

ALBERTA
SOUTHWEST

CLARESHOLM

Accommodation and Food Services

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Executive Summary

Claresholm's accommodation and food services sector presents a mixed picture of modest local participation alongside a smaller and less stable business base than earlier in the decade. The resident labour force in the sector edged up between 2016 and 2021, reaching 135 people, which points to gradual growth in local participation rather than a major shift. By contrast, sector employment and the number of establishments were much more volatile. Jobs fell sharply after 2020, rebounded in 2023, and then eased again to 136 in 2025, still well below the 2020 level. Establishments followed a similar pattern, dropping steeply in 2022 before recovering partway to 18 in 2025, which remained below the earlier peak.

The sector itself is narrow and heavily concentrated in food service. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places account for most employment, making restaurants the clear centre of local activity, while drinking places form a much smaller second tier and accommodation-related segments remain limited. That structure matters because the larger categories have also weakened over time. Restaurant employment rose slightly over the past year but was still down markedly over five years, and traveller accommodation recorded especially sharp declines. The result is a sector that has not disappeared, but has lost depth and breadth. Its establishment profile reinforces that pattern: very small businesses dominate, with the largest count in firms without employees and only a limited presence of mid-sized operators.

Claresholm does retain one distinctive niche within this otherwise modest sector base. Drinking places stand out as the town's strongest area of specialization, with a concentration well above the broader benchmark even after that concentration declined from earlier levels. Most other industries in the sector remain underrepresented and have weakened over time, including restaurants despite their size. At the same time, the labour market gap in 2021 showed more jobs than resident workers in the sector, suggesting local demand exceeded the town's resident labour supply to a moderate degree. The broader impression is of a small sector that still plays a visible role in Claresholm, but one shaped by long-term contraction, uneven recovery, and a reliance on a narrow set of activities rather than broad-based strength.

Resident Labour Force in Sector

Claresholm’s resident labour force in this sector reached 135 people in 2021, up from 125 in 2016. That represents an 8.0% increase over five years, showing a small gain in local participation.

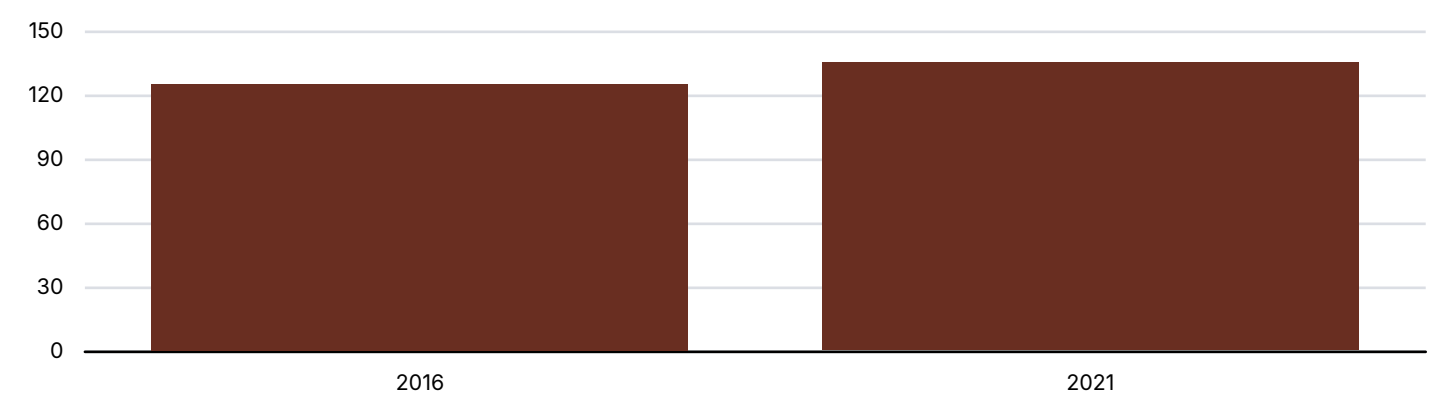


Figure 1.1: Shows the number of resident workers in a specific sector. It helps indicate how many local residents are employed in that part of the economy. (Claresholm, 2016-2021)¹

Claresholm’s resident labour force in accommodation and food services was small but edged upward between 2016 and 2021. The number of local workers in this sector rose from 125 to 135 people, a 5-year increase of 8%. Within the labour force aged 15 years and over, that points to modest growth rather than a sharp shift. With only two time points available, the pattern suggests gradual expansion in local participation in this sector.

Claresholm had 135 resident workers in accommodation and food services in 2021, up from 125 in 2016. That 8% increase suggests modest growth in the local labour force tied to this sector. Among nearby places, Claresholm sat above Fort Macleod at 70, Nanton at 60, and Cardston at 115, while remaining below Pincher Creek’s 145 and far below the 195 recorded in Pincher Creek in 2016. Several small communities showed little or no activity. The pattern is one of steady, mid-range participation rather than sharp change.

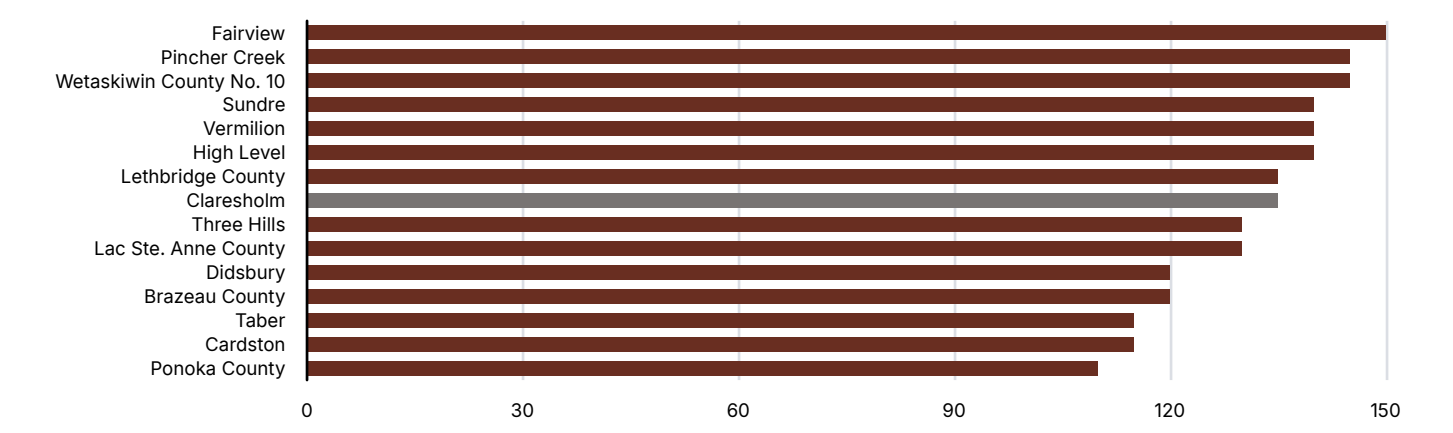


Figure 1.2: Comparison of Resident Labour Force in Sector with other locations (Claresholm, 2021)¹

Largest Industries in Sector

Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places led Claresholm’s sector employment with 108 people in 2025, up 3.85% from a year earlier but down 32.08% over five years. Drinking places followed with 20 people.

Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector in 2025 is led by restaurants, with full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places clearly the largest employer in the group. The sector’s employment is concentrated in a few industries, while some smaller segments have been shrinking or holding steady. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places employed 108 people, after a 3.9% increase over the previous year and a 32.1% decline over five years. Drinking places employed 20 people, unchanged from a year earlier but down 20.0% over five years. Traveller accommodation

employed 7 people, falling 46.1% in the last year and 36.4% over five years. The smallest category, recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps, employed 1 person and showed no change over either period. This leaves the sector’s current employment base heavily tilted toward food service rather than accommodation. The pattern suggests a narrow local sector structure, with one dominant industry carrying most of the employment while the other segments remain small or have weakened over time.

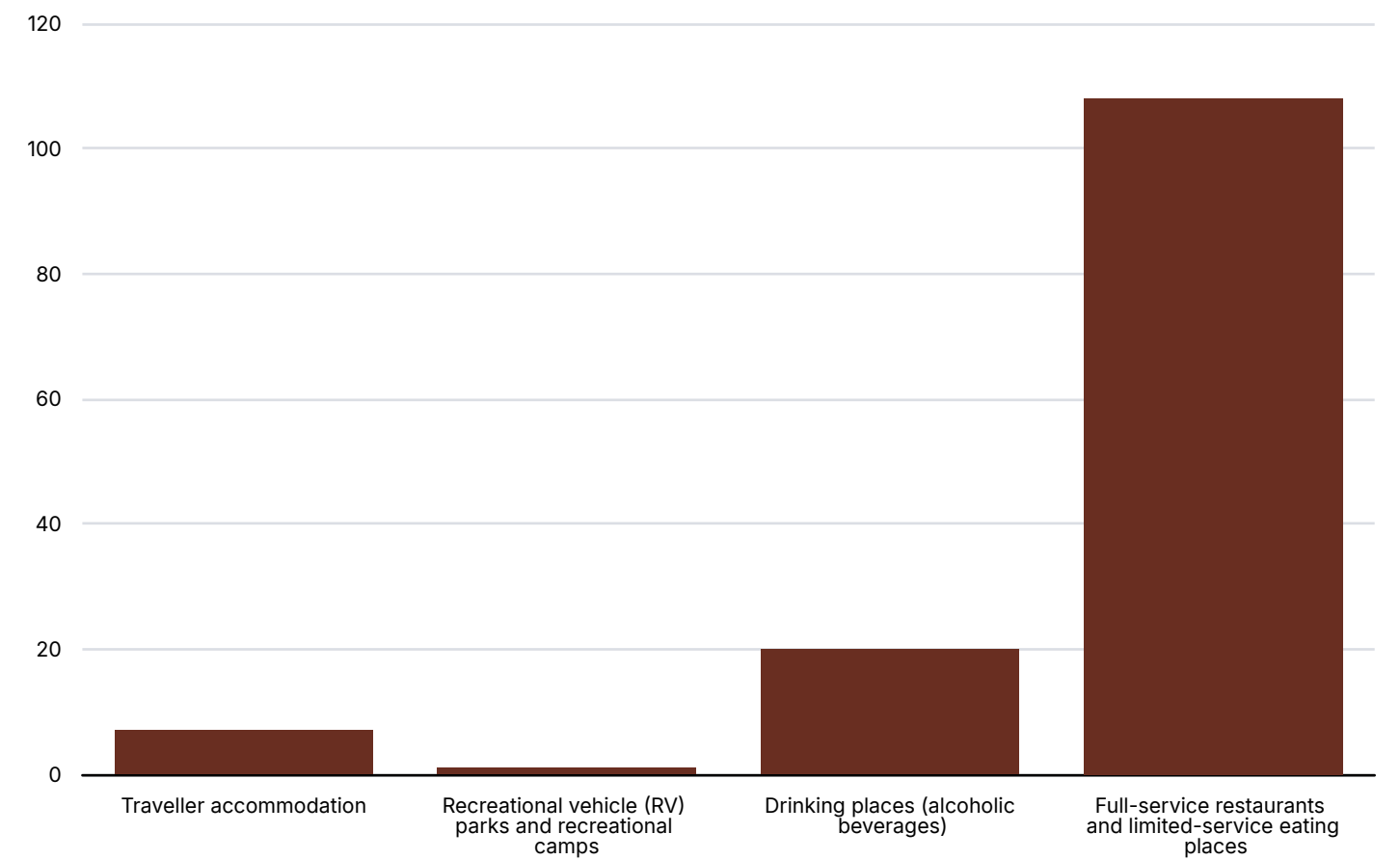


Figure 2.1: Shows the industries within this sector with the highest employment. It helps identify the biggest components of the sector. (Claresholm, 2025)²

Declining Industries in Sector

Claresholm’s largest declining industry group remained full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, with 108 employees, up 3.9% from 2024 but down 32.1% over five years. Traveller accommodation had 7 employees, down 46.2% year over year.

Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector shows a mixed employment picture in 2025, with the sharpest declines concentrated in a few industries rather than spread evenly across the sector. The most notable drop is in traveller accommodation, which has 7 people and fell 46.1% over the past year and 36.4% over five years. Drinking places employ 20 people and were unchanged from a year earlier, but are down 20.0% over five years. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places remain the largest category at 108 people,

yet employment is still 32.1% below five years ago despite a 3.9% increase in the past year. Recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps are very small, with 1 person and no change over either period. The pattern points to long-term weakness in parts of the sector, even where the most recent year shows some stabilization or modest recovery. The sector’s decline is therefore led more by sustained losses over time than by a uniform recent downturn.

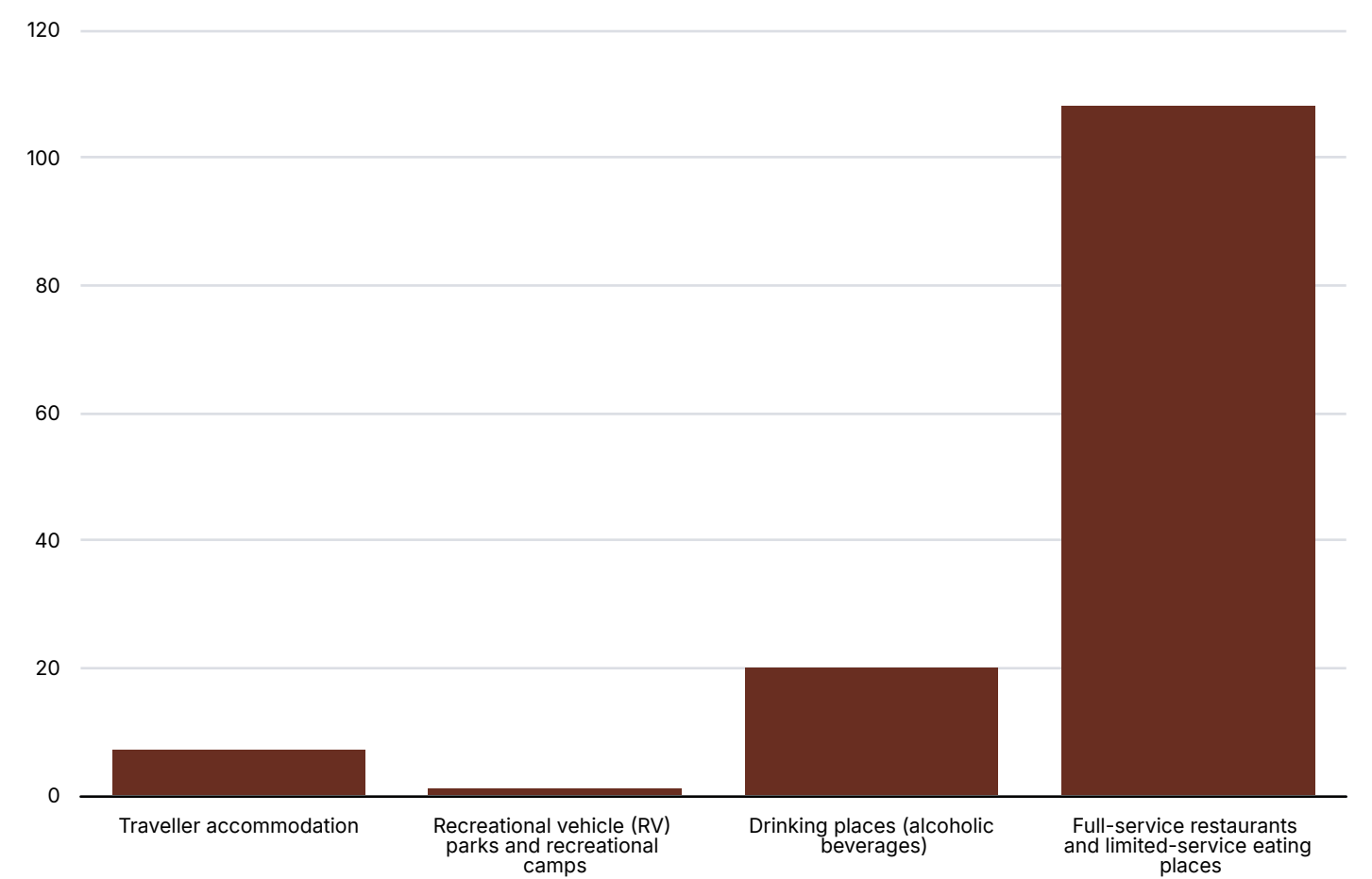


Figure 3.1: Shows industries within this sector where employment has decreased the most over the selected time period. It helps identify segments of the sector that are losing jobs. (Claresholm, 2025)²

Establishments in Sector

Claresholm had 18 business establishments in 2025, unchanged from 2024 but down 25.0% from 2020. The count ranged from 8 in 2022 to 24 in 2018, 2020 and 2021.

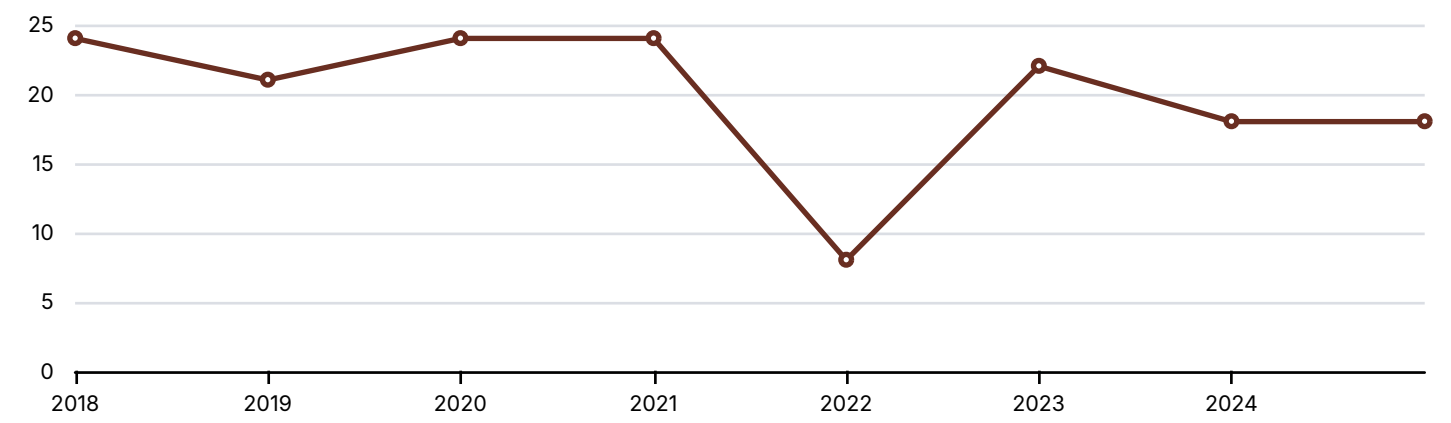


Figure 4.1: Shows the number of business establishments in a specific sector. It helps indicate the scale of business activity in that sector. (Claresholm, 2018-2025)³

Claresholm had 18 accommodation and food services establishments in 2025, unchanged from 2024. The series shows more movement earlier in the period, with 24 establishments in 2018, 21 in 2019, and 24 again in 2020 and 2021. The sharpest shift came in 2022, when the count fell to 8, before rebounding to 22 in 2023. Even with that recovery, the 2025 level remained below the earlier peak, and the five-year change was -25.0%, pointing to a smaller sector than at the start of the period.

Claresholm had 18 accommodation and food services establishments in 2025. That was unchanged from 2024, but still below its recent peak of 24 in 2018, 2020 and 2021. The sharpest movement came in 2022, when the count fell to 8 before rebounding to 22 in 2023. Among nearby places, Claresholm sat in the middle of the group. It was below Pincher Creek's 43 establishments and above Hill Spring's 1 and Stavely's 1. Its 2025 level was close to Cardston's 19 and Nanton's 19. Source: Statistics Canada, Business Register.

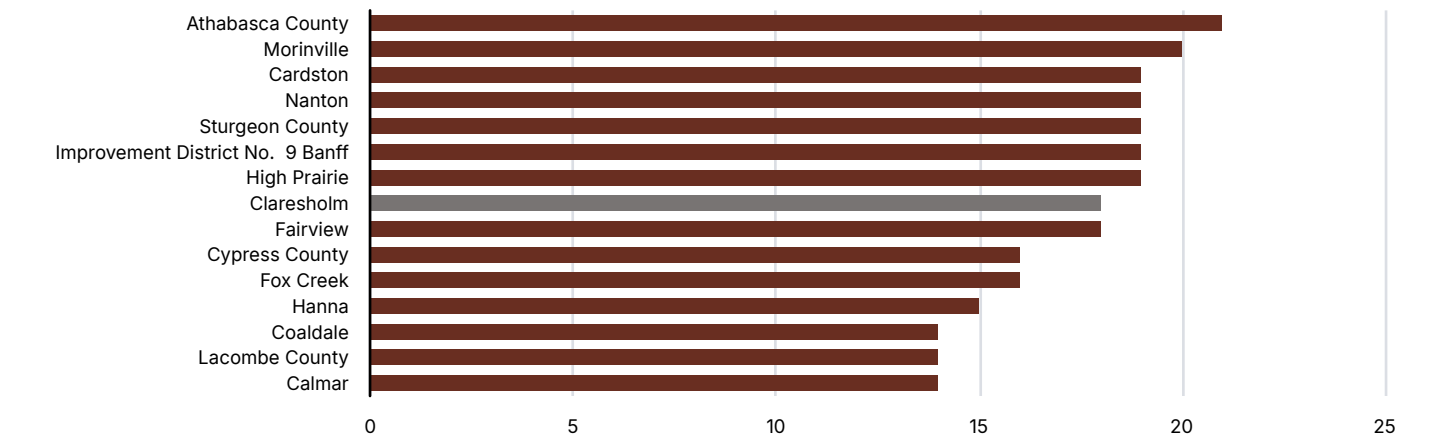


Figure 4.2: Comparison of Establishments in Sector with other locations (Claresholm, 2025)³

Specialist Industries in Sector

Claresholm’s most specialized sector is drinking places, with a location quotient of 3.9727, up 7.2% in one year but down 42.2% over five years. Traveller accommodation ranks lowest at 0.2354.

In Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector, the most specialized industries are concentrated in a few narrow areas rather than spread evenly. The clearest outlier is drinking places, with a location quotient of 3.97 in 2025, well above the other local industries in this sector. Traveller accommodation and RV parks are both far closer to parity, at 0.24 and 0.22, while full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places stand at 0.62. The recent pattern is mixed. Drinking places rose 7.2%

over the past year, but its five-year change was down 42.2%. Restaurants increased 3.1% in the last year yet fell 62.6% over five years. Traveller accommodation declined 46.3% over one year and 67.3% over five years, and RV parks dropped 6.2% and 39.9%. The sector’s specialization is therefore strongest in drinking places, while the other industries remain underrepresented and have weakened over time.

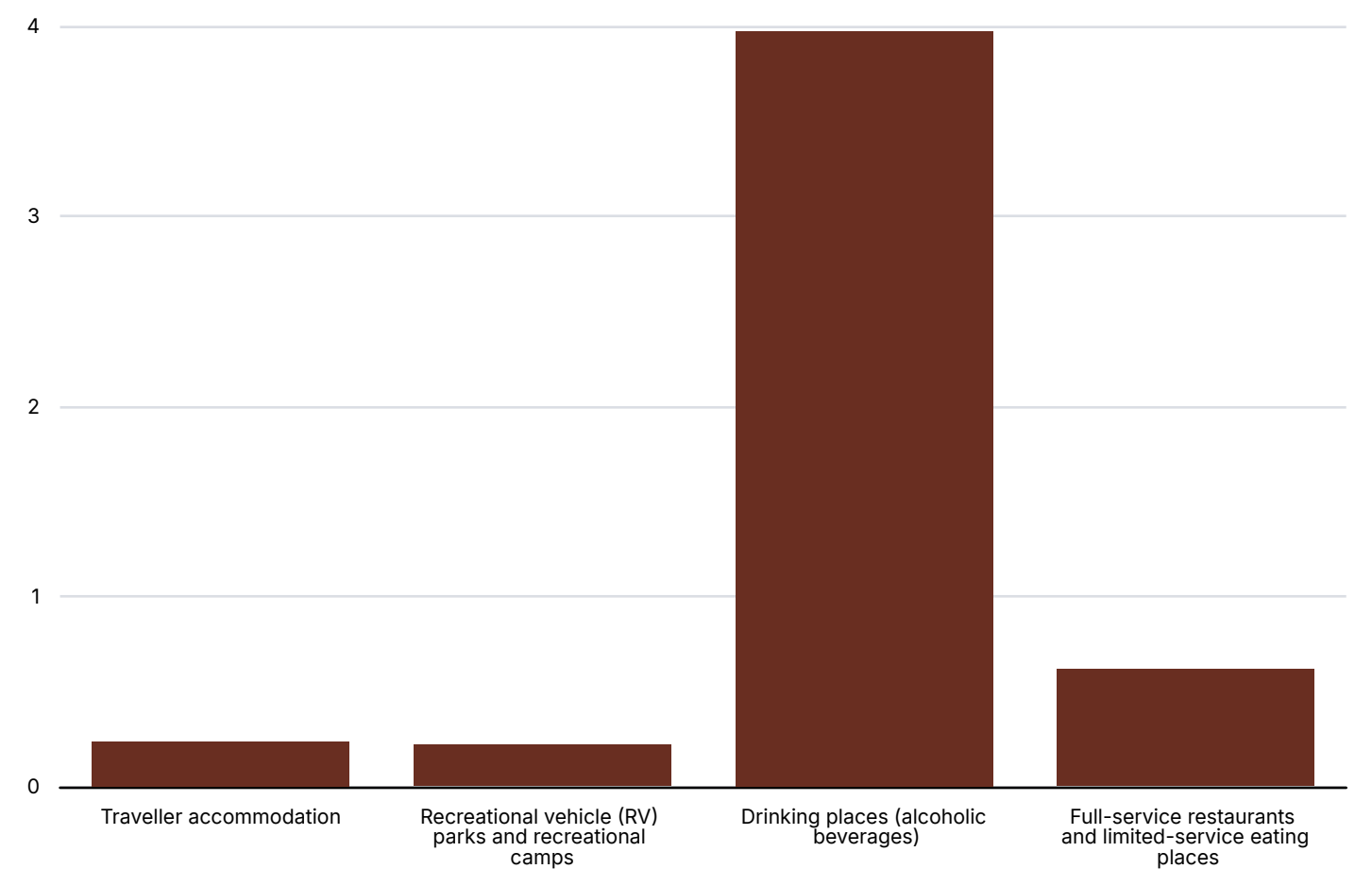


Figure 5.1: Shows industries within this sector where the local economy has the highest level of specialization based on employment concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Claresholm, 2025)⁴

Star Industries in Sector

Claresholm’s most specialized industry is drinking places, with a location quotient of 4.0 in 2025. Concentration rose 7.2% over the past year, after falling from 6.4 in 2022 to 3.7 in 2024.

Claresholm’s most notable star industry in accommodation and food services is Drinking places (alcoholic beverages), with a Location Quotient of 4.0 in 2025. That level suggests the industry is much more concentrated locally than in the broader reference area within the same sector. Recent change points in a mixed direction: employment was up 7.2% over one year, yet down 42.2% over five years. The pattern is less about broad sector depth than about a single highly specialized niche. The

short-term gain suggests some recent recovery or expansion, while the longer-term decline shows that the current position sits within a weaker longer-run trend. Because the dataset includes only this industry for Claresholm, it is the clearest signal of where local specialization stands out in the sector. For a narrow industry like this, the combination of a high concentration measure and a positive one-year change is the main story, even if the five-year record remains subdued.

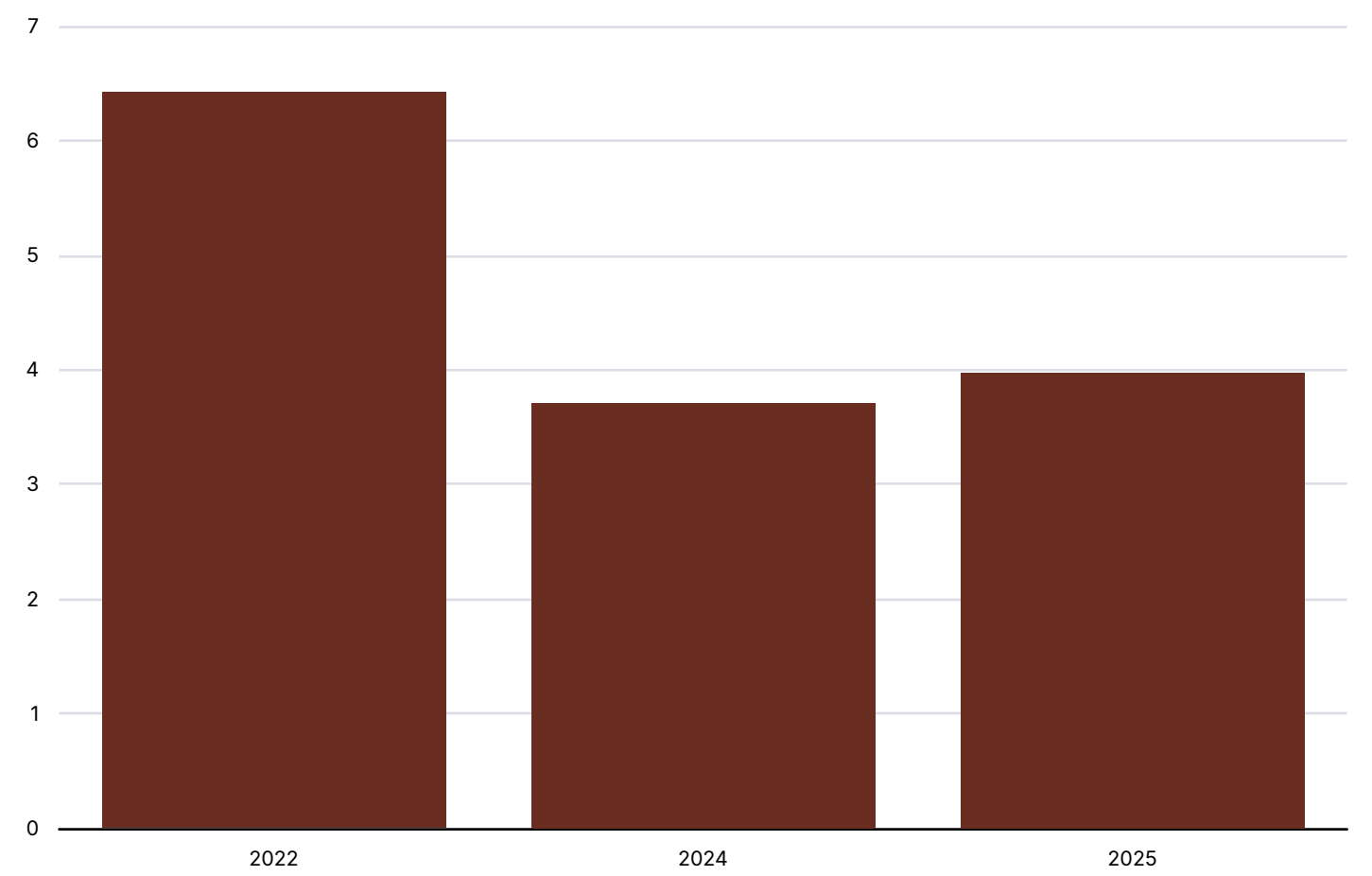


Figure 6.1: Shows industries within this sector where the local economy has strong specialization and increasing concentration or strong growth. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Claresholm, 2022-2025)⁴

Anchor Industries in Sector

Claresholm’s most specialized anchor industry is drinking places, with a location quotient of 3.6816 in 2023, down 42.68% from 2021. Specialization remained high, but concentration declined over the period.

In Claresholm, the clearest anchor industry in accommodation and food services is drinking places, which recorded a location quotient of 3.7 in 2023. That means the industry is concentrated locally relative to the broader comparison group used in the data, even though recent momentum weakened sharply. The one-year change in concentration was -42.7%, pointing to a marked decline from the prior year. The pattern is less about

expansion than persistence: a high concentration remains visible, but the recent change suggests that this specialty is no longer strengthening. Within the sector, drinking places stands out as a locally important line of activity, yet the latest movement shows the concentration is falling rather than deepening. For Claresholm, the data suggest a mature niche that still exceeds typical levels, but with reduced intensity over the past year.

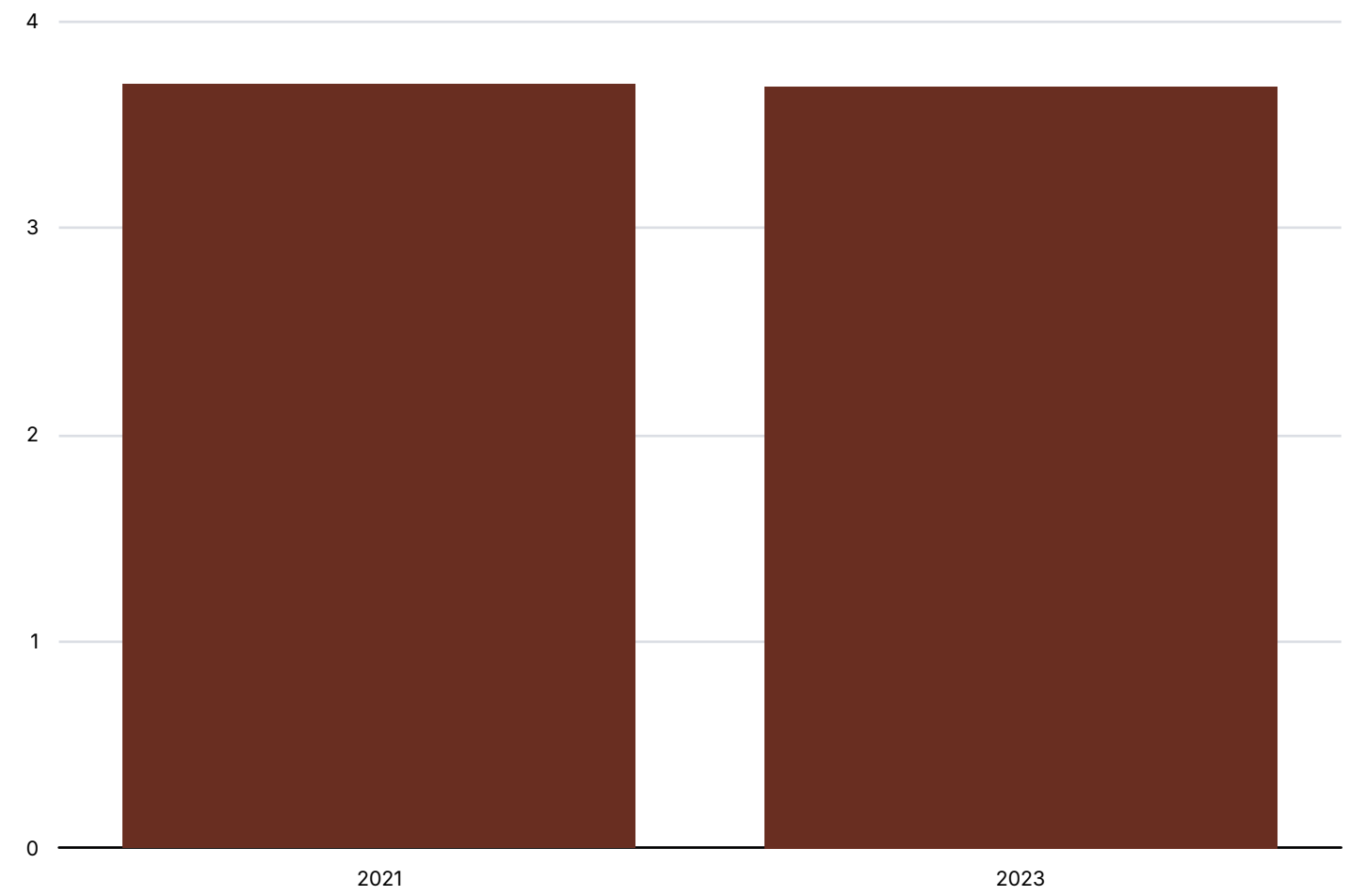


Figure 7.1: Shows industries within this sector where the local economy has strong specialization but relatively stable or declining concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Claresholm, 2021-2023)⁴

Transitioning Industries in Sector

Claresholm’s most concentrated transitioning industry in 2025 is traveller accommodation at 0.2354, down 46.3% in a year and 67.3% over five years. RV parks and camps follow at 0.2180, also declining 6.2% yearly.

Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector shows limited specialization in the industries identified as transitioning. In 2025, both traveller accommodation and RV parks and recreational camps sat below 1.0 in location quotient terms, suggesting they were not concentrated locally. Traveller accommodation recorded a location quotient of 0.2354, with a 1-year change of -46.3% and a 5-year change of -67.3%. RV parks and recreational camps stood at 0.218, with a smaller 1-year decline of -6.2% but a still larger 5-year drop of -39.9%.

The contrast between the two industries is mainly in pace, not direction. Both remain lightly represented in Claresholm’s local economy, but traveller accommodation has fallen much more sharply in the short and longer term than RV parks and recreational camps. Taken together, the data point to a sector segment that is both low in concentration and weakening over time, with the sharper recent decline appearing in traveller accommodation.

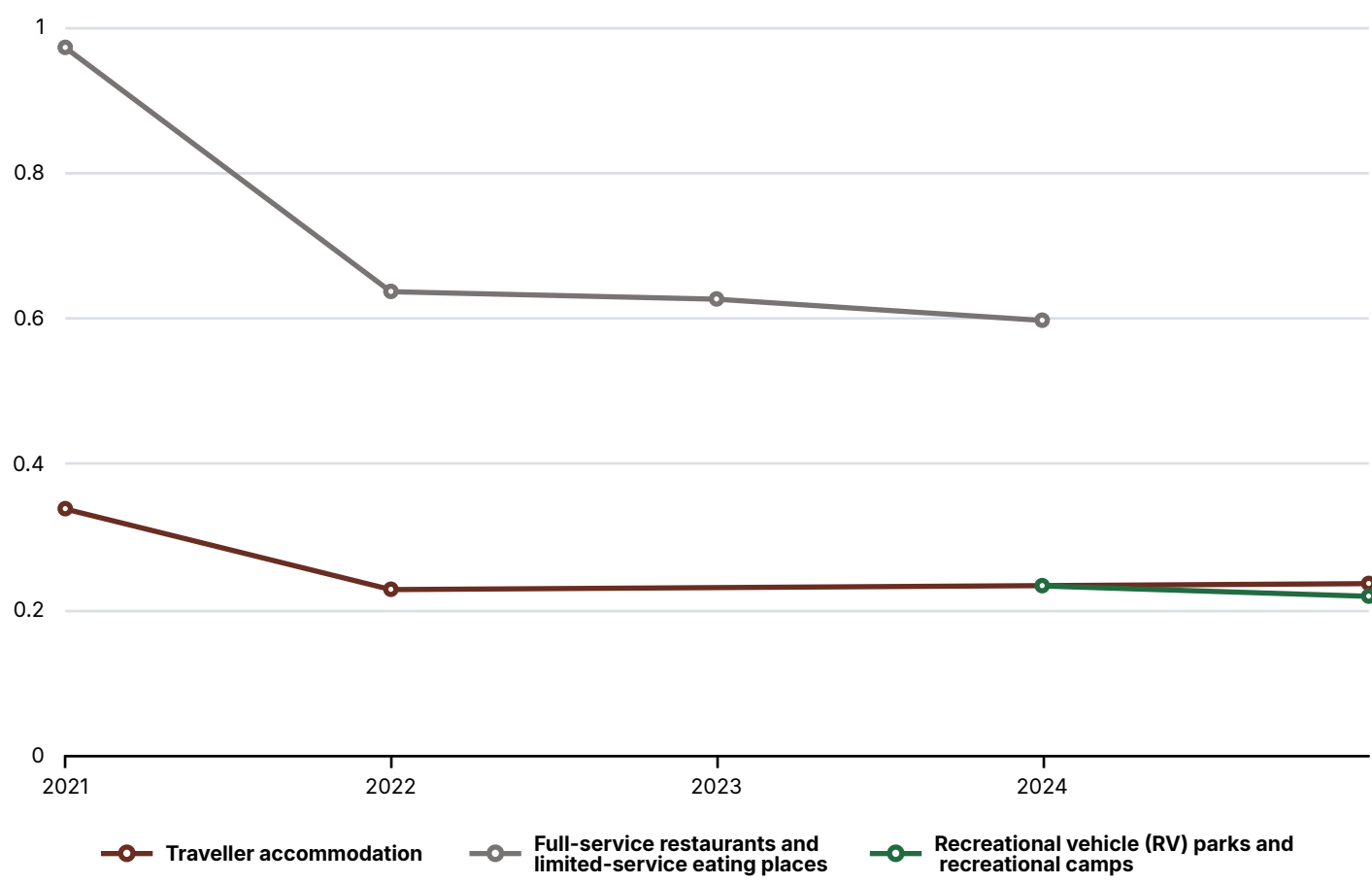


Figure 8.1: Shows industries within this sector that have relatively low specialization in the local economy and limited or declining concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Claresholm, 2021-2025)⁴

Emerging Industries in Sector

In Claresholm, full-service and limited-service restaurants led emerging industries in 2025 with a location quotient of 0.6157, up 3.15% in a year, though still 62.57% below five years earlier.

In Claresholm, the emerging-industry picture within accommodation and food services is narrow but clear in 2025. The only listed industry is full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, which has a location quotient of 0.6. That points to a low current concentration relative to the broader benchmark used in the dataset, even as recent change suggests movement. The short-term trend is positive: the industry's 1-year change is 3.1%, while the 5-year change is -62.6%. Read

together, those figures show a recent increase after a much weaker longer-term pattern. Because no other emerging industries are shown for the town, this sector view is concentrated in a single category rather than a broad mix. The data suggests Claresholm's emerging activity in this sector is not about high specialization yet, but about a restaurant segment that has recently strengthened after a longer decline.

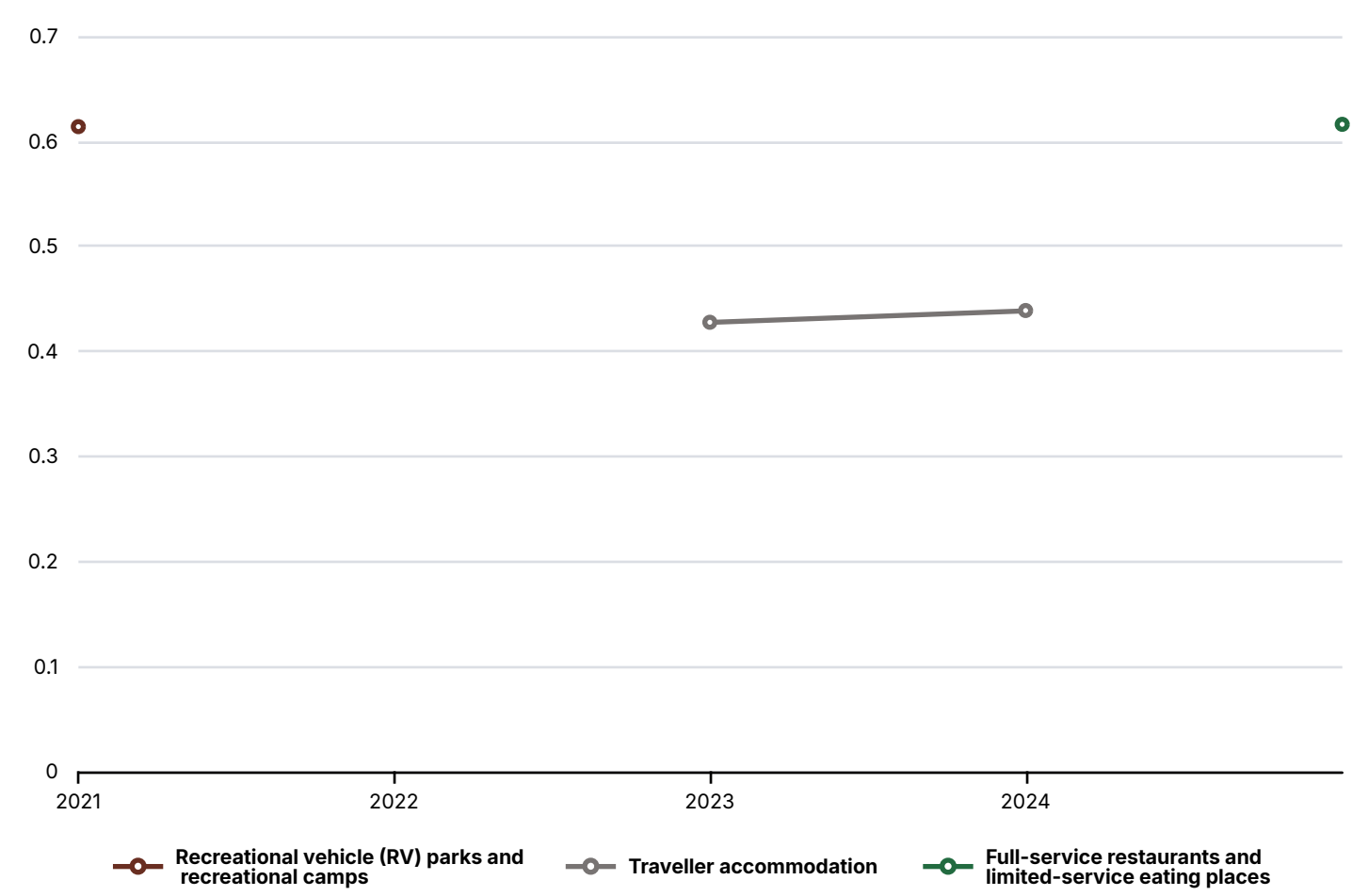


Figure 9.1: Shows industries within this sector that currently have low specialization in the local economy but are experiencing increasing concentration or strong growth. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Claresholm, 2021-2025)⁴

Employment in Sector

Claresholm’s industry employment was 136 people in 2025, down 4.9% from 2024 and 31.0% from 2020. The series fell to 74 in 2022, rebounded to 150 in 2023, then eased again.

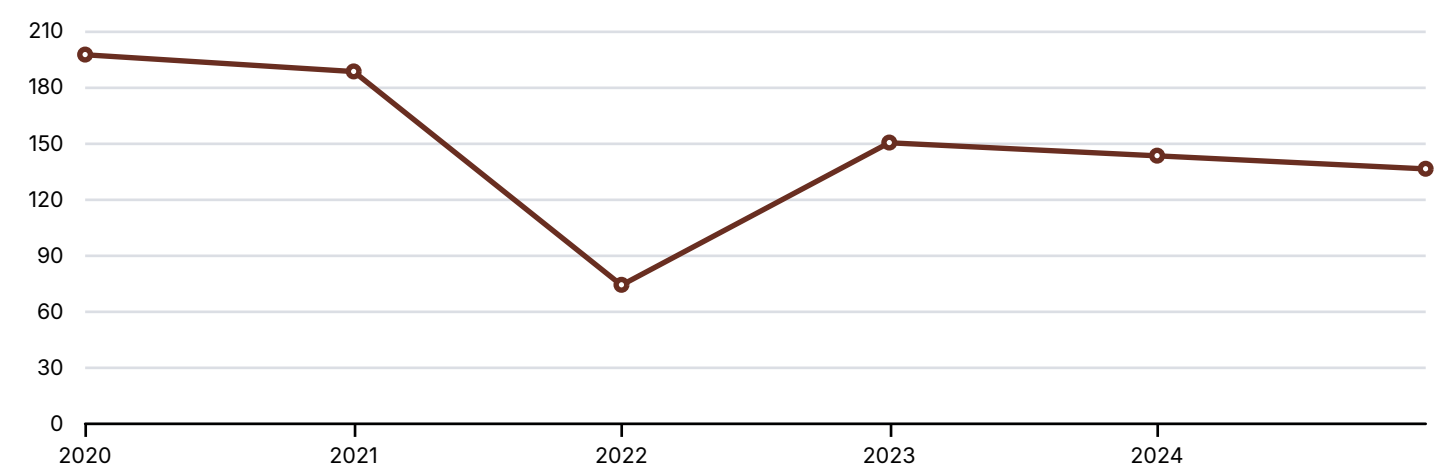
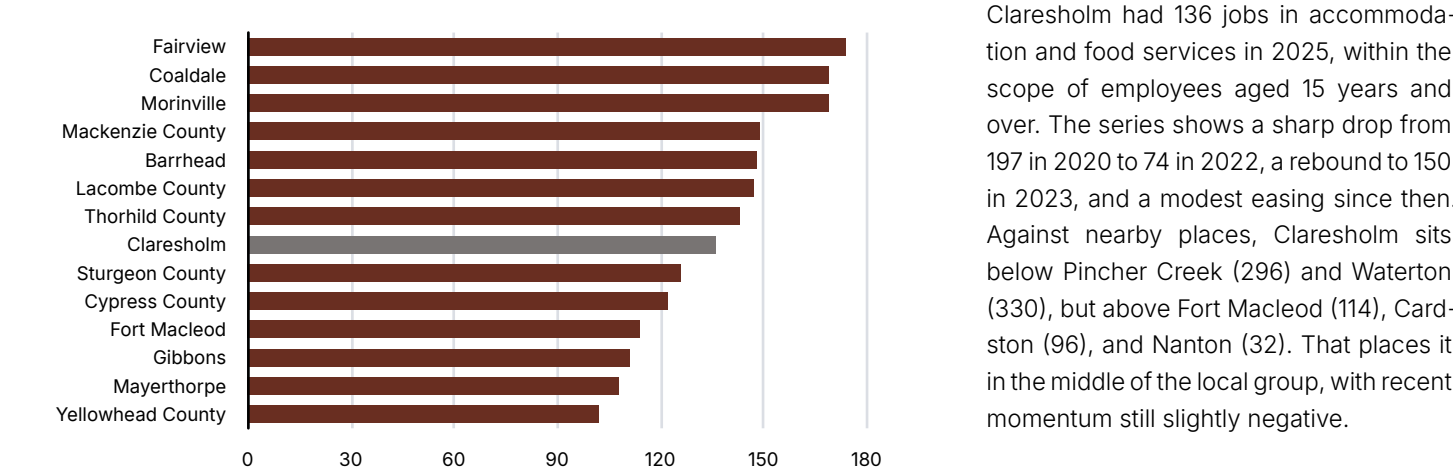


Figure 10.1: Shows the number of jobs in a specific industry sector. It helps indicate the scale of that sector within the local economy. (Claresholm, 2020-2025)²

Employment in accommodation and food services in Claresholm has fluctuated notably since 2020, with the clearest pattern being a sharp drop followed by a partial recovery and renewed easing. The sector counted 197 jobs in 2020 and 188 in 2021, then fell to 74 in 2022 before rebounding to 150 in 2023. That recovery did not fully hold. Employment slipped to 143 in 2024 and 136 in 2025, which is 30.9% below the 2020 level. The 2025 figure also represents a 4.9% decline from 2024, after a 4.7% dip the year before. In this sector, Claresholm’s recent trend points to a smaller workforce than at the start of the period.



Claresholm had 136 jobs in accommodation and food services in 2025, within the scope of employees aged 15 years and over. The series shows a sharp drop from 197 in 2020 to 74 in 2022, a rebound to 150 in 2023, and a modest easing since then. Against nearby places, Claresholm sits below Pincher Creek (296) and Waterton (330), but above Fort Macleod (114), Cardston (96), and Nanton (32). That places it in the middle of the local group, with recent momentum still slightly negative.

Figure 10.2: Comparison of Employment in Sector with other locations (Claresholm, 2025)²

Establishments in Sector by Number of Employees

Claresholm had 6 establishments without employees in 2025, the largest size class. That count was up 50.0% from 2024 but down 25.0% from five years earlier, matching the most changed group.

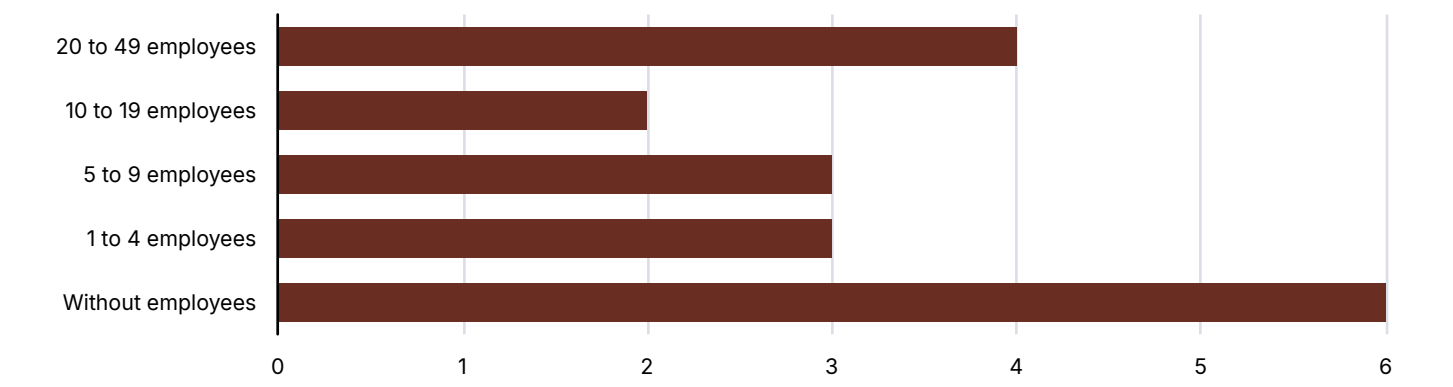


Figure 11.1: Shows the number of business establishments in a sector by employee size class. It helps indicate whether that sector is made up mostly of small or larger firms. (Claresholm, 2025)³

In 2025, Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector was dominated by very small establishments. Businesses with no employees led at 6, followed by 1 to 4 employee firms at 3 and 5 to 9 employee firms at 3. Larger size classes were fewer. The town had 2 establishments with 10 to 19 employees and 4 with 20 to 49 employees. Recent change was mixed: no-employee firms were up 50% from a year earlier, while 10 to 19 employee establishments fell 50%.

In Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector, the establishment base in 2025 is weighted toward very small businesses. Firms without employees lead with 6 establishments, followed by 4 in the 20 to 49 employee class and 3 each in the 1 to 4 and 5 to 9 employee classes. The 10 to 19 employee group is smaller at 2. Recent movement is mixed: no-employee firms rose 50%, while 10 to 19 employee establishments fell 50%. This points to a sector dominated by small operators, with limited mid-sized presence.



Figure 11.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Business Establishment Size - Without employees (Claresholm)³

Sector Labour Market Gap

Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector had a labour market gap ratio of 1.39 in 2021. That means there were about 1.4 jobs for every resident worker in the sector.

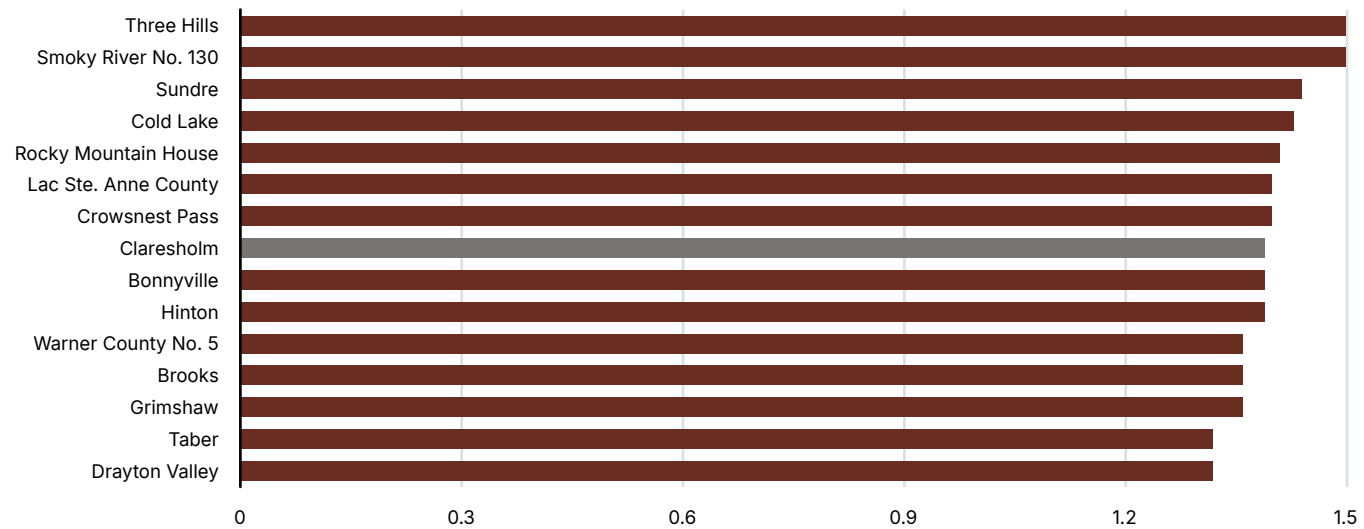
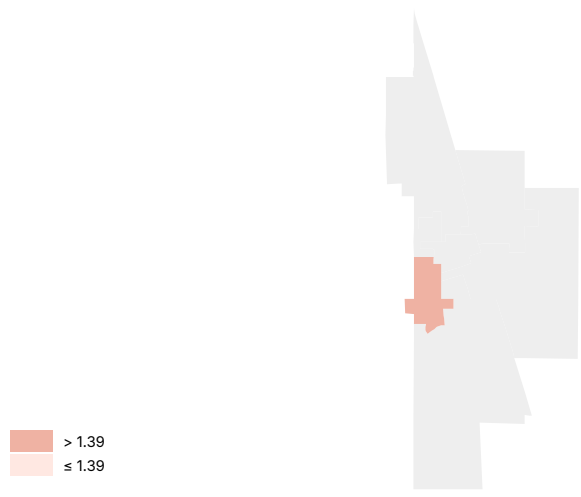


Figure 12.1: Comparison of Sector Labour Market Gap with other locations (Claresholm, 2021)⁵

In 2021, Claresholm’s labour market gap in accommodation and food services was 1.4, measured against the labour force aged 15 years and over. That places the town in a positive gap, suggesting more jobs than resident workers in this sector. Among nearby places with data, Claresholm sat below Fort Macleod at 1.7 and Pincher Creek at 2.2, but above Nanton at 0.9, Cardston at 1.1, and Pincher Creek No. 9 at 0.3. The figure is not extreme, but it shows a moderate mismatch within the local market.



In 2021, Claresholm’s accommodation and food services sector showed a labour market gap ratio of 1.4 for the labour force aged 15 and over. That points to a modest imbalance between local jobs and resident workers in this sector. One descendant dissemination area recorded a much higher ratio of 6.3, suggesting stronger local mismatch there. Source: Statistics Canada, Business Register; Statistics Canada, Census Profile; Localintel, Labour Market Gap Estimates of Census Areas.

Figure 12.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Industry Sector - Accommodation and food services (Claresholm)⁵

Data Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Census Profile. Published in Dec 15, 2022.
2. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
3. Statistics Canada, Business Register. Published in Jun 1, 2025.
4. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment Location Quotient by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
5. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Statistics Canada, Census Profile; Localintel, Labour Market Gap Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.

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