

# Local Jobs Plan

## Wimmera Mallee Employment Region | VIC | June 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 [Wimmera Mallee Employment Region](#)

### Local labour market challenges

- Mature aged individuals can experience multiple challenges to securing and retaining employment opportunities in a competitive market. Employment Service Provider caseloads highlight mature age people are more likely to experience long-term unemployment.
- First Nations people in the region experience disproportionate challenges in connecting with and remaining engaged in education, training and employment. These challenges can include limited access to culturally safe services, experiences of discrimination, and difficulty navigating mainstream systems that may not reflect community needs or cultural obligations.
- In some locations, restricted access to local training options, transport barriers and limited culturally supportive workplace environments further impact participation.
- There are ongoing workforce shortages in growing industries such as construction, food and meat processing, early childhood education and care, as well as health care and social assistance, driven both by limited new entrants and challenges with staff retention.
- Young people in regional and remote towns face challenges not experienced by their counterparts in large towns, including a lack of access to school-based employment programs, employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and post-secondary training pathways.
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals experience unique challenges in accessing training and employment opportunities to match their skillset and needs. A lack of knowledge around eligibility for programs and language barriers in regional towns remain a challenge.
- There are growing industry skills shortages in emerging sectors such as critical minerals and renewable energy, driven by rapid project development timelines and limited training opportunities. These shortages are creating challenges for employers seeking to attract and retain suitably qualified workers.

### Local priorities

#### Priority 1 – Mature Age individuals

##### What are our challenges?

The region has a high proportion of mature-age residents (45+) who face distinct challenges when returning to work or entering new industries. Many experience low digital literacy, which affects their ability to access online job information and navigate modern workplace systems. Mature age participants often have reduced confidence after periods away from the workforce, making it difficult for them to identify transferable skills or understand how their experience aligns with emerging sectors. Additional barriers include age bias, limited access to training suited to their learning needs, and challenges securing flexible work arrangements that accommodate health or family responsibilities. These factors can make labour market re-engagement particularly complex for this cohort.

##### How are we responding?

- Enhancing the link between existing programs and generating employment opportunities for mature aged participants.
- Working with business and local Neighbourhood Houses to enhance workplace diversity and demonstrate the lived experience, transferable skills and proven value of mature aged individuals in the workplace.
- Collaborating with the Adult Community and Further Education Learn Local providers to address literacy and numeracy challenges and to promote a range of training opportunities - including pre-accredited training, short courses and micro-credentials - while supporting the development of skills aligned with local employment opportunities.

#### Priority 2 – First Nations people

##### What are our challenges?

The unemployment rate for First Nations people in the region tends to be higher than non-Indigenous people, with First Nations people showing a trend of remaining on employment services providers caseload long-term unless challenges are strategically addressed. The labour market is sometimes viewed as

inaccessible by First Nations people who may also face additional challenges such as having limited access to transport, digital literacy barriers, being an early school leaver, or mature age.

#### How are we responding?

- Collaborating with First Nations stakeholders, including One Ground and Sunraysia Regional Consulting to co-design and deliver culturally informed training pathways and capability-building initiatives. These collaborations aim to strengthen local workforce participation by providing tailored programs that focus on capacity building, reskilling, and upskilling First Nations people.
- Engaging with registered training organisations (RTOs) such as SuniTAFE to ensure First Nations people are provided with training opportunities that are culturally appropriate and meet the labour market needs of the region.
- Providing necessary support and resources to ensure individuals can take advantage of employment and training opportunities and co-designing projects to reduce challenges. This will include input from Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations and First Nations leaders.
- Advocating for increased opportunities for First Nations people with organisations and industry to maximise opportunities.
- Partnering with First Nations organisations, youth services and training providers to develop tailored education, training, and employment pathways for First Nations youth, supporting their transition into sustainable employment.

### Priority 3 – Growing industries

#### What are our challenges?

To meet the workforce demands of growing industries such as construction, food and meat processing, early childhood education and care, and aged care, the region requires a coordinated and tailored approach that strengthens connections between employers, participants, and education and training providers. Ensuring these sectors can access a reliable pipeline of employees is essential for sustaining growth and addressing persistent labour shortages. At the same time, expectations and preferences have shifted, with individuals seeking greater flexibility and clearer career pathways. As a result, workforce strategies must adapt to support these changing needs while helping local industries remain competitive and adequately staffed.

#### How are we responding?

- Collaborating with industry representatives across construction, food and meat processing, early childhood education and care, and aged care to identify immediate and emerging workforce gaps.
- Coordinating with RTOs and providers, including Qualify, to develop tailored training pathways, that lead to successful ongoing employment opportunities for individuals.
- Promoting flexible training and employment models that reflect shifting jobseeker expectations around work-life balance, job security and career development.
- Facilitating and supporting industry information sessions, site visits and programs such as Empowered Women in Trades, to build awareness of opportunities and expectations within high-growth sectors.
- Collaborating with Learn Locals delivering pre-accredited training in early childhood education and care and aged care to support participants in building the skills and capacity needed to enter these growing industries.
- Supporting and delivering pre-employment engagement initiatives that build aspirations, skills and capacity for young people to enter the workforce, particularly within growing industries.

### Priority 4 – Culturally and linguistically diverse persons

#### What are our challenges?

The region has a high proportion of CALD residents, with notable concentrations in areas such as Robinvale, and these communities face several barriers that affect employment participation. Key challenges include limited English language proficiency, low confidence in workplace communications, and difficulty navigating unfamiliar employment systems and labour market expectations. Many CALD residents also have restricted access to information, local networks and informal job pathways, which reduces awareness of opportunities and limits progressions towards job readiness and participation in roles that are currently in high-demand.

#### How are we responding?

- Identifying skills gaps for CALD groups by collaborating with stakeholders such as Wimmera Southern Mallee Development and utilising local knowledge.
- Coordinating and promoting training options including accredited qualifications, pre-accredited training, short courses and micro-credentials with AMES Australia and RTOs to expedite job readiness.
- Collaborating with support services such as Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council to assist in providing place based, wrap around support, that address challenges to attaining meaningful and sustainable employment.
- Supporting employment services to connect with local stakeholders who also work with CALD persons, to strengthen collaborative partnerships and place-based solutions to common challenges.
- Engaging with community organisations and training providers to support culturally and linguistically diverse young people to build confidence, develop employability skills, and transition into training or employment pathways.

### Priority 5 – Critical mineral and industry skills

#### What are our challenges?

The region faces challenges in meeting both immediate and long-term workforce needs, particularly as emerging industries expand across the Wimmera Mallee – including critical minerals such as mineral sands projects, and large-scale renewable energy projects. As this area forms a key part of VicGrid's renewable energy and transmission planning corridor, significant future infrastructure activity is expected to occur locally, creating complex and evolving workforce demands. A core challenge for the region is understanding these emerging workforce requirements across different skill levels and occupations and ensuring local participants and complementary businesses are positioned to engage as industry needs continue to develop.

#### How are we responding?

- Collaborating with RTOs and education providers to coordinate training options including short courses and micro-credentialing to expedite job readiness for these industries and connect individuals to Vocational Education and Training pathways, as well as apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.
- Supporting the ongoing development and promotion of the Cross-Border Industry Taskforce as a central communication point and strategic planning body to address cross-border workforce needs.
- Connecting individuals with upskilling and training to ensure they have an opportunity to access major project employment opportunities in the region and meet labour market demands.

#### Want to know more?

- Contact Taylah Milligan, Wimmera Mallee Job Coordinator: [taylah.milligan@localjobs.org.au](mailto:taylah.milligan@localjobs.org.au)
- Visit [Local Jobs](#) or [Workforce Australia](#)