



Australian Government

**Local Jobs
Program**

Local Jobs Plan

Geraldton

Western Australia

March 2022

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The Department of Education, Skills and Employment acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the lands where we work and travel through. We pay our respects to their people, cultures, and their Elders past, present and emerging. The Yamatji people are the traditional owners of the land which is now Geraldton.

The Local Jobs Program

As part of supporting Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australian Government's Local Jobs Program (LJP) brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to accelerate reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways in 51 Employment Regions.

Recognising the importance of local knowledge in getting people back into jobs quickly, the LJP includes the following key elements in each region:

- a local Employment Facilitator
- a Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce
- a Local Jobs Plan
- a Local Recovery Fund to support small scale activities
- access to the National Priority Funding Pool.

The Taskforces, each chaired by the respective region's Employment Facilitator, develop and update a Local Jobs Plan for their region that identifies key employment and training priorities and provides a framework for driving employment outcomes in the context of the local labour market.

This Local Jobs Plan for the Geraldton Employment Region identifies the key LJP priorities with a focus on creating employment opportunities, actively upskilling or reskilling local job seekers and meeting local employer demands.

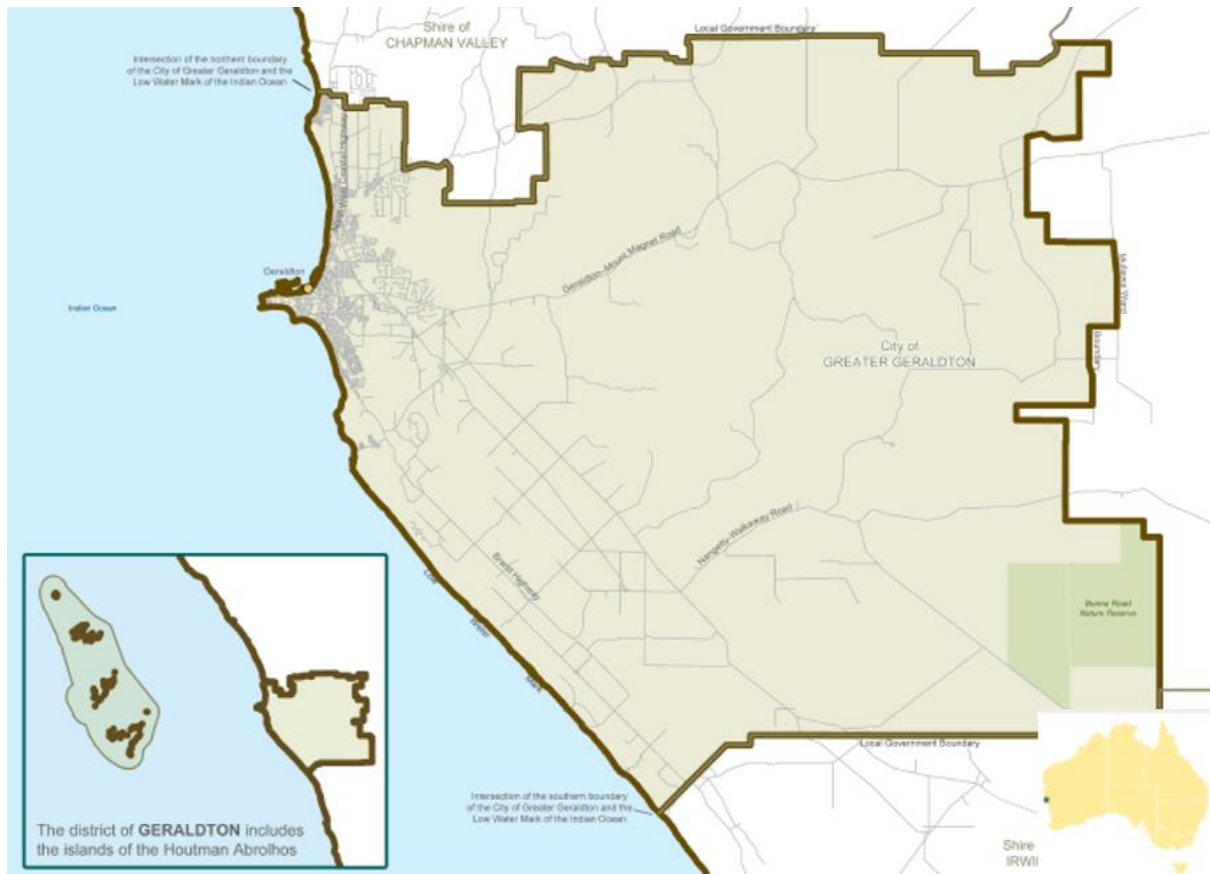
Key Employment and Training Priorities

1. Engage with industry to articulate the needs of employers and job seekers and inform the development of strategies which maximise local job placements.
2. Promote positions for local job seekers including apprenticeships and traineeships and ensure that locals are adequately skilled, prepared and supported for current and upcoming employment opportunities and projects.
3. Leverage existing Australian and Western Australian Government programs to create pathways into local growth industries and broker employment and education opportunities for socially disadvantaged and priority groups including women over 45, young people, and Aboriginal People through collaboration with local community support services, employers and training organisations.

A full description of these key priorities, the strategies to address these and a list of key stakeholders can be found at **Attachment A**.

Geraldton Employment Region Overview

The Geraldton Employment Region is a coastal city in the Mid-West region and covers an area of 270 square kilometres. It is the largest regional town outside of Perth and is positioned approximately 424 kilometres north from Perth. Refer to the map below. Home to 38,231 people, Greater Geraldton supports 16,653 jobs and has an annual economic output of \$7.154 billion. The City of Greater Geraldton is the only LGA in the area.



The Mid-West region of Western Australia is strategically located between Perth and the growing economies of the resource rich Pilbara and Kimberley. Traditionally an agricultural region, the Mid-West is now attracting unprecedented investment interest from a range of other industry sectors. The mining industry has quickly become the main economic driver of the region.

Geraldton is currently experiencing economic expansion and has significant capacity for further growth. Land availability is good, housing prices are affordable and existing infrastructure is well-established. Strong business and economic connections exist between Geraldton, the surrounding Mid-West and the Pilbara.

The Port of Geraldton is a major west coast seaport, as well as the town being an important service and logistics centre for regional mining, fishing, agricultural and tourism industries.

Aboriginal people make up approximately 10% of the Geraldton population. The Yamatji people are the Traditional Owners of the land which is now Geraldton.

The Geraldton Universities Centre is an independent, not-for-profit, incorporated body, supporting university courses in Geraldton on behalf of a range of universities including CQUniversity, Charles Sturt University and the University of Southern Queensland.

Central Regional TAFE provides education, training programs and services to the community. Other specialist training organisations such as the Batavia Coast Maritime Institute (BCMI) operate within Geraldton.

Key challenges in Geraldton Employment Region

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an ongoing shortage of staff across a range of industries in Geraldton, such as Hospitality and Accommodation Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail and Child Care. Employers operating in these non-resource related industries, find it challenging to attract and retain staff, who are drawn to the increasingly generous remuneration and conditions offered by the resources sector.

Replacing backpacker labour within the local hospitality and accommodation service industry has been very challenging, meaning that several small businesses such as cafes and restaurants are unable to operate at full capacity or on weekends.

Pressures created by skills shortages in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector across WA continue to impact local economies. There is an urgent need to focus on identifying and skilling up this workforce, as the demands in this sector continue to grow.

It is noted that a range of issues such as a lack of driving licences and/or transport, difficulties obtaining police clearances, long term unemployment and low employability skills have had a marked impact on the job readiness of some people in Geraldton. Drug and alcohol use are a major barrier to employment, particularly for the resources and civil construction sectors, where regular testing is required.

Developing soft skills and teamwork, building resilience and motivation, providing on the job mentoring support and wrap around services has been identified as crucial to building employment pathways for the most disadvantaged job seekers in Geraldton.

There is a large degree of seasonal transience in the region as job seekers – particularly Aboriginal people with wider cultural and family connections – move between communities outside of Geraldton (serviced under the Community Development Program) and the townsite. This population shift impacts the available local workforce, employment services provider caseloads and the community.

Aboriginal people form the largest group on the employment services caseloads, followed closely by youth, mature age and people with disabilities. Among the mature aged unemployed, women over the age of 45 years are a growing group of disadvantaged job seekers.

Youth unemployment in the WA – Outback statistical area reached approximately 10.2 percent in November 2021. In the 2016 census, 13.6% of youth in Geraldton were neither working nor studying, the second highest rate in Western Australian Employment Regions. Data from the 2021 census, when available, will be important in the context of this plan.

Young people experience more difficulty transitioning from education to employment, which impacts on their aspiration, confidence, mental health, and motivation to engage in further

education or look for work. Young people are more likely to be engaged in temporary and insecure work. Whilst there is labour market demand, unemployed youth experience significant barriers as they have limited or no technical and core skill sets, and many do not hold a current provisional or full drivers' license.

Local stakeholders and opportunities

The City of Greater Geraldton local government area (LGA) is home to 57 localities and suburbs,

The Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a key stakeholder in the Geraldton region, representing major employers and smaller local industry groups.

Geraldton is also home to a well-resourced branch of the Master Builders Association, specialising in developing the industry, including training and hiring apprentices and trainees.

Key Aboriginal stakeholder organisations include: Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation; Wajarri Yamaji Aboriginal Corporation; Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corporation; Midwest Education and Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation (MEEDAC) and Geraldton Streetwork Aboriginal Corporation.

Australian Government employment programs are delivered in Geraldton and across the region.

Other Australian Government programs include Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC), Disability Employment Services (DES) - Disability Management Service (DES DMS), DES - Employment Support Service (DES ESS), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and more.

The Western Australia Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) works closely with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), education providers such as TAFEs, local business alliances and employers. DTWD operates a Jobs and Skills Centre in Geraldton, based at the TAFE.

Leveraging local partnership networks is a priority. Partnerships are a mechanism for local communities to engage with the Western Australian government through a range of key stakeholders and LGAs.

Selected major projects

There is potential for local job seekers to access employment opportunities associated with several major projects from State and Federal Governments and the private sector.

Major Projects in Geraldton include:

- Geraldton Hospital
- Geraldton Aboriginal Short Stay Facility
- Geraldton Port Upgrades
- Incentives to boost residential construction industry: Homebuilder scheme, new homebuyers grant
- Mining and resources sector projects with local procurement target for vendors
- Civil construction projects

Key Industry Sectors with opportunities for growth

The following industry sectors are currently experiencing high growth in demand for employees. Key employers, business types and industry bodies that collectively represent groups of smaller employers within each sector are listed below.

- Public Administration and Safety: City of Greater Geraldton; Mid West Ports Authority; Department of Communities; Department of Justice and other Australian and Western Australian Government Departments
- Resources, Civil Engineering and Associated Service Industries: Engineering; Civil Construction; Transport and Bulk Haulage; Traffic Management; Electrical Services; Plumbing Services and Mechanical Services
- Building and Construction: Master Builders Association
- Tourism and Hospitality: Tourism Mid West
- Agriculture and Fishing: CBH; Fisherman's Cooperative; Rural Enterprises and Marine Services
- Health and Allied Health: WA Country Health Service; Private Medical and Allied Health Practices and Pharmacies
- Aged Care and Community Support: Nazareth House; Juniper; Opal Healthcare; Mid West Community Living; Activ Foundation; Avivo; Parkerville and Silver Chain.
- Education and Training: Department of Education; Central Regional TAFE; Catholic Education Office and Independent Schools
- Retail: supermarkets and bottle shops
- Real Estate, Settlement Agents and Mortgage Brokers
- Accounting and Financial Services

Attachment A – Key employment and training priorities: strategies and stakeholders

1. Engage with industry to articulate the needs of employers and job seekers and inform the development of strategies which maximise local job placements.

Strategies

- Geraldton Employment Facilitator to liaise directly with key local business operators to gain understanding of current employment needs.
- Facilitate round tables for employers to identify industry workforce requirements and develop collaborative approaches to bridge current gaps between workforce requirements and job readiness of job seekers.
- Collaborate with DTWD, TAFE and Jobs & Skill Centre, RTOs, VTEC to implement succinct, fast-track training to meet local industry requirements where practicable.

Stakeholders

- Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Master Builders Association Mid West
- Tourism Mid West
- REIWA Mid West
- WA Country Health Service and private health providers
- Department of Education and Independent Schools
- Department of Justice
- Mid West Ports Authority
- Rigtors IGAs
- Mid West Community Living
- Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation
- NIAA
- Employment Service Providers
- DTWD, TAFE and Jobs & Skill Centre, RTOs, VTEC

2. Promote positions for local job seekers including apprenticeships and traineeships and ensure that locals are adequately skilled, prepared and supported for current and upcoming employment opportunities and projects.

Strategies

- Facilitate industry workshops with key employers, job service providers and relevant community support services to develop industry specific initiatives to bridge gaps between workforce requirements and job readiness of job seekers.
- Facilitate events such as sun downers and industry specific information sessions for employers to inform them of existing services and encourage a collegial and collaborative approach to finding solutions to workforce issues.
- Develop a communication strategy utilising professional networks, online and local media to raise awareness of services and information sessions among businesses.

Stakeholders

- Key employers from each industry sector
- Employment services providers and VTEC
- DTWD, TAFE and Jobs & Skill Centre

- 3. Leverage existing Australian and Western Australian Government programs to create pathways into local growth industries and broker employment and education opportunities for socially disadvantaged and priority groups including mature age women, young people, and Aboriginal People through collaboration with local community support services, employers and training organisations.**

Strategies

- Facilitate focus group discussions with service providers that represent priority cohorts to understand barriers and service gaps experienced and to collaboratively develop suitable supported skillset development opportunities that meet local industry needs.
- Host mini job fairs and/or other similar initiatives to enable local job seekers to meet directly with key employers and RTOs in a safe and supported environment to learn about potential employment opportunities and associated training requirements to secure jobs.

Stakeholders

- Job seekers
- Employment Services Providers, ParentsNext and Transition to Work
- DTWD, TAFE and Jobs & Skill Centre, RTOs, VTEC
- Relevant Community Services Providers identified according to job seeker needs
- City of Greater Geraldton
- Youth Affairs Council of WA
- Headspace
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation
- Bunidyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation
- Geraldton Street Worker Aboriginal Corporation
- MEEDAC
- Women Inspiring Better Business
- Soroptimists International
- Desert Blue Connect
- National Rural Women's Coalition

Attachment B - Geraldton Employment Region Labour Market Data Dashboard



**Geraldton
Employment Region
Western Australia**

Labour Market Data Dashboard

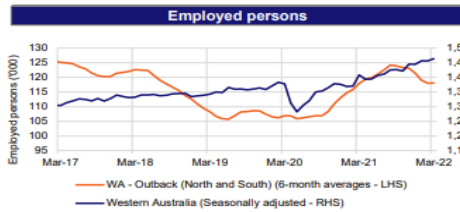
Data current as at 21 April 2022

Refer to source notes for data reference periods

This Labour Market Data Dashboard provides key indicators for the labour market by Employment Region and is updated monthly.

	Labour market summary table											
	Employment			Unemployment			Unemployment rate		Participation rate		Youth unemployment rate	
	Mar-22 ('000)	Mar-20 ('000)	Change (%)	Mar-22 ('000)	Mar-20 ('000)	Change (%)	Mar-22 (%)	Mar-20 (%)	Mar-22 (%)	Mar-20 (%)	Mar-22 (%)	Mar-20 (%)
WA - Outback (North and South)	118.0	106.9	10.4	3.7	9.4	-60.9	3.0	8.1	73.2	69.2	7.1	14.5
Western Australia	1,464.1	1,377.8	6.3	51.2	82.4	-37.9	3.4	5.6	69.7	68.2	9.9	13.2
Australia	13,389.9	12,995.5	3.0	551.3	723.2	-23.8	4.0	5.3	66.4	65.9	8.3	11.6

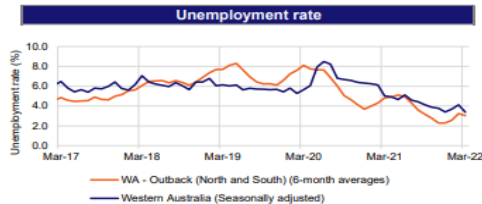
Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Mar-22. Employment Region data are 6-month averages of original estimates, except for the youth unemployment rate, which is a 12-month average of original estimates. State youth unemployment rates are 12-month averages of original estimates. Remaining data are seasonally adjusted.



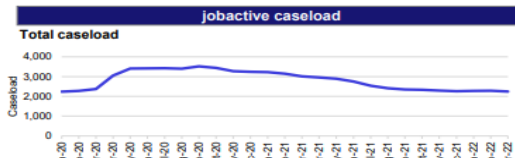
Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Mar-22



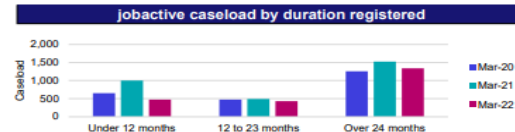
Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Detailed, four quarter averages, Feb-22 quarter



Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Mar-22



	Geraldton	Western Australia
Caseload - Feb 2020	2,280	83,492
Caseload - Mar 2022	2,246	88,820
Change from Feb 2020 to Mar 2022	-34	5,328
	-1%	6%



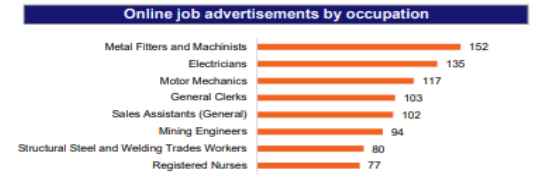
Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment, caseload data, Mar-22

Local Government Area (LGA)	Dec-21	Dec-20
Greater Geraldton	4.2	6.8
Chapman Valley*	3.0	5.2
Irwin	2.6	4.3

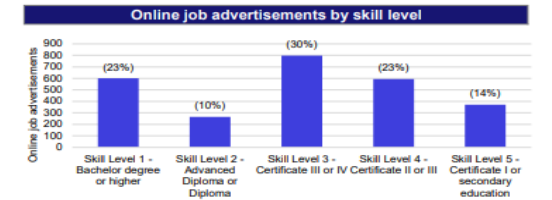
Note: * data should be used with caution due to the small size of the labour force. For more insights, access SALMI data via limp.gov.au. Source: National Skills Commission, Small Area Labour Markets, four quarter averages, Dec-21 quarter



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, Mar-22



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, 3 month average of original data, Mar-22



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, Mar-22

Note: This Employment Region falls within the SA4 Western Australia - Outback (North and South). This SA4 is very large and covers much of regional and remote WA, including Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Geraldton and Broome. The WA Outback SA4 is not a good fit for this Employment Region but is the only data readily available. Other data sources are being investigated for appropriateness. The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) uses a unique geographical approach. For this region, the IVI Pilbara & Kimberley region has been used. Jobactive caseload reports at the Employment Region level and includes participants receiving both digital and provider servicing (it excludes other programs, such as ParentsNext or Transition to Work (TTW)). For caseload data, the Employment Region is based on (1) the location of the provider for jobactive provider serviced participants; (2) where the participant resides for Online Employment Services (OES) participants; (3) the NEST Employment Regions of Adelaide South or Mid North Coast for NEST participants. Jobactive caseload by duration registered is based on the participant's time registered in employment services. Caseload data are based on current methodology which has been retrospectively applied to historical jobactive caseload dates. As such, the data may not align with earlier figures. For any enquiries related to the data in this dashboard, please contact EmploymentPathwaysAnalysis@skillscommission.gov.au.