries, explore career pathways and build confidence in their future employment prospects.

Sponsor organisations also played an active role in the event through exhibitor participation, career demonstrations and direct engagement with students.



CONNECTING STUDENTS

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

One of the key strengths of Coffs Coast Career Connections is its ability to connect employers directly with the future workforce. The event also enabled employers to showcase career opportunities and raise awareness of skills shortages and future workforce needs.



THE CAREERS MARKET PROVIDES ACCESS TO

- Employers
- Apprenticeship Providers
- Traineeship Providers
- Universities
- TAFE NSW
- Industry Representatives
- Community Organisations

STUDENTS ENGAGED DIRECTLY WITH EMPLOYERS TO UNDERSTAND

- Employment Opportunities
- Apprenticeships & Traineeships
- Vocational Pathways
- University Pathways
- Skills for Future Work

STUDENT IMPACT

BUILDING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

More than 85% of students rated the event positively, highlighting the value of attending and the quality of information and career opportunities available.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

"The forensic scientist exhibitor because I want to be one when I'm older."

"The aviation university was the most interactive."

"Occupational therapy because David was informative on how to get into OT."

"All of the stalls were great and the people were so lovely and helpful."



INDUSTRY AND IMPACT

EXHIBITORS FEEDBACK

Creating Real Conversations About Real Futures

"I was excited to be able to help ignite a spark in local young people."

Engagement Levels
89% Excellent

"Fantastic opportunity to network and showcase what we do."

"It is always good to meet future apprentices."

"It felt great talking with students about their future."
Employer Quote

"Events like this allow us to engage directly with the next generation of workers. We showcase the opportunities available to them and encourage them to consider our industry."
– Local NDIS Provider



SCHOOL FEEDBACK

STRONG SUPPORT FROM SCHOOLS

80%

80% of schools rated the overall benefit of attending as Excellent. Majority of attendees rated the range of exhibitors as amazing.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- Increased interactive displays.
- Strong employer participation.
- Diverse industry representation.
- High student engagement.
- Opportunities for direct employer contact.

SCHOOL FEEDBACK:

- One of the best organised careers events we have attended."



EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE

A DIVERSE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

20 Education & Training Providers

17 Employers & Businesses

11 Employment & Support Agencies

5 Government Organisations

FEATURED INDUSTRIES INCLUDED:

Tourism

Engineering

Defense

Health

Aviation

Community Services

Technology

Construction

Transport

Education

Emergency Services



COMMUNITY IMPACT

SUPPORTING REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The event continues to strengthen collaboration between schools, employers, training providers and community organisations across the Coffs Coast.

- Increase awareness of local employment opportunities
- Promote apprenticeships and traineeships
- Connect employers with future workers
- Strengthen education-to-employment pathways
- Support regional workforce development
- Encourage informed career decision-making



LOOKING AHEAD

FUTURE PLANNING

Mid Coast Connect remains committed to delivering high-quality career and workforce development events that support young people and strengthen regional employment outcomes.

68%

EXHIBITORS ALREADY
COMMITTED TO
RETURNING IN 2027
WITH ANOTHER 30%
PENDING

17%

INCREASE IN STANDS

THANK YOU

To our sponsors, exhibitors, schools, volunteers, teachers and students. Together we are helping young people explore opportunities, build confidence and create pathways into employment, education and training.



LOOKING BEYOND THE EVENT

GROWING IMPACT

By connecting young people with employers, industry and education providers, Coffs Coast Career Connections helps build a skilled, informed and job-ready workforce for the future.



TAFENSW



BCU.Bank



OUR EXHIBITORS

ADF
AKG Australia
Australian Cabinet & Furniture Association
Australian International Aviation College
BCU
Birdon
Bond University
Busy at Work
C.ex Group
City of Coffs Harbour 6 Degrees
City of Coffs Harbour Career Pathways
City of Coffs Harbour Coastal Works
City of Coffs Harbour Life Guards
City of Coffs Harbour Open Spaces
Coffs Harbour Bypass Team
Connect Northern Rivers
Costa Group
CSU
Engineers Australia
Essential Energy
ETC Child Care
ETC First Aid
ETC Hospitality/ Commercial Cookery
ETC Individual Support
Everthought Education
Faircloth & Reynolds Pty Ltd
Fire & Rescue NSW
Genesis Health & Fitness
Goodstart Early Learning
Grace College
Housing Industry Association
Independent Schools NSW
International College of Management
International Sport College Australia
Key Community Group
Learning Live
Lifestyle Group
Lindsay Australia
Mid Coast Connect
Mid North Coast Local Health District
Mission Australia
National Parks & Wildlife Services
Northrop Consulting Engineers
Novaskill
NSW Department of Education Teach NSW
Police
Real Futures
Robert Menzies College
SCU
SCU Psychology
SCU Education
SCU Indigenous Australian Student Services
SCU Marine Science
SCU Midwifery
SCU Nursing
SCU Occupational Therapy
SCU Physiotherapy
SCU Sports & Exercise Science
Services Australia
Social Futures
Students of the World
TAFE Animal Care
TAFE Business Services
TAFE Creative Arts
TAFE Early Childhood
TAFE Engineering
TAFE Hair & Beauty
TAFE Health/Nursing
TAFE Information & Technology
TAFE School-Based Programs
TAFE Services
TAFE Working at Heights
The University of New England
Thomas Scaffolding
Tursa
University of Newcastle
University of Southern Queensland
Zeal Futures