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FACT SHEET

Tradies look to the bush as city living takes its toll

It's Your Move – Regional Australia's Biggest Ever Recruitment Drive

We surveyed more than 500 Australian tradies living in capital cities about their perspectives on making the move to regional Australia*. We found that more than three in five tradies would consider taking a job in regional Australia. Here is what's motivating them:

1. Almost nine in ten tradies are dissatisfied with their job

86 per cent of Australian tradies who live in metropolitan are unsatisfied with certain factors of their jobs.

- The highest pain point among tradies is the growing cost of expenses they incur through their work such as petrol and tolls with 45 per cent of respondents citing this as an issue.
- Salaries not being enough to keep up with the cost of living is another common issue for metro tradies, with 43 per cent saying this is negatively impacting their perception of work.
- Female tradies are also more dissatisfied with their jobs with 92 per cent citing elements of dissatisfaction with their job compared with only 84 per cent of men.
- Younger tradies are struggling with job dissatisfaction with 90 per cent of 18-49 years unhappy with their current role.
- 1 in 4 (24 per cent) Sydney-based tradies said a long commute was causing job dissatisfaction while 2 in 5 Sydney tradies (41 per cent) said their salary wasn't enough to keep up with the rising cost of living.
- Nearly half of Melbourne and Brisbane (49 per cent each) tradies said the growing cost of expenses like petrol and tolls was causing job dissatisfaction.
- 1 in 4 (25 per cent) of Perth tradies said uncertainty and limited work opportunities was a cause for dissatisfaction.

2. Majority of tradies are open to a tree change

In a win for the regions, 92 per cent of tradies could be persuaded to take a job in regional Australia.

- Almost a quarter of survey respondents (23 per cent) said that they would "definitely" consider relocating to regional Australia for their job.
- Younger tradies are leading the charge with 74 per cent of respondents aged 18-34 willing to consider relocating for their job.
- Among those who could be persuaded to take a job in regional Australia, 3 in 5 tradespeople (63 per cent) said a salary increase would compel them to move to regional Australia, while more than half (56 per cent) said the cheaper cost of regional living is a convincing factor.
- More than half of Brisbane-based tradies (56 per cent) said regional Australia's more relaxed lifestyle would convince them to move.
- 1 in 5 Melbourne-based tradies (19 per cent) said the opportunity to run their own business could persuade them to choose a life in the regions.
- One quarter of Sydney tradies (25 per cent) said the stronger sense of community in regional Australia would persuade them to move.

3. Tradies are crying out for better work-life balance as industry-wide stressors take their toll

88 per cent of city-based tradespeople are seeking a more relaxed lifestyle with a better work-life balance.

- 82 per cent of tradies believe the rising cost of labour and materials is putting the building and construction sector under increasing pressure.

*YouGov survey of 500 city-based tradespeople working in a capital city. Fieldwork was undertaken between 25th July – 2nd August 2023. The survey was carried out online.

** This is the latest data gathered using the Internet Jobs Vacancy Index (IVI) from Jobs and Skills Australia. The data analyses information gathered by SEEK and doesn't account for job ads posted in shop windows or on social media.



- A third of tradies (32 per cent) feel that their job is insecure, believing the pipeline of work is drying up.
- Nearly half of all tradies surveyed (44 per cent) reported struggles with their mental health.
- Melbourne-based tradies reported the highest rates of mental health struggles (49 per cent) with Sydney-based tradies coming a close second (46 per cent).
- Sydney-based tradies were most worried about the pipeline of work drying up with 41 per cent of those surveyed indicating concern about future job opportunities.

4. There's no shortage of jobs for tradies looking to explore regional life

There were 10,426 regional jobs advertised online for tradies in June 2023, according to recent data compiled by the Regional Australia Institute**.

- New South Wales is the state with the most regional jobs on offer for those in the building and construction sectors with 3,270 jobs posted online in June.
- Victoria came in second highest numbers of regional jobs on offer for tradies with more than 2,800 (2,836) jobs posted online in June.
- Queensland was third, with 2,302 regional jobs in the building and construction sector advertised online during the month of June.
- The local regions with the most jobs on offer for tradies are Newcastle and Hunter (139), Far North Queensland (119), Central Queensland (90) and Bendigo & High Country (69).

5. Government incentives for those working in the building and construction sector

Australia wide: *The Living Away From Home Allowance* helps Australian apprentices who are required to move out of home to take up or remain in an Australian apprenticeship¹. The amount of the Living Away From Home Allowance depends on how long apprentices have lived out of home for.

- First 12 months - \$77.17 per week
- Second 12-month period - \$38.59 per week
- Third 12-month period - \$25.00 per week

New South Wales: *Regional Skills Relocation Grant:* In NSW, employees working in industries aligned with key Government policies can be eligible for grants of up to \$12,500² when relocating from a metropolitan area to a regional town. Key industries include, resources and mining, renewable energy, agribusiness and forestry and manufacturing. These grants can be used to cover:

- Furniture removal including removalist services
- Pet boarding for up to three months
- Travel for employee and immediate family to relocate
- Temporary accommodation for up to three months
- Furniture storage for up to three months

Queensland: *Back to Work Initiative:* Employers who recruit eligible unemployed jobseekers in regional Queensland are eligible for a support payment of up to \$20,000 from the Queensland Government.

West Australia: *Location allowance for regional employees:* Many West Australian awards, including building and construction, require employers to pay an employee employed in certain regional towns a location allowance³. The allowance paid to employees depends on their location in WA.

¹Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2022), *Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System Guidelines*, Australian Government <https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-support-individuals/resources/australian-apprenticeships-incentive-system-guidelines>

²NSW Department of Regional NSW (2022), *Regional Skills Relocation Grant*, NSW Government. <https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/regional-skills-relocation-grant-0>

³Department of Mines, Industry Regulation (2022), *Location allowance for employees in regional areas*, Government of Western Australia, <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/labour-relations/location-allowance-employees-regional-areas>

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