

Local Jobs Plan

North West Country Employment Region | SA | August 2026

Workforce Australia Local Jobs (Local Jobs) is a program that creates partnerships between business and communities to meet local workforce needs, thereby improving employment outcomes. Local Jobs operates in all 51 Employment Regions in Australia.

Local Jobs Overview

Local Jobs Plan

Each Employment Region has a Local Jobs Plan which outlines the labour market challenges in the region and the strategies to address these challenges.

Job Coordinators

Each Employment Region has a dedicated Job Coordinator who leverages existing resources, supports local labour markets through structural adjustments and retrenchments, and creates opportunities for collaboration between business and communities.

Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce

Each Employment Region has its own taskforce that meets regularly with the Job Coordinator to develop an understanding of challenges in the region and implement solutions. The taskforce is comprised of representatives from the region.

Local Jobs, Local People Grant

The Local Jobs, Local People grant funds activities that help people into ongoing employment or training. Activities must support local labour market needs.



Explore labour market insights for the [North West Country SA Employment Region](#)

Local labour market challenges

- Expected large pipeline of projects and strong jobs growth.
- Structural and labour market adjustment – net zero transition and Whyalla Steelworks.
- High unemployment, long-term unemployment, including high numbers of First Nations people and disengaged youth.
- Large number of displaced workers in labour market increases challenge for people seeking jobs.
- Growing workforce shortages in the care and support sector.
- Housing and childcare shortages.
- High demand for trainers to fill skills gaps.

Local priorities

Priority 1 – Meet the workforce needs of employers and industry

What are our challenges?

The region has long standing workforce shortages across multiple sectors, along with new large-scale projects requiring significant labour. These changes sit alongside the net zero transition and major structural adjustments connected to OneSteel Whyalla administration and sale process. Early engagement with industry and proactive, place-based solutions are essential to connecting local people to available jobs.

How are we responding?

- Lead, coordinate and facilitate access to structural adjustment support for employers and impacted workers including support for the Career Transition Service.
- Collaborate with industry and regional leaders to design and deliver annual workforce summits for the Resources, Infrastructure and Regional Care sectors, informing policy, shaping workforce solutions, and addressing skills shortages through local employment pathways.
- Co-design industry-led training and employment initiatives, leveraging available government funding opportunities to meet workforce needs.
- Bring together employers and local, State and Federal government representatives through taskforces to develop coordinated responses to workforce challenges, including housing and childcare shortages, and to strengthen employer capability to recruit, retain and develop entry-level workers.
- Support regional stakeholders to increase workforce participation among underemployed cohorts through initiatives such as the Upper Spencer Gulf Workforce Strategy, Spencer Gulf Career Transition Service, Spencer Gulf Jobs and Skills Hub, Regional Industry initiatives and the Spencer Gulf Jobs Platform, including informing industry participation plans and workforce pathways for the Northern Water project.
- Target skills development and workforce capability in high-growth sectors, including aquaculture, agriculture, manufacturing, construction, health care, social assistance, critical minerals and other net zero enabling industries.

Priority 2 – Jobs for First Nations people

What are our challenges?

The region is home to a diverse range of Aboriginal people from many nations and is covered by the Native Title determination for the Barngarla and Nukunu people. There is a higher-than-national average proportion of First Nations people on the caseload in NWC (30%), and almost 50% of the caseload in Port Augusta.

How are we responding?

- Lead and inform quarterly Jobs and Skills Networks focused on First Nations employment and skills priorities in Port Augusta and Whyalla and chair the national Job Coordinator Community of Practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Prioritise and support projects that provide training, job-readiness and employment opportunities for First Nations people through initiatives such as Local Jobs Local People, the Regional Industry Partnership Program and Launch into Work.
- Coordinate Essential Day events across key locations to connect people with services that address barriers to employment and workforce participation.
- Partner with First Nations people, communities and businesses to co-design employment, training and career pathway initiatives, while building capability for procurement, entrepreneurship and self-employment.

- Strengthen cultural competency across business, government and community sectors through targeted engagement and training, including Cultural Understanding workshops that support employers to recruit, retain and develop First Nations employees.

Priority 3 – Young people are learning and earning

What are our challenges?

Young people in the region face high unemployment and significant competition for jobs. They are navigating through a changing labour market and new models of learning as the economy evolves. Tailored approaches are required to keep young people connected to education, training work and pathways to full employment.

How are we responding?

- Deliver annual regional Career Roadshows and Explore programs in partnership with stakeholders to connect young people with career, training and employment opportunities, and support engagement in learning and work.
- Develop and implement place-based employment initiatives, including Local Jobs Local People projects and successful models such as the Jobs 4 Locals Program.
- Design and deliver targeted pre-employment programs through the Regional Industry Partnership Program to prepare people for identified workforce opportunities, including Heavy Industry Manufacturing Skills and Jobs 4 Locals projects across civil construction, care and support, tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Provide labour market information and career guidance resources that help young people understand opportunities, industry pathways and employer expectations.
- Co-design and deliver programs that strengthen work readiness, resilience and wellbeing, including career expos, immersive industry experiences and employment-focused initiatives.
- Promote apprenticeships and traineeships and increase awareness of government-funded programs and pathways available to employers, jobseekers and students.

Priority 4 – Address other challenges to employment

What are our challenges?

Local people need support to get the job they want. Complex issues like homelessness, mental illness, drug or alcohol addiction, sexual abuse or violence, health or psychological factors, incarceration, and access to driver's licences and transport require sustained tailored programs and place-based projects to make a difference. Structural issues include housing shortages for existing and new workers and a shortage of childcare places which prevent parents from working.

How are we responding?

- Partner with the Mid North SA Employment Region to lead delivery of the Using Transport in Regional Communities to Enable Workforce Participation in South Australia project, identifying strategic and scalable solutions to transport and driver licensing barriers that limit workforce participation.
- Facilitate regional collaboration on childcare capacity growth by developing evidence-based planning resources, supporting investment decisions, and aligning workforce development with emerging childcare services.
- Coordinate and deliver Essential Days events across the Northern and Western Country region, connecting people with local services, training pathways and employment opportunities.
- Co-design employment initiatives with Employment Services Providers, community organisations, businesses and local communities to improve workforce participation and respond to structural adjustment, including programs such as CITC Pathways to Future.
- Develop and implement innovative solutions to address regional workforce challenges, including practical resources such as the Local Jobs, Skills and Services Handbook.
- Deliver community-based projects that build skills, confidence and pathways into education and employment for priority cohorts, including prison-to-work programs.
- Support workers and employers impacted by industry change through targeted Worker Information Sessions and Employer Connect Sessions.

Priority 5 – Maximise government investment in regions

What are our challenges?

Employers need support to navigate the wide range of government programs, services and funding. Providing clear information on guidelines and eligibility improves employer understanding, increases participation in funded initiatives and supports more effective partnerships and leveraged funding.

How are we responding?

- Promote government funding opportunities, programs and initiatives through regular newsletters, digital communications and stakeholder engagement.
- Provide tailored workforce solutions that support upskilling, reskilling and career pathway development to address skills shortages and meet industry demand.
- Connect employers, workers and communities with relevant government programs, while building partnerships that maximise regional investment in training, workforce development and employment outcomes.
- Collaborate with Employment Service Providers to connect individuals with employment, skills development and major project workforce opportunities, including structural adjustment information sessions and tailored support for employers, workers and their families.

Priority 6 – Strengthen regional capacity to respond to employment and skill needs

What are our challenges?

The region faces existing skills shortages along with significant growth in industries such as green steel, critical minerals and renewable energy. Thin markets, high demand and shortages of trainers, housing and childcare require coordinated and innovative responses to enable local people into local jobs.

How are we responding?

- Facilitate quarterly Jobs and Skills Network meetings to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between industry, employers, service providers and government agencies.
- Secure and support investment in regional workforce initiatives, including the Jobs and Skills Hub, Spencer Gulf Jobs Platform and Career Transition Service.
- Identify and implement opportunities to upskill people into available jobs by working with industry and policy makers to design practical workforce development solutions and career pathways.
- Connect employers with tools, resources and workforce development initiatives that support attraction, retention and workforce capability.
- Advocate for and support the development of workforce, skills and employment initiatives that address regional priorities and emerging industry needs.

Want to know more?

- Contact: Andrea Broadfoot, North West Country SA Employment Facilitator: andrea@localjobsprogram.com
- Visit: [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)