

# URALLA, NSW | CASE STUDY

Is your community ready for the future of work? To answer this question we need to explore the opportunities and challenges in your local community, how the local job market stacks up and the predicted changes in employment in the next 15 years.

Understanding the skills required to succeed and preparing the next generation for the future of work has never been more important. It's time to get ready – visit [www.thefutureofwork.net.au](http://www.thefutureofwork.net.au) to access the *Future of Work* online toolkit and join the conversation.

# 33%

of current jobs are predicted to be **at risk** from digital **disruption** in the future



Uralla's significant agricultural industry accounts for the highest proportion of at risk jobs, while education, healthcare and training make up the largest share of jobs likely to be least at risk.

## Future of Work Scorecard

### Learning Ready

Although Uralla underperforms in secondary literacy and numeracy scores, there is an appetite for lifelong learning with high rates of adult learners.



### Innovation Ready

Uralla is underperforming on measures of innovation compared to the national averages. Both business entries and skills mix will need to be improved to build up its innovative capacity.



### Digital Ready

With a strong focus on its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry, it is no surprise that Uralla outperforms the national average for employment in the sector, with mobile broadband coverage at the national average level as well.



### Jobs at Risk

Uralla's proportion of jobs at risk from technology change is close to the national average, with nearly a third of local jobs likely to be at risk over the next 15 years.



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Australia's broadband network



## The future of jobs in Uralla

Uralla is a small Heartland Region [www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/the-future-of-work/](http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/the-future-of-work/) in the NSW northern inland, just 25km from Armidale. In a region often considered the most fertile farmland in Australia, agriculture plays a large role in the local economy, as does Uralla's proximity to Armidale. Other key industries include retail trade, education, training, healthcare and social assistance.

Although these industries are expected to remain the core drivers of Uralla's economy, the types of jobs available are likely to change. Our kids will need different skills and experience to take on these new jobs.

With lower than national average performance in educational outcomes, parents and community members in Uralla could look to upskill kids for new jobs with resources outside of the classroom. Especially as only 10 per cent of a child's time between 5 and 18 is spent at school.



### SOFT SKILLS

collaboration  
problem solving  
critical thinking  
communication  
creativity  
embrace culture  
utilise connectivity



### HARD SKILLS

science  
technology  
engineering  
maths  
design  
programming  
entrepreneurialism

## Upskilling the Next Generation

Uralla is surrounded by a number of educational opportunities, from primary through to tertiary facilities such as the University of New England (UNE) and TAFE New England. The area boasts a high proportion of tertiary educated residents and performs well in lifelong learning measures with an active University of the Third Age located in nearby Armidale as well.

Uralla's earlier educational outcomes, however, are less impressive. Uralla performs below the national averages in terms of early childhood development, primary and secondary school attainment.

For Uralla, it is vital that kids are encouraged to learn and interact with different technologies early in their education. For a small community like Uralla, it won't just be a matter of providing formal education opportunities, but exploring technology outside the classroom as well.

Research is showing that in addition to digital skills, kids will need a mix of both hard specialised knowledge and soft personal skills such as critical thinking, communication and collaboration. Hard specialised knowledge in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, as well as Entrepreneurship, Art and Design will also be critical.



## **In Focus: Growing Opportunities in the Northern Inland Region**

As the first region to gain access to the **nbn**<sup>™</sup> network, Armidale and surrounding communities of the Northern Inland region have experienced a surge in tech related industries. From graphic design studios to precision agriculture, a raft of new businesses have been attracted to the region.

New training and research facilities such as the UNE SMART Farm initiative, a site showcasing emerging technologies for the agriculture industry, offers locals and students a chance to get acquainted with new technologies applied in the field. It also provides a glimpse into the kinds of occupations that might emerge in the industry within five or ten years, for example big data analyst and precision agriculture technicians.

The Northern Inland region is home to high quality digital infrastructure, providing an important opportunity for kids to use it to their full advantage. This means not just developing STEM skills, but also core competencies such as critical thinking, high level problem solving and entrepreneurial capacity.

## **The Future of Work**

With 33 per cent of jobs in Uralla at risk from digital disruption in the future, the types of jobs available in the region are likely to change significantly.

Low skill jobs based on routine tasks are most at risk of disruption from technological change. On the other side, jobs based on high level technical knowledge, strong interpersonal contact, or involving individualised care activities, are the least likely to be at risk. The strongest future employment growth areas place more reliance on the right mix of technical and personal (hard and soft) skills.

Uralla's occupation projections suggest that the region is expected to see more growth in higher skilled occupations requiring a mix of hard and soft skills. If Uralla follows national trends, it could see 72 new positions within professional occupations and 60 new managers across several industries in the next five years.

Access to digital infrastructure is just the first step in realising this potential. Good career outcomes will rely on young people having necessary skills to match the needs of the future workforce and make the most of more flexible working arrangements.

## **Looking Ahead**

The job market in Uralla has already started to evolve and the region is home to a budding IT and research sector. Uralla mirrors the national average in terms of employment in both ICT and tech related industries.

To give our kids the best chance of success in the future job market we need to give them the best chance to develop both the hard and soft skills they need to succeed.

The variety of education and training facilities in Uralla's region is a significant advantage for equipping local kids with the skills they need to participate in the future workforce. The challenge for Uralla will be to ensure they are making the most of this advantage.



### **In Focus: Learning with Technology, not for it**

'ICT Educators of NSW' is an organisation designed to support teachers using technology in classrooms. Director, Martin Levins, emphasises it is critical for kids to learn ways to live and thrive in a world where computers dominate. This isn't just a matter of putting 3D printers and computers in a classroom. It's about giving kids the tools and opportunities to learn skills that allow them to solve problems they are passionate about.

According to Martin, the opportunity to learn outside of school is also vital. Kids can get the flexibility, time and creative licence to pursue problems interesting to them.

The aim is not for kids to learn for technology, but instead to learn with technology as an "intellectual prosthesis".

This type of learning not only reinforces key skills like high level problem solving and creativity, but also requires a multidisciplinary approach, covering subjects like art, maths and literacy.

### **Is Uralla ready?**

As Uralla prepares for the future of work, think about these questions:

- With access to a range of education facilities, Uralla is well placed to provide kids with a good education – but are kids given the opportunity to develop their hard and soft skills?
- Do teachers in Uralla have access to the skills and tools they need to use digital technology to help students build essential skills?
- Do students and parents have access to practical information about the expected changes to jobs and industries in Uralla? Are they using this information to inform their choices about their future careers?
- Are there clear pathways from education and training to work for young workers?

**To find out more about tools and resources to help your kids develop the right mix of skills, visit the Future of Work Toolkit at [www.thefutureofwork.net.au](http://www.thefutureofwork.net.au).**

For more information on the Future of Work visit  
[www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/the-future-of-work/](http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/the-future-of-work/)

