



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Skills Development Needs in Eastern Cape

Identifying MMS-related skills gaps, community training needs and strategic opportunities across the Eastern Cape — commissioned by the Mining Qualifications Authority.

PROVINCIAL UNEMPLOYMENT VS NATIONAL



52.6%

FEMALE — PROVINCIAL GENDER SPLIT

330

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SURVEYED ACROSS 3 MUNICIPALITIES

0.2%

MINING'S SHARE OF PROVINCIAL GVA

11

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED

7.2M

TOTAL POPULATION (2022)

27 yrs

MEDIAN AGE

2,336K

NEET INDIVIDUALS

49%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The Eastern Cape is the **second-largest province by area** and the **fourth most populated** with 7,230,204 people. As a major labour-sending region, it faces deep structural unemployment, low educational attainment and persistent skills mismatches. The study surveyed **330 community members** across Buffalo City, Nelson Mandela Bay and Amathole municipalities.

7.2M

TOTAL POPULATION (2022)

52.6%

FEMALE SHARE OF POPULATION

27 yrs

MEDIAN AGE

2.3M

YOUTH AGED 15–34

EDUCATION PROFILE · AGES 20+**Qualification Attainment**

Only **10%** hold post-school qualifications — the most critical bottleneck to skilled employment.

NEET — NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING**496K**

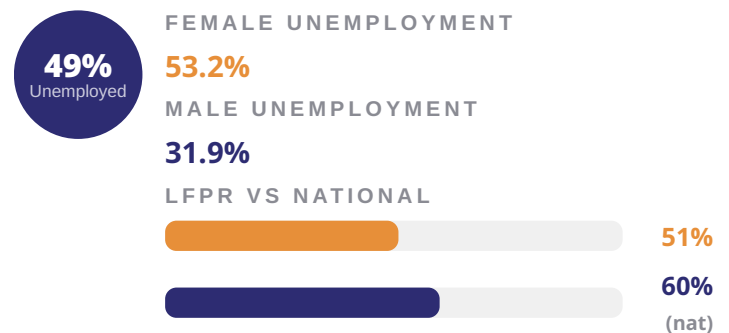
AGES 15–24

804K

AGES 25–34

1,036K

AGES 35–60

Total NEET in province: **2,336,000****LABOUR MARKET · 2024 Q1****Unemployment Snapshot**

Discouraged work-seekers rose **38%** — from 162,000 to 224,000 in just one quarter.

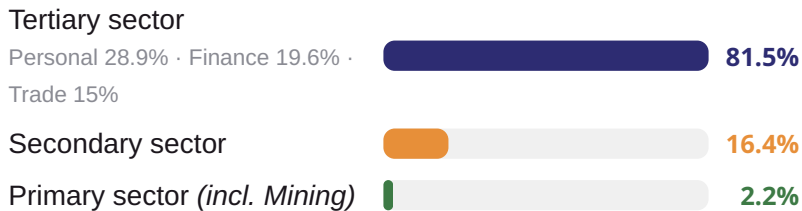
PROVINCIAL SKILLS PROFILE (EMPLOYED)

Engineering LFPR: **82% employed** — strong absorption where qualifications exist.

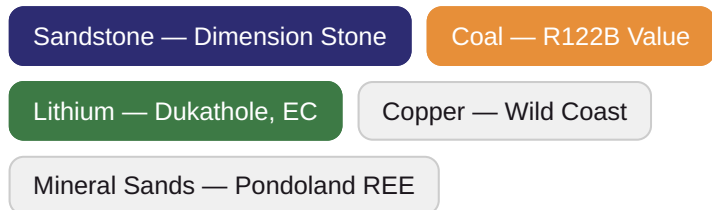
" Community members described **increased crime, substance abuse and exploitation of young women** as direct social consequences of prolonged joblessness. "We want to work and do business. We are capable and do not want to depend on social grants."**"**

PROVINCIAL ECONOMY — GVA CONTRIBUTION

GVA BY SECTOR (2024 Q1)



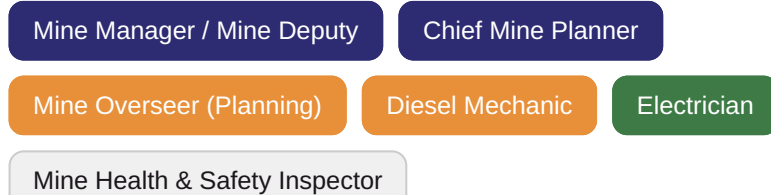
KEY MINERAL DEPOSITS IN THE PROVINCE



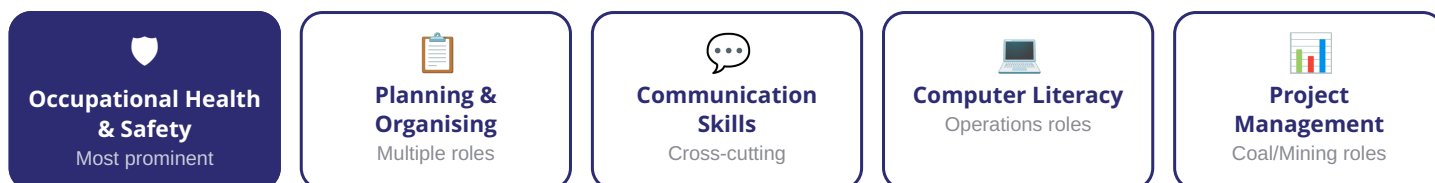
HARD-TO-FILL VACANCIES · PRIMARY CAUSE



CRITICAL ROLES UNFILLED



MOST PROMINENT SKILLS GAPS — TOP-UP SKILLS ACROSS OCCUPATIONS



PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN MINING (2024 Q1)

3,280

MINING GVA CONTRIBUTION

R601M

CRITICAL TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION GAP



Only 3.6% delivery rate. 15 programmes planned · 3 delivered · 192 targeted · 7 trained. MQA must urgently investigate barriers with mining companies.

Hard-to-Fill Vacancies (HTFV) Analysis

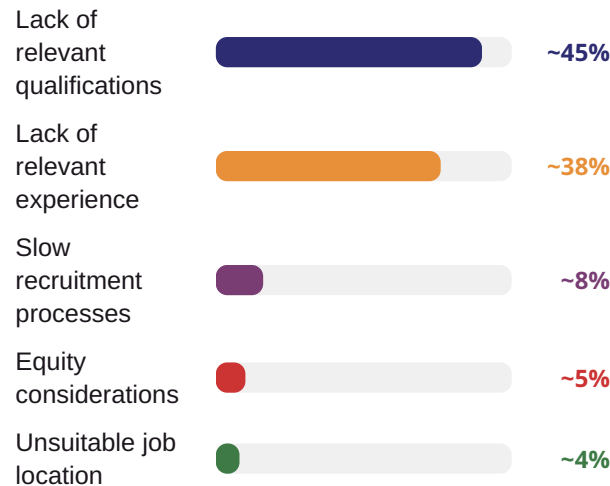
Hard-to-fill vacancies are occupations that an employer was unable to fill within 12 months (WSP-ATR 2024 definition). Highlighted occupations were reported by **at least 2 mining companies** in the Eastern Cape. **Lack of relevant qualifications** is the largest barrier, followed by lack of experience.

OCCUPATIONS IDENTIFIED AS HARD-TO-FILL

Occupation	OFO Code	Primary Reasons
Works / Workshop Manager (Manufacturing)	2021-132102	Slow recruitment
Mine Manager, Mine Deputy, Quarry Manager	2021-132201	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications Equity considerations
Chief Mine Planner / Mine Design & Planning Mgr	2021-132202	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Facilities Manager	2021-143901	Lack of experience Unsuitable location Lack of qualifications
Mechanical Engineer (Mines)	2021-214401	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Electrical Engineer (Mines)	2021-215101	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Cost Accountant	2021-241102	Lack of experience
Mine Planning Technician	2021-311701	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Mine Overseer (Planning) / Superintendent	2021-312101	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Miner	2021-312102	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Mine Air Quality / H&S Inspector	2021-325705	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Mine Rescue / Magazine Master	2021-541902	Lack of experience Lack of qualifications
Diesel Mechanic / Electrician	2021-653306	Lack of qualifications

△ 17 occupations identified in total. Key roles shown. See the full report for the complete list.

PRIMARY RECRUITMENT BARRIERS



Top 3 hardest to fill: Mine Manager/Mine Deputy/Quarry Manager · Chief Mine Planner/Mine Design & Planning Manager · Mine Overseer (Planning)/ Superintendent. These operational and planning roles were each reported by **at least 2 mining companies**, signalling a consistent province-wide shortage.

HIGHLIGHTED VACANCIES (2+ COMPANIES)

Mine Manager / Mine Deputy

Chief Mine Planner

Mine Overseer (Planning)

Mechanical Engineer (Mines)

Electrical Engineer (Mines)

Mine Health & Safety Inspector



TOP SKILLS NEEDED BY COMMUNITIES (SURVEY)



MQA COMMUNITY AWARENESS

38%

Familiar with MQA

Familiar with MQA	38%
Somewhat familiar	9%
Not familiar	53%

Buffalo City: **14%** aware · Nelson Mandela Bay: **65%** aware

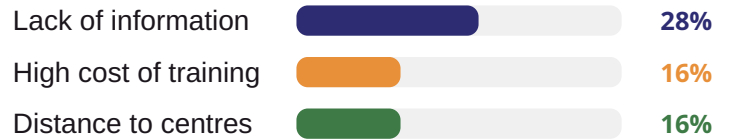
BARRIERS TO ACCESSING TRAINING (SURVEY)

51%

SAY ACCESS IS "VERY DIFFICULT"

78%

UNAWARE OF ANY MMS TRAINING PROGRAMME



EMERGING OPPORTUNITY SECTORS

Renewable Energy

Wind turbine technicians · Solar PV · Battery storage

Amathole

NEVs & Auto Manufacturing

Mechatronics · NEV mechanics · Toolmakers

EC Auto Base

Agro-processing & Small Mining

Agri-business · GIS surveying · Extraction

Agric 29%

Ocean Economy

Maritime engineering · Port logistics · Coastal mining

Pondoland

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREAS (SURVEY)

30%

Prepare Youth for Mining Careers

23%

Alternative Skills / Economic Diversification

23%

Support Local Businesses / Mining Sector

17%

Upskill Current Mining Workers

SMART Framework — 11 Recommendations. Each recommendation is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound — structured to address the most critical skills development gaps in the Eastern Cape.

1

Assess Youth Development Initiatives

Evaluate effectiveness of youth skills programmes; develop strategy supporting MQA's unemployed youth programme.

🕒 2026/27 Financial Year

3

Career Guidance for NEET Youth

Host community-based career campaigns with local stakeholders targeting 2,336,000 NEET individuals across age groups.

🕒 Within 12 Months

5

Map CBO Skills Needs

Develop a regional stakeholder matrix; map CBOs and align MQA-supported projects with identified skills needs.

🕒 2026/27 Research Agenda

7

OHS Training in Mining Operations

Initiate OHS training province-wide — the most prominent skills gap across all occupations.

🕒 2026/27

9

Accreditation Support for Artisans

Build provider capacity in diesel mechanics & plant fitting — zero accredited mining providers exist in EC.

🕒 2026

2

Enhance Women's Economic Participation

Initiate gender-specific skills study; develop a gender strategy. Women = majority of population and 71% of unemployed in the survey.

🕒 2026/27 Financial Year

4

Community Outreach for MQA Visibility

Launch outreach programme to address 53% non-awareness. Host feedback sessions sharing study findings with communities.

🕒 Immediate — 2026

6

Partner with Entrepreneurial Stakeholders

Establish partnerships with DSBD and SEFA to increase the impact of entrepreneurship programmes.

🕒 2026/27 Financial Year

8

Engage Mining Companies on Training Gap

Investigate why only 3/15 programmes delivered and only 7/192 individuals trained.

🕒 2026

10

Establish Multi-Stakeholder Skills Forum

Coordinated platform for industry, government, education, labour & communities — focused on petrochemicals, renewables, agro-processing & auto-manufacturing.

🕒 2026

11

Implement Small-Scale Mining Programme

Roll out MQA's Small-Scale Mining Support Programme to capitalise on lithium, kaolin, limestone and copper deposits.

🕒 2026/27