

## Job boom in disability sector

Digby Hildreth | 29th April 2011

A BOOM in the disability sector will create nearly 5600 job opportunities on the North Coast between now and 2015.

Care Careers, an employment arm of National Disability Services NSW, predicts that 350,000 people will need disability assistance by that time.

"People thinking of a career change should consider employment in the disability and community care sector," a Care Careers spokeswoman said.

Sarah Jurd, a speech pathologist with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance at Alstonville, said she had seen a growth in demand for its services in the past few years.

"There is always more need than there are resources to meet it," she said.

Tony Davies, CEO of the Northern Rivers Social Development Council, said it expected major growth in the disability sector.

This meant a bigger demand for workers, especially in the Aboriginal community, where the need was already great.

The health and human services sector had overtaken education as the second-largest employer in the region, Mr Davies said, and the drivers of growth were set to continue.

"These include having the highest population growth rate in non-metro areas in NSW and a traditionally high number of people with disabilities."

Mr Davies said the healthcare and social assistance sector employed 14% of the North Coast workforce, compared with an 11% average in the rest of NSW.

"Between 2001 and 2006, the healthcare sector went from third to second largest employer in the region, with a 5% increase in employment figures."

Disability workers were not paid what they should be, said Katrina Luckie, the Northern Rivers CEO of Regional Development Australia.



Speech Pathologist of the Cerebral Palsy Alliance in Alstonville, Sarah Jurd has seen the need to more carers in the region.

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This is great news, but after the next federal budget, there will be fewer disabled people that will need help, because the govt will decide they are capable of work. Perhaps these new unemployed instead of disabled people, can be trained to look after the remaining disabled, until there are no more disabled people left because they will all be working. Now there is a good govt policy.

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