Local Jobs Plan

Wimmera Mallee Employment Region | VIC | May 2025

Workforce Australia Local Jobs (Local Jobs) is a program that supports tailored approaches to accelerate reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways in response to current and emerging local workforce needs.

Explore labour market insights for the Wimmera Mallee Employment Region

Local Jobs elements

Local Jobs Plan

The Local Jobs Plan sets out the skills and employment challenges and priorities of the region, and associated strategies that will drive the design and implementation of activities to be implemented to address these challenges.

Job Coordinators & Support Officers

Job Coordinators and Support Officers support the delivery of the program by bringing together key stakeholders including businesses, employment services providers, higher education, and training organisations.

Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce

Each Employment Region has its own Taskforce. Representatives include local stakeholders who have demonstrated experience in upskilling, reskilling, and an ability to represent, connect and collaborate with others in the region to meet labour market needs.

Program Funds

The Employment Region's Local Initiatives Fund enables targeted local investments that support local labour market functioning. Further, from 1 July 2025, a central grants-based fund will respond to local needs and help progress broader employment service reform objectives.

Local labour market challenges in the region

- Young people in regional and remote towns may face challenges not experienced by their counterparts in large towns, including a lack of access to school-based employment programs, work placement opportunities, apprenticeships and post-secondary training pathways.
- First Nations peoples experience significant challenges in connecting with, and remaining engaged in education, training and employment opportunities.
- Mature Age individuals experience multiple challenges to securing and retaining employment opportunities in a competitive market and are more likely to experience long-term unemployment.
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals may experience unique challenges in accessing training and employment opportunities that match their skillset and needs. A lack of knowledge around eligibility for programs, language challenges and access to employment services in regional towns remains a challenge.
- Transport poses significant challenges for individuals across all age groups as there is limited public transport in the region. This affects an individuals' ability to pursue training and employment opportunities.
- There is a lack of a employees entering or remaining in roles such as early childhood education and care, aged care, personal care and disability services. Rural towns in the region are disproportionately affected compared with the rest of the state. Principle primary carers may be unable to return to work due to shortages of childcare placements.
- There are shortages in industries such as construction, transport and logistics, manufacturing and processing, mining and agriculture. Workforce shortages for skilled workers including managers and professionals in various occupations also remains high for the region.

Local jobs and skills priorities and strategies in the region

Priority 1 – Mature age individuals

What are our challenges and opportunities?

There is a high proportion of mature age residents (45+) in the region who experience challenges to employment. Addressing these challenges requires a tailored approach to ensure information and employment services are accessible to this cohort. Challenges include low digital literacy, identifying and promoting transferrable skills, difficulty accessing training and arranging flexible work opportunities compatible with individual's needs and family dynamics. Opportunities exist to support participants to access appropriate training and employment and fill industry and skills shortages.

How are we responding?

- Enhancing the link between existing programs and generating employment opportunities for mature aged participants.
- Working with businesses to enhance workplace diversity and demonstrate the lived experience, transferable skills and proven value of mature age individuals in the workplace.
- Coordinating and promoting training options including accredited qualifications, pre-accredited training, short courses and micro-credentials with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to expedite job readiness in industries that are experiencing growth and labour shortages.
- Collaborating with support services to address challenges to literacy and numeracy and integrate opportunities for participants to address digital and alpha numeric literacy while developing skills relevant to local employment opportunities.

Priority 2 – First Nations peoples

What are our challenges and opportunities?

The unemployment rate for First Nations people in the region tends to be higher than non-Indigenous people, with First Nations peoples showing a trend of remaining on employment services 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 being an early school leaver, or mature age. There is opportunity to collaborate with First Nations peoples within the region to create innovative and culturally appropriate solutions to identify and address complex challenges to employment.

How are we responding?

- Collaborating with Transport Victoria's P21 and L2P programs to provide driving mentorship and help First Nations People in obtaining a driver's licence. Additionally, supporting access to programs that assist in regaining a driver's licence after suspensions or licensing related legal challenges.
- Engaging with RTOs 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 with 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.

Priority 3 – Regional youth unemployment

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Young people in small and remote towns throughout the region face multiple challenges and experience increasing disengagement. Young people who do not transition into work or training upon leaving school are likely to become or remain disengaged. As the demand for entry-level and skilled workers grows, there are opportunities to broker employment for young people in the care sector, as well as industries with in-demand occupations such as trades work, labourers, machinery operators and drivers. There is also opportunity to engage young people in further education and training to meet the future demand for skilled workers.

How are we responding?

- Identifying solutions to increase youth engagement in education, employment and training opportunities.
- Collaborating with Transport Victoria's P21 and L2P programs to support youth to access driving mentoring and obtain a driver's licence, or access alternative driver mentor options where L2P and P21 is unavailable or has extensive waitlists.
- Collaborating with Workforce Australia Employment Services Providers, Transition to Work Providers and Apprentice Connect Australia Providers to promote regional apprenticeship and traineeship pathways as sustainable employment outcomes that meet labour market needs.
- Developing and/or supporting pre-employment engagement programs that build aspirations and capacity for individuals (age 15 to 25) to undertake first time employment, particularly in the care sector and other in demand occupations.

Priority 4 - Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) persons

What are our challenges and opportunities?

There is a high proportion of CALD residents in the region, with populations concentrated in locations such as Robinvale. Challenges include the need to create inclusive and ongoing employment and training opportunities, improve English language skills and self-confidence and create avenues for networking and information sharing to ensure labour market access is possible. A tailored approach is required to prepare participants for job readiness, by addressing challenges and supporting participants into in-demand roles, as well as training and skill building opportunities.

How are we responding?

- Identifying skills gaps for CALD groups by collaborating with stakeholders and utilising local knowledge.
- Coordinating and promoting training options including accredited qualifications, pre-accredited training, short courses and micro-credentials with RTOs to expedite job readiness in industries that are experiencing growth and a shortage of skilled labour.
- Collaborating with support services to address challenges to learning English, as well as literacy and numeracy, to integrate opportunities for participants to address digital and alpha numeric literacy while developing skills relevant to local employment opportunities.
- 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.

Priority 5 – Critical minerals and industry skills shortages

What are our challenges and opportunities?

To meet short-term and long-term employment opportunities, we will require a skilled regional workforce for the emerging workforce shortages and growth expected in new industries, including critical minerals, known as mineral sands projects, renewable energy industries, the health and care sectors, construction, transport and logistics, manufacturing and processing. Collaboration with industry will be required to understand emerging workforce requirements across different skill levels and occupations to ensure local participants and complementary business stakeholders are well positioned to capitalise on the expected growth.

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 a cross-border industry taskforce as a central communication point and strategic planning body to address cross-border mineral sands workforce needs, as well as planning for, and reducing the impact of labour shortages in the agriculture and horticulture workforce.
- 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.
- Creating opportunities to connect individuals and stakeholders with industry to explore transferable skills and career opportunities in early childhood education and care, aged care, personal care and disability services, as well as construction, transport and logistics, manufacturing and processing, mining and agriculture.

Want to know more?

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Visit: Local Jobs or Workforce Australia