



LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Skills Development Needs in Limpopo

An assessment of the skills landscape within the MMS in Limpopo Province — examining skills demand, training supply alignment and systemic constraints.

Commissioned by the Mining Qualifications Authority.

PROVINCIAL UNEMPLOYMENT VS NATIONAL



30%+

MINING'S SHARE OF PROVINCIAL GDP

62.2%

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN LIMPOPO (2025)

11

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED

52.6%

FEMALE — PROVINCIAL GENDER SPLIT

7.2M

TOTAL POPULATION (2022)

30%+

MINING SHARE OF GDP

5

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES

7

TVET COLLEGES IN PROVINCE

Limpopo is defined by its **deep reliance on mining** — contributing more than 30% to provincial GDP — and its growing significance in South Africa's **Just Energy Transition (JET)**. The province is characterised by high unemployment, spatial inequality and pronounced rurality. Mining-dependent districts in Waterberg, Sekhukhune and Mopani face the most severe skills access barriers. Study conducted across **5 district 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**

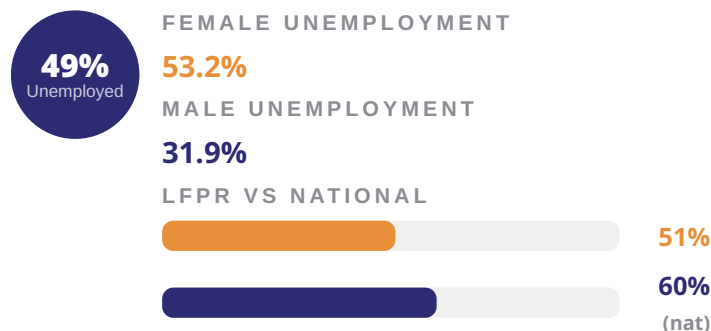
AGES 15–24

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)

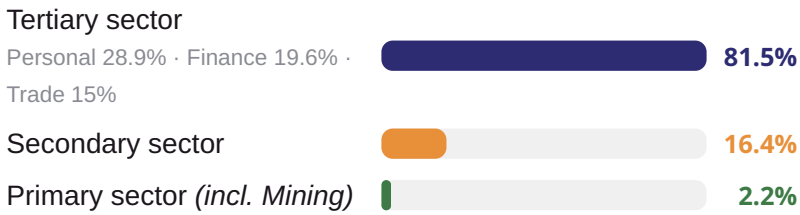
Engineering LFPR: **82% employed** — strong absorption where qualifications exist.

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

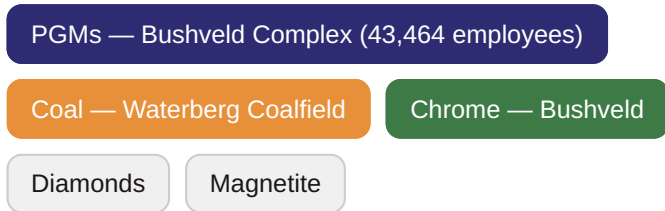
Mining Sector Profile & Skills Gaps

PROVINCIAL ECONOMY — GVA CONTRIBUTION

GVA BY SECTOR (2024 Q1)



KEY MINERAL DEPOSITS IN THE PROVINCE

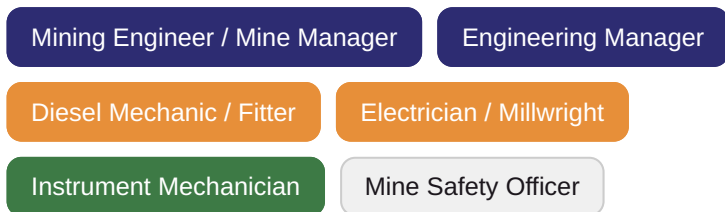


HARD-TO-FILL VACANCIES · PRIMARY CAUSE

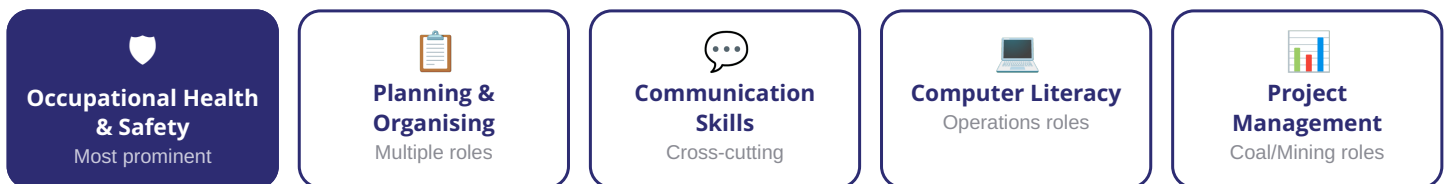


Limpopo hosts the world's most significant PGM reserves and is central to South Africa's **Just Energy Transition** strategy. PGM mining employs the most workers in the province (43,464 of ~89,566 MMS employees).

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.

Limpopo's MQA 2025 WSP data identifies **130+ hard-to-fill occupations** across 8 sub-sectors — the broadest of all provinces. Critical shortages are concentrated in artisan, engineering, supervisory and machine-operator roles. Key groups below; full WSP list available on request.

KEY HARD-TO-FILL OCCUPATIONS (WSP 2025)

Occupation / Role	OFO Code
MANAGEMENT & PROFESSIONAL	
Engineering Manager / Section Engineer	2021-132104
Mine Manager / General Manager Mining	2021-132201
SHE Manager / OHS Coordinator	2021-121206
Reliability Engineer	2021-132107
ENGINEERING & TECHNICAL	
Mining Engineer / Rock Engineer	2021-214601
Mechanical / Electrical Engineer (Mines)	2021-214401
Instrumentation Engineer / Technologist	2021-215201
Mine Surveyor / Strata Control Prac.	2021-311701
SUPERVISORS & OPERATIONS	
Mine Overseer (Production) / Shift Foreman	2021-312101
Miner / Hard Rock Miner / Shaft Timberman	2021-312102
Mine Safety Officer / H&S Inspector	2021-325705
Drill Rig / Jumbo / Scaler Operator	2021-711301
ARTISAN TRADES	
Electrician / Millwright	2021-671101
Auto Electrician	2021-671208
Instrument Mechanician	2021-672105
Diesel Mechanic / Boilermaker	2021-653306

△ 130+ occupations identified in total (MQA WSP 2025). Key roles shown. See full report for the complete list.

SKILLS PRIORITY MISMATCH — STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A key tension: **73% of employers** rank Technical & Artisan skills as top priority, yet **0% of education institutions and training providers** are prioritising this for expansion — while 100% focus on green skills the labour market doesn't yet demand.

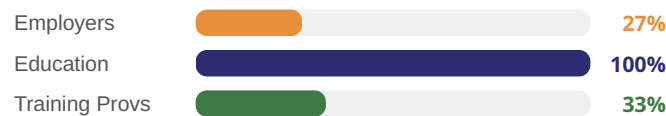
Technical & Artisan Skills



Digital & Technology Skills



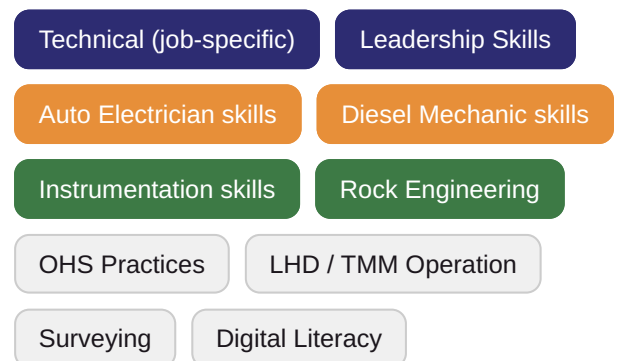
Green & Sustainability Skills



Management & Leadership



TOP-UP SKILLS — RECURRING GAPS





TOP SKILLS NEEDED BY COMMUNITIES (SURVEY)



MQA COMMUNITY AWARENESS

38%

Familiar with MQA

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

Mining districts (Waterberg, Sekhukhune, Mopani) — lowest awareness

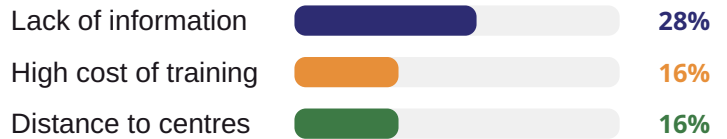
BARRIERS TO ACCESSING TRAINING (SURVEY)

51%

SAY ACCESS IS "VERY DIFFICULT"

78%

UNAWARE OF ANY MMS TRAINING PROGRAMME



EMERGING OPPORTUNITY SECTORS

Renewable Energy & Critical Minerals

Solar PV · Battery storage · Lithium processing

Waterberg

PGM Value Chain

Beneficiation · Downstream processing · R&D

Bushveld

Agro-processing & Small Mining

Agri-business · GIS surveying · Extraction

Rural DMs

JET Skills & Green Economy

Energy transition roles · Environmental management

Province-wide

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. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound — structured to address the most critical skills development gaps in Limpopo, including the Just Energy Transition.

1

Assess Youth Development Initiatives

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

🕒 2026/27 Financial Year

3

Career Guidance for NEET Youth

Host community-based career campaigns with local stakeholders, particularly targeting youth in Waterberg, Sekhukhune and Mopani.

🕒 Within 12 Months

5

Map CBO Skills Needs

Develop a regional stakeholder matrix across 5 DMs; 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 — addressing the most prominent skills gap across PGM, coal and chrome operations.

🕒 2026/27

9

Accreditation Support for Artisans

Build provider capacity — leverage Limpopo's 7 TVET colleges to deliver accredited artisan training in diesel mechanics and plant fitting.

🕒 2026

2

Enhance Women's Economic Participation

Initiate gender-specific skills study; develop a gender strategy addressing women's exclusion from mining and emerging JET sectors.

🕒 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 rural communities.

🕒 Immediate — 2026

6

JET Skills Partnership Programme

Establish partnerships with DSBD, SEFA and energy transition bodies to align skills development with Limpopo's JET strategy.

🕒 2026/27 Financial Year

8

Engage Mining Companies on Training Gap

Investigate why only 3/15 programmes delivered and only 7/192 individuals trained. Focus engagement on Bushveld corridor companies.

🕒 2026

10

Establish Multi-Stakeholder Skills Forum

Coordinated platform for industry, government, education, labour and communities — focused on PGMs, renewables, JET and agro-processing.

🕒 2026

11

Implement JET-Aligned Critical Minerals Programme

Roll out MQA's Small-Scale Mining Support Programme to capitalise on Limpopo's critical mineral deposits (PGMs, lithium, magnetite) within a JET-aligned framework.

🕒 2026/27