



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN FOR THE MACARTHUR YOUTH COMMITMENT

Key Findings

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Component 1. Population composition

The aim of this section is to convey something of the economic and social wellbeing of residents in the Macarthur and its advantages and disadvantages assessed against national indicators. The first section also attempts to capture and comment on some of the key trends emerging over time in the region.

Key Findings

- The Macarthur region had a faster growing population between 1991 and 1996 (9.7%) than the Sydney metropolitan area (5.7%).
- Of the three Macarthur Local Government Areas (LGAs) Camden had the largest percentage increase between 1991 and 1996 with 42.6%. Wollondilly increased by 10.4%, Campbelltown by 4.8%.
- Additionally, the Macarthur region's combined resident population grew by approximately 1.3% per year (between 1999 and 2000), however Camden's population grew by 6.1% over this period (the second fastest in NSW).
- 68% of the Macarthur population live in Campbelltown, 16% in Wollondilly and 15% in Camden. At the next census, given the respective growth rates of each LGA, there will be a larger percentage share in Camden, and subsequent decreases in other areas.
- In the Macarthur region families comprising of a couple with children, made up a larger percentage (approximately 10%) of households, in comparison to the Sydney metropolitan area (SMA).
- In 1996, 16% of the Macarthur region's population was aged between 15 and 24. This was 2% higher than the proportion for NSW.
- Compared to the SMA, the Macarthur region has slightly lower proportions of residents in the higher income ranges and more in the lower ranges.
- The areas with the highest average income levels are Mount Hunter, Wilton and Camden West urban centres, and those with the lowest average incomes are Menangle Park, Couridjah, Tahmoor and Yanderra.
- The Campbelltown LGA has a slightly higher proportion of residents receiving government benefits than the SMA average. The most common benefits are New Start, aged pension and sole parent benefits.
- Camden and Wollondilly LGAs have a lower proportion of residents receiving government benefits than the SMA.
- The key industries of employment are manufacturing and retail trade.

- Relative to the SMA, the Macarthur workers are over represented in the construction, manufacturing and agriculture industries, but have lower proportions working in property and business services, and finance and insurance industries.
- The Macarthur region has more tradespeople, labourers and middle level production and transport workers than the SMA average.
- Professionals are under presented in Macarthur.
- The region has a high proportion of residents with skilled vocational qualifications, but less with all other levels qualifications, particularly university qualifications.
- The most common field of qualification in Macarthur is in engineering. In all other fields of qualification Macarthur has a lower level than the SMA, in particular in the areas of business and administration, and society and culture.

Component 2. Youth Participation

This section provides a well-grounded snapshot of the participation of youth in the transition from school to work. It attempts to identify the levels of early school leavers and to quantify the numbers of young people not engaged in full time employment, education or further training.

Key Findings

- Over the last two years the unemployment rate amongst Macarthur youth aged between 15 and 19 years has averaged between 15% and 17%. The average trend has tended downwards in that time.
- The largest *number* of Macarthur's population is aged between 10 and 15 years, however this was recoded five years ago suggesting that these *numbers* would now (5 years later) be 'youth aged'.
- Macarthur youth tend to leave school earlier than compared to other school districts in NSW.
- The region has a higher proportion of students attending public schooling than the SMA.
- A smaller proportion of Macarthur's total population is in post school education, which is concerning considering a larger proportion of the population are youth aged (or of an age usually engaged in post school education).

- Macarthur has higher proportions of its residents enrolled in part-time TAFE, but lower proportions enrolled in full-time TAFE when compared to the SMA.
- The Macarthur also has significantly fewer students, as a proportion of the total population enrolled in tertiary programs.
- Government High Schools in the Macarthur region typically have retention rates 4% - 6% lower than the NSW average (that is, leaving before year 12 completion, but after commencing year 10).
- Of these early school leavers, more than a third immediately go on to further education, approximately one in five immediately go on to full-time work with 14% going on to immediate part-time work, 21% become unemployed.
- Of the early school leavers who gain employment after leaving school only 56% still had the same job one year later. One third have had two jobs, and a further 7% had been in three jobs.
- Students who left school early (before completing year 12) were also found to have higher rates of unemployment than those who stayed on to year 12.
- Of the youth in Macarthur who are employed, a higher proportion work full-time compared to the SMA. For the 15-19 year olds, both Campbelltown and Camden have higher proportions of youth employed on a part-time basis rather than full-time¹.
- Of the 15-19 year olds who are employed, the largest majority work in retail.
- Manufacturing and then construction employ the next largest proportion of youth aged between 15 and 19 (significantly more than the SMA).
- By the time Macarthur youth reach 20 to 24 years of age they are predominately employed in construction and manufacturing. Again, this trend stands out when compared to the SMA.
- Macarthur youth are typically employed as elementary clerical, sales and service workers (similar to the SMA) and tradespersons and related workers (significantly more than the SMA)
- On average, over the past two years, more than 75% of Macarthur's youth aged population (15 – 24) were in the labour force (either employed or actively seeking work),

¹ There is perhaps a need to further analyse this data to attempt to separate part-time employment undertaken while in education or study from post education employment.

compared to less than 70% for the SMA, however only a slightly higher proportion of these youth were unemployed compared to the SMA.

Component 3. Youth Aspirations

This section draws on relevant surveys or projects undertaken by educators, researchers, community agencies or local government that have attempted to better understand youth needs and aspirations in the Macarthur.

Key Findings

- Macarthur youth have typically grown up in a region characterised by a population with lower levels of educational qualifications, less residents with high level skills and with a workforce engaged in lower paying professions.
- A survey of students who left school early (before completing year 12) conducted by Vickers (2000), found that most early leavers left because they had a job to go to, or because they were disengaged from school.
- Disengaged students cannot see how success in school will lead to a better life in the future.
- Students wanted more subjects that are relevant to their future, or a better understanding of the relevance of present education to their future.

Based on a review of literature detailing the needs and aspirations of youth in the Macarthur, the following issues were identified:

- Public transport was a recurring issue for youth in the area. Youth stated they found poor transport reduced the accessibility of education in isolated areas, both via poor infrastructure, services or costs of transport.
- Youth in the Macarthur have continually expressed the need for more adequate health services such as counselling, as well as drug, alcohol and crisis centres.
- Youth also wanted to know more about existing youth services available to them.
- Youth also saw transport as a big issue in getting to work.
- Youth continually expressed a desire to be consulted about decisions that have an impact on youth affairs in the Macarthur.

Component 4. School to Work Programs

Section four outlines the range of School-to-work programs that exist in the Macarthur region to assist youth in making the transition from school, to further education and to work. This section reviews the services available to youth in the region designed to ensure they navigate this transition period successfully.

Key Findings

- A strong national commitment to school-to-work programs already exists through programs such as JPP and JPET and foundations such as the ECEF.
- Careers advisors in local schools are over burdened by the workload of assisting all students in designing a ‘jobs pathway’. This has made it harder for school-to-work programs in the region to reach all youth.
- Some employment and training organisations are unaware of other training organisations or other youth services that exist in the Macarthur area.
- Similarly, many training organisations are unaware of the variety of other youth assistance schemes available in the area.
- There is often competition between training organisations and services in the region.
- Macarthur also has a number of highly innovative school-to-work programs operated by organisations such as DET, TAFE, Burnside, Mission Australia, various High Schools and other business groups.
- Examples of successful partnerships include, the CVETISC, the Macarthur Schools Careers Advisor Network and the Mac Thing. These partnerships should continue to be supported and expanded in the region.

Component 5. Education Patterns and Networks

This section aims to detail the schooling, training and further education providers, both public and private servicing the Macarthur region.

Key Findings

- The Campbelltown School District is the third largest in the State.
- The District also has the largest number of students (3,000) studying VET courses in NSW (both school VET and TVET).
- The number of VET students in the Macarthur grew by almost 20% last year.
- The majority of this growth was in IT and Business Administration courses.
- Due to the large number of VET students in the Macarthur, the number of mandatory work placement required by these students presents one of the biggest challenges to VET coordinators and business in the area.
- In 2000, the majority of these work placements occurred in the Building and Construction and Hospitality frameworks. Short falls are expected in these industries, as well as IT in 2001 due to rapidly expanding numbers.
- Outcomes of student workplace learning in the Macarthur have been very positive in terms of employment outcomes, reinforcing the importance of continuing to find businesses willing to take on a growing number of local VET students.
- A number of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) exist in Macarthur that find jobs placements, provide training and manage the training pathways for youth in the region.
- The Campbelltown office of the DET also runs a large number of early intervention programs designed to reduce the number of ‘at risk’ students leaving school early.
- Better information is required in the region on tracking youth as they move from school to various destinations such as employment, further education, out of the labour force or into unemployment. To track this would involve a partnership or networking body between schools, further education and training providers as well as the business community and government service organisations.

Component 6. Employment Patterns and Assistance Pathways

This section provides both further analysis of employment and industry in Macarthur as well giving a broad overview of the peak bodies and organisations that service the area in terms of promoting employment and economic growth.

Key Findings

- 60% of all employed Macarthur residents travel outside of the region each day to work, additionally, 63% of working 20-24 year olds and 43% of working 15-19 year olds travel outside the region to work on a daily basis.
- More than 10,000 youth travel outside the Macarthur for work each day
- More than 10,000 residents travel outside the region to work in Manufacturing alone
- All three Local Councils appear to be active in forming economic development strategies.
- The key industries that are currently being targeted for development in Macarthur are Manufacturing, Information Technology (I.T.) and Tourism.
- Other growth industries in the Macarthur include, transport, warehousing and distribution.
- There appears to be some movement by local Chambers of Commerce to get involved in partnerships involving youth participation, training and employment pathway programs.
- Centrelink provides a range of services to assist young people in making the transition from school to education and to work through the Job Network, as well as Picton and Tahmoor Outreach centres.
- Centrelink, and in particular the Campbelltown office, also appears to be quite innovative in terms of supporting youth make a successful school-to-work transition. Examples of innovative pilot initiatives include; the Student Processing Centre, the Positive Participation Program, a youth website and the employment of an Outreach Education Liaison Officer.

Component 7. Community Services Profile

This section of the Scan reviews the scope of housing, drug and alcohol, counselling, recreation and health services addressing young people that are provided by government and non-government sectors in the Macarthur.

Key Findings

The Environmental Scan surveyed a large number of youth service facilities that exist in Macarthur. This survey (conducted by informal telephone discussions) identified a wide range of both specific and general youth issues in terms of services that exist in the region. Based on the general findings of this research, it was clear there exists a variety of challenges that the Macarthur Youth Commitment could address in ensuring that community services in the region more adequately assist youth.

The majority of youth service providers surveyed by the Scan indicated low levels of awareness of other youth services or programs that could assist Macarthur youth. Youth also expressed a need to know about services available to them.

Learning and work for young people in the Macarthur region: Needs identified by the Environmental Scan

- Integration of existing services for young people.
- Tracking and monitoring all school leavers.
- Personal action plans for all secondary students.
- Individual case management plan for those young people leaving school before Year 12.
- Advice and guidance for all secondary students.

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