

# Local Jobs Plan

South Coast of Victoria | Victoria | February 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.



## Local labour market challenges

- The Labour Market Insights data indicates that mature age people and people with a disability face longer periods of unemployment and underemployment. This shows the need for stronger inclusive employment pathways and targeted support.
- Youth unemployment and underemployment are increasing in smaller towns within the region. There are limited programs designed to help young people find work locally.
- Strong links between education and training that build relevant skills are required to keep young people engaged and ready for future job opportunities.
- The region faces economic and social challenges from drought, climate change and the need for climate adaptation. Industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction and retail trade have all seen a decrease in their workforce with roles in farming particularly affected as the industry works to rebuild after losing workers.
- Limited transport access, especially for people without a driver's licence, has contributed to a reduction in workforce participation where primary work opportunities are not located centrally. Creative mobility solutions are needed to improve access to work.
- Attracting and retaining skilled workers remains challenging. Many construction and renewable energy projects rely on 'fly-in fly-out' workers, and skilled health care and social assistance roles have a reliance on agency staff or temporary roles.

## Local priorities

### Priority 1 – Working together to support priority groups into employment

#### What are our challenges?

Many people in Workforce Australia Employment Services have been getting support for more than 12 months. A range of structural and situational barriers can affect a person's ability to take part in employment and training. These include limited transport options, health issues, insecure housing, and unequal access to education, financial support, and digital capability building. These barriers are common among priority cohorts, including people with disability, mature age workers, First Nations peoples, people who have been unemployed long term, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Collaboration across organisations and support frameworks will improve job access and create sustainable employment.

#### How are we responding?

- Enhance the capacity of mature age women to return to work by working with organisations, including Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, to deliver evidence-informed pre-employment initiatives and events.
- Deliver a 10-month series 'Careers and Conversations' in partnership with the Warrnambool Library and Learning Hub designed to support career conversations with employers in a welcoming and relaxed approach.
- We will work with Learn Local providers, Career Transition Assistance and Employability Skills Training providers to ensure that there is accessibility to digital and numeracy programs across the region, tailored to suit both participant and industry needs.
- We continuously engage and partner with Employment Services Providers, Sureway and are-able, to design and tailor initiatives to address the unique needs of individuals on their caseloads. We will continue to deliver the Fast Track Your Career events across the region with the local Workforce Australia Employment Services Providers.
- We will support the development of a First Nations construction roundtable, addressing pre-employment opportunities across trades in the Glenelg Shire.

## Priority 2 – Empower young people through employment pathways

### What are our challenges?

Youth unemployment and underemployment are increasing, particularly in rural areas with limited transport and education access. Many young people are leaving school early or not completing the Victorian Certificate of Education. With a focus on academic pathways, and success often measured by academic results, there are young people disconnected from job options or accessibility to training.

### How are we responding?

- We will work with organisations and initiatives such as Neil Porter Legacy, Victorian Early Leaver Connection Initiative and the Local Learning Employment Networks who are promoting career pathways. Alongside these organisations we will engage with young people to ensure opportunities for co-design and shared understanding.
- We will collaborate with the Warrnambool Moyne Community Investment Committee, Brotherhood of St Laurence, and the National Youth Employment Body to map and understand the systems that support young people in the South Coast of Victoria, ensuring their voices shape the design and implementation of new place-based programs and employer resources.
- Actively contribute to youth-based networks across the region through council run programs and bodies, such as the Southern Grampians Youth Network and Youth Affairs Council Victoria.
- We will promote the advantages of apprenticeships and traineeships for businesses and young people, helping to develop a skilled workforce for the future, particularly in industries with strong projected demand. Working closely with Apprenticeships Victoria.
- Encourage and support initiatives that develop practices of mentorship and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

## Priority 3 – Support employers to build, grow and retain their workforce

### What are our challenges?

According to Labour Market Insights, the South Coast of Victoria Employment Region has a lower unemployment rate than both the Victorian and national averages. Despite this, employers report greater difficulty finding suitable candidates than the state average, as illustrated in Jobs and Skills Australia's Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey. This is compounded by low use of paid advertising portals locally, meaning job opportunities often rely on personal networks or social media access and digital literacy.

### How are we responding?

- We will connect employers to federal and state programs and initiatives in education and employment. These include Workforce Australia Employment Programs, Real Jobs Real Wages, Skills for Education and Employment, Work Foundations, Apprenticeships Victoria, the Victorian Early Leaver Connection Initiative, Learn Locals, Local Learning and Employment Networks, and the Skills and Jobs Centre.
- We will promote meaningful career pathways in industries with current and future opportunities. We do this through practical initiatives, information sessions, and events designed together with employers and participants.
- Build a South Coast digital platform linking participants to training, events, and workplace experiences, and employers to resources. Include connections to other regional online resources like Great South Coast Settlement website and the Future Portland interactive dashboard.
- We will work with employers of all sizes to connect them to resources, programs, and services that support innovative, effective, and inclusive workforce strategies.

## Priority 4 – Addressing transport as a barrier to employment

### What are our challenges?

With limited public transport services, a shortage of learner driver trainers, and the rising costs of vehicles and fuel have contributed to a reduction in workforce participation across the region, and equitable access to education.

### How are we responding?

- We will encourage and promote private sector innovation by continuing to identify and share successful employer-led transport workforce solutions.
- We will investigate and conduct a regional transport access study in collaboration with external stakeholders, ensuring duplication is minimised and the findings can be utilised to support practical, place-based transport solutions.
- Support and grow volunteer-led transport initiatives, such as learner driver and community transport programs.
- Advocate for equitable access to jobs and training for priority groups, informed by participant experiences through facilitated focus groups.

## Priority 5 – Supporting People and Businesses Through Change and Innovation

### What are our challenges?

Emerging industries, including renewable energy and circular economies, are creating new opportunities in the South Coast of Victoria Employment Region. Community knowledge about these industries and the jobs they offer is still growing. Some businesses are restructuring, and workers are facing changes to their roles or retrenchment. These shifts create both challenges and opportunities for people and employers.

### How are we responding?

- In response to restructures or business closures we will develop flexible response plans that can be activated quickly and connect affected workers to local, state, and federal supports, including career practitioners and Workforce Australia Employment Service Providers early access initiatives. Coordinate local support events with employers, employment services, and community organisations to assist impacted workers.
- We will participate in regional initiatives that build social licence and increase awareness of clean energy opportunities, including representation on the Barwon South West Transition Energy project. We will also promote awareness of new industries and regional investment as opportunities emerge to young people, employment service providers, educational bodies and the wider community.
- We will support modular and mobile education and training for career changers and people who are upskilling. We will also encourage STEM activities and industry connections at events and work with educational partners like South West TAFE Tech School and Deakin University to make this happen.
- We will strengthen regional social procurement by showcasing the local ecosystem aligned with Victoria's Social Procurement Framework and creating clear resources that highlight our regions social enterprises and their role in the regions supply chain.

## Want to know more?

- Contact Angela Williams South Coast of Victoria Job Coordinator at [Angela.Williams@localjobs.org.au](mailto:Angela.Williams@localjobs.org.au)

Visit [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)