

Local Jobs Plan North and North Western

Tasmania

August 2021

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The Department of Education, Skills and Employment acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.

The Local Jobs Program

The Local Jobs Program (LJP) is an Australian Government initiative that brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level as part of supporting Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The North and North Western Tasmania Region is one of 51 Employment Regions which will see a focus on the reskilling, upskilling and generation of employment pathways for job seekers.

The LJP is centered on the development of a Local Jobs Plan ('Plan') that sets out the training and employment challenges and priorities of the region, and associated strategies that will drive the design and implementation of projects to be implemented to address these challenges. The Plan will be subject to revision and adjustment as priorities shift during the course of the LJP, with strategic input provided by the North and North Western Tasmania Region Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce. Overall coordination of the Plan and its implementation is the responsibility of the North and North Western Tasmania Region Employment Facilitator.

Full details of the LJP can be found at www.dese.gov.au/local-jobs-program

This is the second version of the North and North Western Tasmania Local Jobs Plan. The first Local Jobs Plan was published in October 2020.

Key employment and training priorities – North and North Western Tasmania

1. Maximising the extent to which local positions are filled by local job seekers.

This includes ensuring apprenticeship positions are filled and locals are skilled to meet the needs of employers in the construction and other relevant sectors.

- 2. Maximising the outcomes of existing Australian and Tasmania Government programs aimed at skills development and employment pathways.
- 3. Engaging employers and their networks in the design and delivery of initiatives.

Particularly in industries experiencing growth (for example Aged and Disability Care) or workforce shortages (for example Construction, Horticulture and Renewable Energy).

- 4. Reducing labour market disadvantage (including for Indigenous Australians, long-term unemployed, women, mature age workers and youth) through facilitating access to employment and training opportunities.
- 5. Complementing and advancing local and state government economic development priorities and workforce strategies.
- 6. Facilitating local responses where economic structural adjustment or redundancy events impact job seekers.

Employment Region overview

The North and North Western Tasmania Employment Region (the region) comprises 16 of the state's 29 Local Government Areas (LGAs) including King and Flinders Islands. The southern borders of the region adjoin the LGAs of Huon Valley, Derwent Valley, Central Highlands, Southern Midlands and Glamorgan Spring Bay, running west to east.

Major population centres across the region include Burnie, Devonport, Smithton, Ulverstone, Latrobe, Deloraine, Longford, Launceston, Georgetown, Scottsdale and St Helens. Launceston is the second largest city in Tasmania and the largest in the region.





The Launceston City Deal (a shared vision between the Australian and Tasmanian governments and the City of Launceston) includes a focus on jobs, skills and business growth, and infrastructure projects such as the University of Tasmania (UTAS) campus renewal.

The West Coast, Circular Head and Waratah-Wynyard areas have diverse mining, forestry, tourism, aquaculture and agriculture industries. Dairy is strongly represented in Circular Head, Meander Valley, Dorset and Waratah-Wynyard. The George Town LGA has Bell Bay heavy industry precinct. Horticulture is a strongly consolidating sector across Central Coast, Latrobe, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and Launceston, while Burnie and Launceston have major tertiary education and health facilities servicing the region.

Bridport and St Helens are coastal tourist destinations, with niche offerings in links golf at Barnbougle/Lost Farm at Bridport. Scottsdale and St Helens offer rapidly consolidating world class mountain biking and other tourism opportunities.

Socio-economic profile

The North and North Western Tasmania region contains some very disadvantaged areas, with seven LGAs (George Town, West Coast, Break O'Day, Burnie, Central Highlands, Devonport and Dorset) ranked in the lowest quintile in the 2016 Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) in Australia.¹ Ravenswood, a Statistical Area 2 (SA2) within the Launceston LGA is the most disadvantaged SA2 in the region and is the 27th most disadvantaged SA2 in Australia, out of 2,184 SA2s.

Key challenges in North and North Western Tasmania Employment Region

Tasmania and the North and North Western Tasmania region face several challenges, including:

Low population growth, high youth unemployment and an ageing population.

- Historically, North and North Western Tasmania have experienced a lower rate of population growth than experienced in other areas of Tasmania. For example, from 2018 to 2019, the estimated resident population grew by 0.83 per cent in North Tasmania, while North West Tasmania grew by 0.74 per cent. In comparison, growth in Tasmania was 1.17 per cent and in Australia 1.51 per cent over the same period.²
- The trend of low population growth has continued in the North West, with a population growth of 0.88 per cent compared to growth in Tasmania of 1.16 per cent and growth in Australia of 1.31 per cent.
- In Northern Tasmania, population growth has increased. Since 2019, the population is estimated to have grown 1.19 per cent, which means that the region's growth rate now sits just higher than the rest of Tasmania³. This is consistent with other data sources: according to Regional Australia Institute's 2020 *The Big Movers* Report, four out of the five Tasmanian LGAs that had the highest inflow of new population were based in Northern Tasmania. This demonstrates interest and demand for this region as an internal migration hotspot.
- It is also of note that Tasmanian youth unemployment has historically been higher than in other parts of Australia, and the population is ageing more rapidly.

Low levels of digital literacy.

• Tasmania was the first state to be connected to the NBN, however in 2020 was ranked as the least digitally advanced of all the states.⁴ While digital access has increased across the state in recent years, several low socio-economic areas of the region are still well below the national average. LGAs in the region have up to 28 per cent of households without internet access.⁵

¹ ABS (Cat 2033.0.55.001), Socio-Economic Index for Areas, 2016

² ABS (Cat 3218.0), Regional Population Growth by Statistical Area Level 2, 2018 to 2019

³ ABS (Cat 3218.0), Regional Population Growth as at 30 June 2020, Australia

⁴ Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) accessed via <u>https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/</u>

⁵ TasCOSS, Understanding Digital Inclusion in Tasmania – Report on Research Findings, <u>https://tascoss.org.au/new-submission-to-the-tascoss-vault-11/</u>

Limited public transport outside of metropolitan centres which inhibits opportunities for some job seekers to take on work and training.

 Public transport is largely limited to metropolitan town centres within the region and timetables do not always align with employer needs for shift times. The cost of public transport is a further barrier to employment for those on low incomes, as is access to private vehicles, and in some regions lower level of car ownership and the cost of operating and maintaining a vehicle are barriers to economic participation.⁶

Historic and generational low educational attainment, particularly outside of metropolitan areas.

While educational attainment across Tasmania has increased in recent years, it is still below the national average on some indicators. Some comparisons drawn from 2016 ABS Census data highlight the disparities:

- In Northern Tasmania, 35.2 per cent of residents had completed year 12 equivalent, in the North West it was 27.6 per cent. Both parts of the region were well below the Australian rate of 51.9 per cent.
- University qualification attainment in North Western Tasmania was 16.6 per cent and 21.2 per cent in Northern Tasmania, well below 30.9 per cent nationally, and 23.8 per cent for Tasmania.
- Vocational education attainment in Northern Tasmania was 21.6 per cent and 24.1 per cent in North Western Tasmania, above 18.8 per cent nationally.

Impact of COVID-19 related border closures on international workforce.

• Effective closure of Australia's international borders from late March 2020 meant that a number of industry sectors which would normally rely on temporary overseas workers (e.g., working holiday makers) experienced subsequent labour shortages. Sectors which have reported particular impacts include horticulture, stone fruits and hospitality, although strategic action to support the continued entry of Pacific Islanders under the Seasonal Worker Programme has offset the horticulture workforce shortfall to a degree.

The employment outlook across the region is generally positive but employers struggle to recruit.

Against the backdrop of the challenges identified above, the broader Employment Region
offers a range of employment opportunities across industry sectors which are in consolidation
or expansion mode. These include horticulture, agriculture and dairy farming, mining/minerals
processing, forestry, and timber processing, meat processing, manufacturing, freight and
transport, and hospitality. Of note is an April 2021 employer survey in the region that
indicated only 2 per cent of respondent businesses expected to decrease staff numbers in the
coming months while nearly 20 per cent expected to increase. The range of occupations
advertised across the region in the period December 2020 to March 2021 covered general
clerks, sales assistants, chefs, farm workers, labourers, various trades, and truck drivers. The
broad range of advertised positions indicate continued opportunities across various
occupations, industries, and skill levels.

⁶ https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf_file/0007/174076/Transport_Access_Strategy.PDF

Surveys in the region also indicate that employers often struggle to recruit suitable or "right-fit" people for their needs. The Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS) for August 2020 to April 2021 conducted by the National Skills Commission, showed that 41 per cent of businesses recruiting for staff in that time experienced difficulties. The reasons include lack of suitable applicants, remote or regional locations and applicants lacking technical skills.

The informal job market is a significant factor across the Employment Region.

The REOS Survey confirmed that 40 per cent of employers recruited through word of mouth or poaching staff to fill their positions. This presents a particular challenge for job seekers in maximising their job prospects, as they need to have a wide range of job searches, communication and presentation skills to identify opportunities in this critical pathway.
 Feedback from employment service providers, employers, and job seekers indicate that many people struggle to understand and engage with the informal job market to the best extent possible.

Local stakeholders and opportunities

Many industries are indicating strong demand for workforce in the coming months and years, including disability support services, hospitality and tourism, building and construction, polymer processing, agriculture/ horticulture and meatworks. Much of this demand has been validated and quantified through industry led workforce development and strategic plans across various industries such as:

- Building and construction including residential, commercial and civil construction
- Community services including aged care, disability, health care and community-based roles
- Energy infrastructure including renewable energy (particularly associated with wind farms) and advanced manufacturing
- Primary industries including aquaculture, fruit growers, vegetable growers, wine industry, dairy and wool growers
- Mining and minerals processing industries
- Transport industry, and
- Tourism and hospitality.

The Launceston City Deal (a shared vision between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and the Launceston City Council) includes the Inveresk precinct redevelopment, enhancement of Launceston's City Heart precinct as a regional retail, cultural and business hub, improved governance and planning for the Tamar River estuary, and the Launceston apprenticeships pipeline project.

Whilst employers experience recruitment and retention challenges, there are some unique challenges faced by industries that are highly casualised, employ low skilled workers and are seasonal. This is because these industries are less appealing to job seekers and as a result, affected by shortages of skilled and/or experienced labour.

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

- 1. Maximising the extent to which local positions are filled by local job seekers including through ensuring apprenticeship positions are filled and locals are skilled to meet the needs of employers in the construction and other relevant sectors.
 - A range of current and future residential and infrastructure construction projects offer opportunities for employment and apprenticeships. Major infrastructure projects in the region include:
 - o the Burnie and Launceston UTAS campus redevelopments
 - building of the Northern Regional Prison
 - o hydrogen energy initiatives
 - renewable energy initiatives such as the Battery of the Nation and Project Marinus, Robbins Island, Cattle Hill and Jim's Plains wind farms
 - \circ the Launceston Sewer Improvement Program, and
 - the consolidation, reopening or redevelopment of Savage River, Mount Lyell and Beaconsfield mines.
 - Several state-wide infrastructure projects also appear likely to have a significant impact on the region, including the Pipeline to Prosperity irrigation infrastructure development project, the Tasmanian Freight Rail Revitalisation Program and upgrades to road infrastructure, including the Midland and Bass Highway.
 - Of particular note are employment impacts such as an industry identified need for workers with polymer welding skills to facilitate irrigation infrastructure rollout. Employers have reported strong demand for road infrastructure related traffic management qualifications/skills, and CNC machining and metal fabrication skills required by employers in Defence contracting supply chains and other industry contracts.
 - Other emerging sectors across the employment region include mountain biking, adventure and general tourism guiding. Fermentation and distilling are also facing the need for skilled local job seekers. These sectors represent potential employment opportunities for entry level workers where the Local Jobs Program can consider strategic engagement.

2. Maximising the benefits of existing Australian and Tasmania Government programs aimed at skills development and employment pathways

- Several Australian and Tasmanian Government programs targeting skills development and employment pathways are already operating in North and North Western Tasmania. There is potential to support people and businesses to take advantage of these in an integrated and place-based way. The range of programs and services include, but are not limited to:
 - Australian Government employment services including jobactive, Transition to Work, Parents Next, Employability Skills Training, PaTH industry pilots, Skills for Education and Employment (SEE).
 - The Australian Government Industry Training Hub and the Career Facilitator in Burnie. The Industry Training Hub has been in place since March 2020 and aims to improve opportunities for young people in regions with high youth unemployment, targeting Year 11 and Year 12 students. The Career Facilitator works with young people to build skills and choose occupations in demand in their region.
 - The JobTrainer Fund provides fee-free, nationally recognised training in up to 200 priority qualifications for industries with an identified need for more skilled workers and represents up to 7,000 additional placements for Tasmanians.
 - Opportunities as part of the Energising Tasmania commitment to develop a skilled workforce equipped with the expertise needed for the renewable energy and related sectors in Tasmania. Energising Tasmania is a \$16.1 million funding commitment from the Australian Government to develop a skilled workforce to meet demand across our major energy projects, including Project Marinus and Battery of the Nation.
 - The Rapid Response Skills Initiative provides up to \$3,000 towards the cost of training for eligible people who have lost casual, full-time or part-time work in the last 12 months due to retrenchment, downsizing or business closure.
- Further to the above, the Tasmanian government has made a number of policy commitments in 2021 relevant to skills and employment initiatives. These include:
 - \$20.5 million committed to Jobs Tasmania Local Jobs Networks, as well as the establishment of a new Jobs and Participation Unit in Skills Tasmania to oversee the implementation of these Local Jobs Networks. There are two existing hubs (Break O'Day Employment Connect and Northern Employment Business Hub), to which a third will be added in Burnie
 - \$2 million for a Tasmanian Job Ready Fund to help job seekers gain essential tools to get a job
 - \circ \$3.2 million to expand the Area Connect Service from 6 to 16 regions
 - \$400,000 for a Worker Connect Portal for Tasmanian businesses and job seekers to share and access information on support services, programs and local jobs
 - \$200,000 for a Regional Jobs Show and Events program to demonstrate opportunities for employment, which will run in partnership with the local community and Local Jobs Networks
 - \$2.4 million for the expansion of the job matching service
 - \$6.5 million to fund the Tasmanian Employer Bonus, providing \$6,500 per employer as an incentive to employ long term unemployed with skills and experience
 - \$300 million to provide an additional 600 training places in Certificate III of Individual Support

- \$1 million to extend the Skill Up initiative for an additional 12 months to provide training for those most impacted by COVID-19, and
- \$850,000 to the Youth Navigators project, which is a youth employment alliance formed between community organisations.
- Working closely with the Tasmanian government and its services funded under these new initiatives will be critical to ensuring maximum effectiveness of the Local Jobs Plan. The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce will ensure these issues are standing items in agendas for future meetings.
- 3. Engaging employers and their networks in the design and delivery of initiatives particularly in industries experiencing growth (for example Aged and Disability Care) or workforce shortages (for example Construction, Horticulture and Renewable Energy)
 - Business and industry sectors are best placed to know their workforce needs. Major employers and sectors which operate state-wide in Tasmania include:
 - The Federal Group (hospitality/accommodation sector, also freight movement) with multiple sites around the state.
 - The University of Tasmania (education sector) with multiple sites across the state.
 - The Tasmanian State Service (Public Administration including Tasmanian Health Service) with multiple sites around the state.
 - The Australian Public Service (Public Administration) operating in multiple sites/agencies around the State.
 - The seafood industry (covering farmed producers Petuna, Huon Aquaculture and Tassal, their supply chains and wild fisheries) with diverse sites around the State.
 - RAC Tasmania (Retail, Transport, Accommodation and Hospitality) at various sites around Tasmania.
 - Major employers based in the region include:
 - Costa Berries (Horticulture grower/distributor with sites/farms across north and north-west Tasmania).
 - Bell Bay Aluminium (minerals processing at Georgetown).
 - Simplot Australia (vegetable growing/processing).
 - Grange Resources (mining/minerals processing at Savage River/Port Latta, HQ in Burnie).
 - It is recognised that securing suitable employees is an issue for businesses of all scales, from small to medium, up to larger enterprises of 200 plus workers. The Taskforce receives regular feedback and commentary that this challenge affects employing firms of all sizes and is mindful of the need to engage appropriately. It will look to pursue those engagements through local and regional Chambers of Commerce, industry peak bodies, employment service providers and informal networks of businesses at place and sub-regional level.

4. Reducing labour market disadvantage (including for Indigenous Australians, long-term unemployed, women, mature age workers and youth) through facilitating access to employment and training opportunities

• All Australian governments are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their communities, organisations, and businesses to implement the new National Agreement on

Closing the Gap (<u>https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement</u>) at the national, state and territory and local levels. Within North and North Western Tasmania 10.18 per cent of the jobactive caseload, identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (as of March 2021).

- This is an overrepresentation, in comparison to the 7.7 per cent of the population in Northern Tasmania and 6.9 per cent in the North Western Tasmania population in the region in the 2016 Census.⁷
- The Tasmanian Government's interim Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) report noted that among the industries hardest hit by the COVID-19, suppression response in Tasmanian were industries that historically employ a high proportion of women and youth, such as accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, and arts and recreation services.
- The final PESRAC Report shows recovery in female employment data. Based on the ABS Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia data, as of January 2021, both male and female jobs index were increasing as of January 2021 but are not yet back to pre-COVID levels. A similar increase is evident for the same data for youth. All ages are increasing on the Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages index, but the sharpest increase in wages is seen in the 15-19 year age group. This age group is seeing some of its highest increases since pre-COVID.
- Within the Employment Region, 52.75 per cent of the total jobactive caseload are Long-Term Unemployed (November 2020). This is a higher percentage than is seen in the South of the state (45.45%) and compared with other employment regions such as Cairns (48.67%) Hunter (46.33%) and Gippsland (46.79%).
- The Tasmanian Government's final PESRAC report noted the critical importance of removing employment barriers and better matching job seekers with employers. Anecdotal and service provider evidence gathered throughout the region has indicated that there are a number of organisations that are looking to hire, but a common barrier is a lack of digital literacy and low levels of language, literacy and numeracy proficiency. For example, job seekers can capture photographic images of their resume for forwarding on, but either lack digital literacy skills or have no access to scanners and email.

5. Complementing and advancing local and state government economic development priorities and workforce strategies

- State and local government initiatives around employment and skills pathways are established across the region and have strong linkages with the employers, industries, and communities in which they operate. These include:
 - Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional Recovery Committees.
 - Cradle Coast Authority Regional Futures Plan.
 - Northern Tasmania Development Corporation (NTDC).
 - Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing and Energy Council (TMEC).
 - Launceston City Deal.

⁷ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016

• The main function of the Local Jobs Program and Activities funded through the Local Recovery Fund will be working with local and state businesses to further these identified economic development priorities and workforce strategies. With key growth industries such as manufacturing, hospitality, tourism and construction, there is an ever-growing need to ensure that across these strategies, there is a consistent focus on sustainable and effective workforce development. This coordinated approach will require ongoing and strategic collaboration between existing service providers at a federal, state, and local level.

6. Facilitating local responses where economic structural adjustment or redundancy events impact job seekers

- The full economic impact of the pandemic remains to be seen in its entirety, but we have already seen some emerging trends. For example:
 - Supply chain breakdown related to current and future outbreaks of COVID-19 will potentially impact businesses. Outbreaks and consequent border closures result in an inherent fragility to supply chains. Businesses in the region have reported a reduced capacity to restock or obtain critical componentry in a timely fashion.
 - Several industries can be expected to be severely impacted by limited labour mobility due to COVID-19 restrictions. The continuation of international border closures and internal border uncertainty has placed a heavy burden on those industries that have been historically reliant upon international employees, such as backpackers. Affected industries include agriculture, especially with the upcoming harvest season, and hospitality.
 - Uncertain future demand for exports, including tourism.

Attachment B – Labour Market Data Dashboard (July 2021)

Employment Region



North and North Western Tasmania

Labour Market Data Dashboard

Tasmania Labour market summary table Employment nployment Unem ient rate Participation rate Youth unemployment rate May-21 Mar-20 Change May-21 Mar-20 Change May-21 Mar-20 May-21 Mar-20 May-21 Mar-20 ('000) ('000) (%) ('000) ('000) (%) (%) (%) (%) North and North Western Tasmania 10.3 50 47 12.4 123.5 119.8 3.1 6.4 5.8 60.1 58.2 14.6 Tasmania 259.6 257.9 07 15.7 13.7 147 57 50 61.4 61.0 11.6 10.8 Australia 13,125,1 12,994.8 1.0 701.1 723.5 -3.1 5.1 5.3 66.2 65.9 10.7 11.6

Published on 14 July 2021

Refer to source notes for data reference periods

This Labour Market Data Dashboard provides key indicators for the labour market by Employment Region. It is updated on a monthly basis

Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, May-21. Employment Region data are original estimates, except for the youth unemployment rate, which is a 12-month average of original estimates. State youth unemployment rates are original estimates. Remaining data are seasonally adjuste



Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, May-21





Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, May-21



jobactive Caseload by participant cohorts

Participant Cohorts	Jun-21	Monthly Change (%)	Change since Mar-20 (%)
Total caseload	13,920	-3.0	22.1
Male	6,880	-3.9	20.4
Female	7,050	-2.2	23.9
Mature Aged (50+)	4,480	-3.0	30.4
PWD	3,730	-0.6	26.3
Youth (U25)	2,320	-2.9	0.0
Indigenous	1,510	-1.5	24.9
CALD	860	-3.0	16.3

jobactive Caseload by duration registered



Source: Department of Education, Skills and Employment, caseload data, Jun-21

LGAs with highest unemployment rates (%)				
Local Government Area (LGA)	Mar-21	Mar-20		
Break O'Day (M)	12.2	9.4		
West Coast (M)	11.3	10.3		
George Town (M)	11.2	9.6		
Bumle (C)	9.2	8.2		
Devonport (C)	9.0	7.9		

For more insights, access SALM data via imip.gov.au. Source: National Skills Commission, Small Area Labour Markets, four quarter averages, Mar-21 quarter



Launceston and Northeast Tasmania; and North West

Tasmania

1,300 Change over the month -1.6% (or -20 job advertisements) Change since Mar-20 203.8% (or 900 job advertisements)

Number of job ads

Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, May-21



Online job advertisements

Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, original data, May-21



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted, May-21

Note: Data are not neadly available for all sources by Employment Region. ABS Labour Force Survey data are based on the combined SA4s of Launceston and North East, and West and North West. The Internet Vacancy Index (I/I) uses a unique geographical approach. For this region, the I/I Launceston and Northeast are based on the combined SA4s of Launceston and North East, and West and North West. The Internet Vacancy of Transition to Work (ITTW)). For caseload data, the Employment Region is based on the combined SA4s of Launceston and North East, and West and North West. The Internet Vacancy (I/I) uses a unique geographical approach. For this region, the Employment Region is based on the provider servicing (it excludes dotter programs, such as been used. jobactive participants; (2) where the participants (2) where the partic

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