

## **SKILL SHORTAGES IN NSW**

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## Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development

### “Inquiry into Skill shortages in NSW”

Joint submission from the Western Riverina Custer Councils:

Griffith City Council, Leeton Shire Council, Murrumbidgee Shire Council, Narrandera Shire Council, Carrathool Shire Council.



# Legislative Assembly Committee on Economic Development

## Inquiry into Skill shortages in NSW

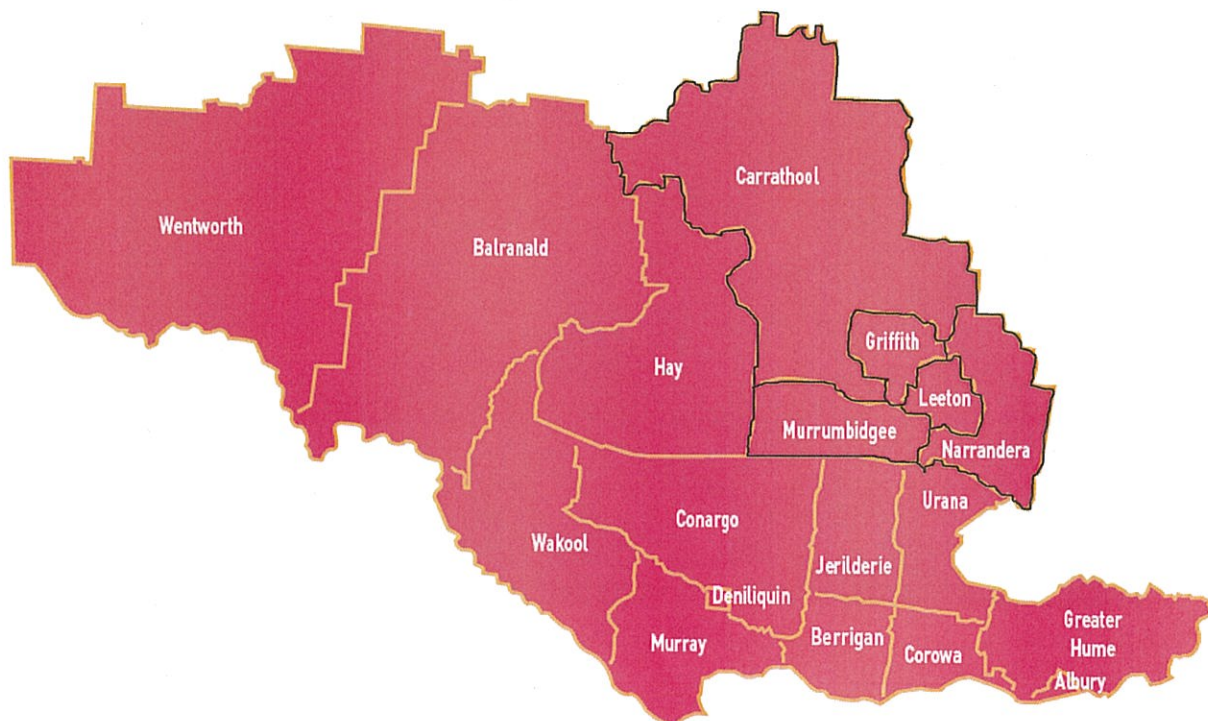
Some background on our region;

The Western Riverina region encompasses an area of 29,391 square kilometres and has a population just under 50,000 people (ABS 2011).

The Area is predominantly rural with Agriculture, Manufacturing and Retail Trade the main employers by industry. The major town centres are Griffith, Leeton, Narrandera, Coleambally, Darlington Point, Hillston and Goolgowi.

The Western Riverina experiences very low unemployment with the December 2012 quarter small area labour markets averaging an unemployment rate for the area at 4.5% with two shires experiencing unemployment rates of 3.7%, well below the state average of 5.5%. The number of people engaged in the labour force in the Western Riverina is 26, 572.

The makeup of the labour force is a combination of local workers, workers who have moved from other shires or locations and international migration. A large proportion of our international migration workforce is transient (holiday or working visa /backpacker market) who traditionally use our area as a 6 month stop gap to pick fruit, drive tractors / harvesters, work in food and beverage manufacturing and the like, the unskilled or semi-skilled roles.



The Western Riverina is also home to a large number of refugees who fill an important workforce gap in abattoirs and manual labour positions, such as onion, pumpkin, cherry and orange picking, those in which average Australian's do not wish to do. The attraction of skilled migrants, individuals and families from other parts of Australia and the world is very important for regional development in our area.

The value and contribution of skilled migration in regional NSW, such as the Western Riverina cannot be overstated. Our businesses rely heavily on all overseas migration to fill critical positions that the local job market cannot supply. This is certainly the case for the 457 (temporary), Employer Sponsored (permanent RSMS) and Skilled Regional Sponsored (provisional) visas.

The number of RSMS nominations which were certified in this region for 2011 was 88 with the top five industry groups being Hospitality, Trades, Agriculture, Health and Education. The skilled worker applications came from twenty three countries in which our region could not attract, after months of advertising and scouting by employers.

In 2012, this figure almost doubled with the number of regional sponsored migration nominations certified at 159, again the top five industry groups were Hospitality, Business / Administration, Trades, Health, Agriculture / Farming and over thirty countries sourcing skilled workers.

In 2013 from January to May there has only been twenty three RSMS nominations certified, mainly in Hospitality and Health, with five countries of origin.

The Skilled Regional Sponsored (Provisional) visas are temporary visas (leading to a pathway to permanent residency) as follows....

In 2011, the number of visas gaining sponsorship was 70, with the top four industries being Health, Trades, Engineering and Education from thirty countries.

In 2012 the number of visas gaining sponsorship was 12 in Health from three countries and in 2013 from January to May the number of visas gaining sponsorship is five in Health and IT / Communications from three countries.

The above information was obtained through the RDA - Riverina who is the Regional Certifying Body for RSMS visa assessments and sponsorship for Regional Skilled Sponsored visas.

In July 2012 DIAC (Department of Immigration and Citizenship) introduced a new program called Skill Select and the eligibilities were tightened for independent and provisional visas, which points to the massive decline in numbers for the provisional and permanent visas in our area.

Councils are also reliant on the RSMS visa program to attract engineers, town planners, building certifiers, among other positions.

Recipients of these visa programs will often bring a family with them and will contribute to the community through education, social, sporting and cultural activities. They also contribute to our regional economies as individuals as well as ensuring the area remains productive. Visa recipients create their own cultural groups and often make arrangements to bring extended family members to the region who also have desirable skills and experience which are of great benefit to businesses within the Western Riverina.

Without the above visa programs, business, welfare, hospitality, schools, hospitals, agricultural entities and councils would struggle to conduct business and grow.



The Committee on Economic Development has asked for submissions to focus on;

- \* Identifying gaps and areas of need in particular industries, professions and communities; and;
- \* Identifying strategies for government to assist in addressing skill shortages.

Our combined councils commend the committee for the Inquiry into Skill Shortages and would like to respond by way of the attached documents as well as the points below. The attached Western Riverina Workforce Development Strategy is a detailed analysis of the Western Riverina in terms of addressing skill shortfalls (page 3), gaps and areas of need (page 13-16). The document was developed in 2012 in conjunction with key stakeholders and also suggests programs which key stakeholders in our region are implementing without any funding assistance (Page 16). The DEEWR Sturt survey highlights findings in this submission in relation to migration and employment (labour force market) 2011.

The visa programs do and are working, however, there are a number of flaws which have been identified by employers;

- \* Most employers are willing to do whatever it takes to fill the position but may lack cultural training which can impact on the applicant and their families ability to settle in the area.
- \* The visa process is fairly inflexible, arduous and can be expensive.
- \* Due diligence to ensure applicants have the correct skill sets and experience often leaves a lot to be desired.
- \* The skills in need list goes out of date very quickly and makes it difficult for regional businesses to start the visa process without having their positions on that list.
- \* There is no support once the visa has been granted. A lot of issues could be circumvented by a support mechanism for employers and applicants throughout the first 18 months.

In terms of identifying strategies for government to assist in addressing skill shortages, the Western Riverina Workforce Development Strategy details a number of strategies for our area (see attached Pages 18-20).

Businesses are under strain across the Western Riverina in terms of their ability to attract suitably qualified and skilled workers, retain workers and up-skill existing workers. Uptake of the National Workforce Development Fund has been low which can be linked with businesses inability to co-contribute to training, which is much more expensive to implement in regions than in metropolitan markets.

The NSW Government's Relocation Grant has been well received, bearing in mind, that relocation is a slow process and positive results make take successive years to yield results.

RDA—Riverina as the Regional Certifying Body for visa sponsorship continues to provide an excellent service to the wider business community.

RDA—Riverina co-ordinates the Country Change Program, which is a second tier Evocities campaign funded by participating council's to attract skilled people to regions, via the website ([www.countrychange.com.au](http://www.countrychange.com.au)), tell us your skills database and promotional activities such as the Country and Regional Living Expo in Sydney.

A better conjute between schools, universities and business needs to be established, whether by database, linked-in or web based portal to link skilled young people to businesses.

More incentives for people to consider relocating to regions would be welcome, particularly for teachers, health, engineers, agronomists and other professions which are in high demand.

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# REGIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

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*Growing our Workforce for a More Productive and Innovative Region*

2012

Western Riverina

Regional Workforce Strategy Stakeholder Group

Cluster 4

(Narrandera, Leeton, Murrumbidgee, Carrathool and Griffith)





### *Strategic Workforce Development:*

A multi-faceted approach to increasing productivity this document includes recruitment and retention, work flows and job roles, workplace conditions and pay, career structure and succession planning, performance management and recognition, management culture and internal communications, business and HR systems, as well as skills development and training DEEWR.

Prepared by;

Griffith City Council with assistance from Leeton Shire Council on behalf of regional councils, businesses, RTO's and agencies.

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Disclaimer: This document has been prepared by Griffith City Council Economic Development Coordinator Nicola James and Leeton Shire Council Economic Development Officer Paul Crack for surrounding Council's, Narrandera Shire, Murrumbidgee Shire, Carrathool Shire, agencies, NGO's, RTO's, businesses and other organisations – state and federal. In preparing this document, Griffith City Council has relied on data from id., DEEWR, Griffith Business Skills Audit, NCVER, NSW Business Chamber, Blueprint SA, Regional Workforce forum, Regional Stakeholders from the Regional Workforce Committee. This document has been prepared as a resource in good faith given that the information is current and correct. This is a living document to be altered as conditions in our regional landscape change.

Photos provided by Griffith City Council, and Leeton Shire Council.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Purpose

The primary purpose of the Regional Workforce Strategy is to provide a resource and a starting point for the business community in the Western Riverina to look at ways in which we can be more proactive in developing individual strategies for workforce skills attraction, retention and training.

This document is a work in progress or a living document so that as the workforce environment changes so too does the document in looking at future opportunities, emerging trends and challenges so that our region can work in a more efficient and collaborative way.

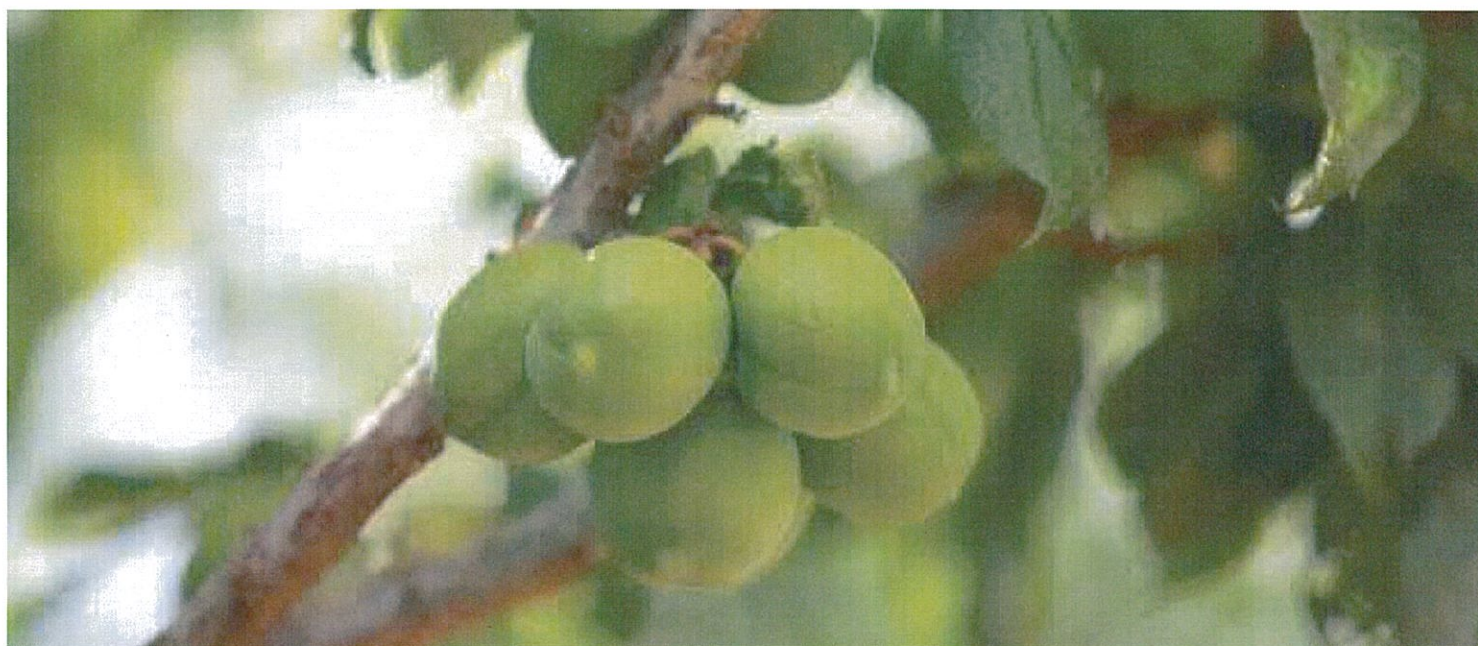
There may be opportunities to conduct specific industry workshops or develop specific industry workforce plans as the

need arises. There may also be opportunities to attract funding for specific regional workforce based projects to enable a more in depth understanding of our unique industries and business communities and what challenges they are facing now and into the future.

This Regional Workforce Strategy is a guide for those businesses in our region to develop stronger workforces and to enable them to become an 'Employer of Choice'. This document endeavours to list challenges, resources and opportunities for local business so that they can position themselves as a leader in skills attraction, retention and training programs to ensure that they have the best level of staffing that they need now and into the future.







## Background

In March 2011 a Griffith Business Skills Audit was conducted, based on 25 Industry sectors in the community. This showed:

- businesses are struggling to attract suitably skilled applicants;
- the number of suitable applicants applying for jobs has decreased;
- retaining staff has become a major problem due to the diversity of unfilled jobs in the current labour market.

Very similar findings came from a 2012 Leeton Shire Business Survey.

When taken together with official labour force surveys undertaken during the same period by DEEWR (Department of Education Employment Workplace Relations) these findings can only be expected to be compounded by an improvement in business conditions; a return of investor

confidence across industry sectors; and baby boomers exiting the workforce.

In face of these problems, a series of Regional Strategic Labour Workshops were held involving industry, federal, state, and local government, and representatives of the education and training industry. The aim was a collective Workforce Strategy able to identify and find ways to address those issues at a regional level.

➤ A Forum on a range of issues of interest to business: what assistance was available; migration processes; incentives for apprenticeships and traineeships, and ways to become an employer of choice.

➤ A Workshop on skills retention, attraction and training opportunities; identifying hurdles for our region now and into the future; and the need to work closely with our regional stakeholders.



From these and related activities a strategic 'road map' was developed to help shape and drive the strategy;

Along with establishing a framework of four driving principles;

- existing workforce pool
- external workforce attraction
- education & training
- promotion of industry

### Identified Skills Shortages 2011-2012

Auto technician / motor mechanics / spray painters	Chefs
Structural steel / welding – fitters & turners	Register nurses
Construction – building / glaziers, shopfront detailed joiners	Psychologists
Plumbers / Electricians	Accountants
Engineers	Early Childhood
Printers	Agri related degree – Agri Business / agronomists
Teachers	Case Workers
Finance	Geophysicists
Surveyors	
HC / MC Drivers	Delivery drivers
Managerial	Community development
Agricultural	Labourers
Commercial cleaners	General clerks
Livestock farm workers	Sales Assistants
Bar attendants / baristas, wait staff	Finance





## Aim of the Strategy

Workforce planning is complex. Research suggests that current methodology does not properly account for many factors that influence workforce supply such as gender, marital status, child care responsibilities and 'lifecycle', along with many other factors that can influence workforce behaviour and availability.

The aim of the Regional Workforce Strategy is to assist local employers and their human resource service providers enhance workforce development through an adoptable resource that business, industry, councils, schools, registered training organisations, job network and other organisations work towards a more

sustainable skilled workforce relevant to our region, and thereby help boost productivity.

It addresses key issues, challenges and opportunities for skills attraction, retention and training in a living document that can be adapted as the needs of stakeholders in the region change.

It is an ambition of the Strategy to provide a channel for funding for collaborative projects to support its recommendations.

Finally, to provide a practical resource to assist businesses develop their own workforce plans, and help industry and RTO's develop industry specific training.



## Driving Principles

It is a foundation of the Regional Workforce Strategy that understanding and identifying the drivers of change in the labour market will help individual businesses develop their personalised Workforce Plan.

Some key drivers which guide the Regional Workforce Strategy are:-

### **Existing Regional Workforce Pool**

- Create a status as an employer of choice;
- Work with stakeholders to develop programs to ensure job seekers are work ready for both casual and permanent employment;
- Develop an employment register through Country Change website;
- Encourage employers to find ways to include workers from a diversity of sources such as women returning to the workforce; the disabled; mature workers; indigenous and other cultural backgrounds.

### **External Workforce Pool**

- Seek to attract workers from outside the region e.g. by participating in the Country Change program;
- Understand and use migrant attraction programs such as the Regional Migration Program;
- Develop an Industry Assistance Resource for attracting people to the region.



## **Education & Training**

- Promote traineeships to business / industry sectors;
- Highlight in-house training programs and other training opportunities;
- Engage with schools and parents in the promotion of local employment opportunities;
- Encourage open dialogue between stakeholders, National, State and regional programs;
- Work with training providers to develop industry-specific training, and flexible delivery models;
- Develop an industry Training Register.

## **Promotion of Industry**

- Boost industry profiles through local engagement with schools, post-compulsory education and training enterprises, and at local and out-of-region Job Expos;
- Create and promote clear career pathways;
- Work collaboratively with other industry members and industry associations;
- Understand industry commonalities.



## Strategic Outcomes

Any Strategy must be judged by its outcomes. What practical value will come from implementing its recommendations? As defined by DEEWR, a Workforce Development Strategy is aimed at anyone involved in boosting productivity in this instance by ensuring a consistent supply of motivated and skilled employees in the face of economic challenges and external forces such as our country location, and an aging workforce.

### Target Group

This can include anyone involved in business recruitment and retention, work flows and job roles, workplace conditions and pay, career structure and succession planning, performance management and recognition, management culture and internal communications, business and HR systems, as well as skills development and training.

At its heart, a Workforce Development Strategy is aimed at any employer or professional business provider wishing to be proactive about the attraction and retention of a local workforce now and into the future.

The Regional Workforce Strategy will target those 'drivers' as identified above (existing workforce, external workforce and education and training), each with their unique needs.

### Existing Workforce Pool

The existing workforce pool consists of an adult population of 18,505 with a breakdown of 9,929 in Griffith, 4,254 for Leeton, 2,189 for Narrandera 1,043 for Murrumbidgee and 1,099 for Carrathool. Of these adult populations on average between 74.7% and 78.5% of the working age population are participating in the workforce with at least 18% (Griffith, Leeton, Murrumbidgee) of 65+ aged still participating in the workforce, which is comparable to NSW and National averages but fairly low when compared to other LGA's across the Sturt region such as Berrigan at 28%.

Our existing workforce is made up of people in work, people who have left a job or been made redundant, people who have transferred from other areas, people who are on holiday, contractors, casual, part timers, full timers and job share.

This sector of our workforce can also draw more participation from vulnerable groups such as Indigenous, Youth – teenage employment, school leavers, disabled, migrant, retraining, aged and young mothers who are looking to return to work.



## External Workforce Pool

The region's external workforce pool is made up of those people who are not yet residing in the region. Addressing ways that we can successfully attract and retain this workforce is something that changes constantly.

Looking at the reasons why someone would like to move to a regional setting is the key to luring skilled workers to the region. This can be dependent on where the targeted worker is at in their life cycle (for instance if they are single with no ties, have a partner, a young family, empty nesters, retirees). Reasons can include; better work – life balance, career move, improve financial situation, housing affordability, quieter lifestyle, access to natural environment, less overheads to invest in business development to name a few.

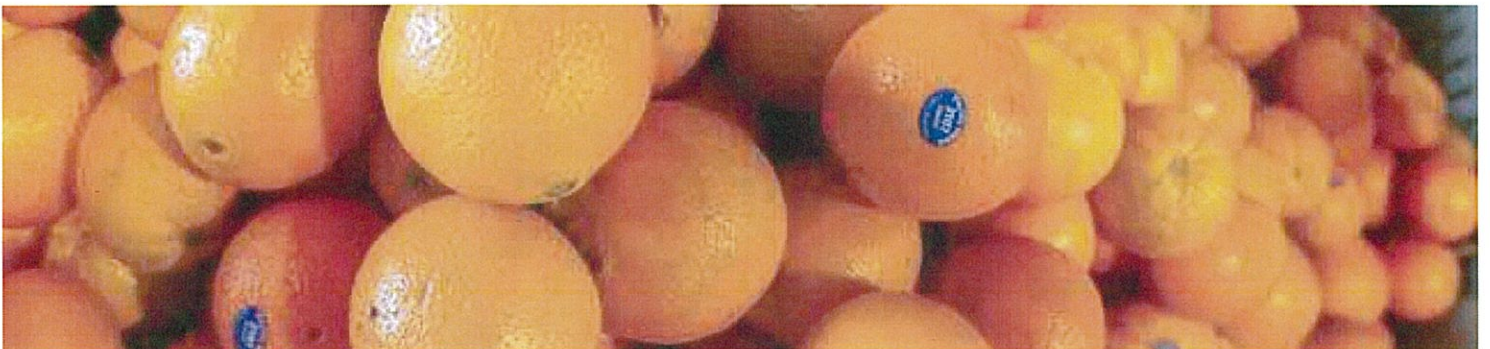
There are a number of hurdles to overcome to ensure that external workforce attraction is a success. Procuring skilled workers domestically and internationally both has its challenges. Selling the region to people in other regions and metropolitan markets can be hard work with Councils and businesses needing to remain committed to this proactive marketing approach in order for it to pay dividends in the future. Councils in the Western Riverina Cluster 4 (Narrandera, Leeton, Murrumbidgee, Carrathool and Griffith) are part of the Country Change program which aims to attract workers, investors and visitors to our region through

various expos and trade fairs in order to capitalise on targeted audiences to sell the virtues of our region, to take in-demand jobs, attractive business opportunities and home investments.

Supporting the partner and family once they arrive to the area is important for the family to integrate into our area, to feel welcome and feel that they are part of the community.

The Visa application process can be quite tedious for business but can also be an essential workforce building tool for regional businesses. Forward planning is key as well as matching your companies growth to future skills required. The migration visa application process can be a very valuable option for many regional businesses, ensuring that the workers are well supported is vital to the success of retaining workers.

This target market faces competition from other regions, the resources sector and can be costly and yield little results. The overseas skilled market is also problematic in that their skills may not necessarily match the quality of skills our employers are wanting. There are considerable hurdles for employers undertaking this process in that the process itself can take a long time, there can be discrepancies as to the level of skills the applicant has and the quality of the applicant. The applicant may not be a good fit for the organisation.



## Education & Training

The education and training needs of industry in the Western Riverina are specific and different. They may have cross sectors and disciplines up and down the skills hierarchy and there may also be many synergies. New jobs are being created and career paths are changing.

New technologies are emerging and work practices being applied in different ways. There is an imposing amount of information, so it is hardly surprising that determining best practice and keeping pace with these changes is a challenge for many enterprises and RTO's (Registered Training Organisations).

The Western Riverina has a number of RTO's and training providers who are becoming more effective in their ability to adapt to the emerging needs of the workplace and recognise opportunities. In order to effectively establish economies of scale and attract a critical mass our RTO's will need to work regionally and across industries in order to respond to changes in training needs within workplaces in our region.

Industries will need to become more proactive in identifying shortfalls in future workforce areas and work with RTO's to develop industry specific training packages. Industries and the schooling sector will also need to work collaboratively to promote

career pathways, promote workforce readiness and the type of skills businesses are looking for in a trainee.

Accessing and maximising opportunities from government investment in skills development can be a challenge if that information is not readily available or not in front of business when they need it. Offering a central Western Riverina specific website for jobs vacant, critical information for small to medium enterprises as well as big business to access training rebates and other innovative schemes could be a valuable resource for local business.

Establishing a Centre for Excellence could be a way forward for the region for a number of industry sectors. These could provide a forum for research, analysis, dissemination and development of best practice models and resources. They can offer a birds eye view with a global perspective and provide an opportunity to forge partnerships with research centres, universities and other development organisations.

Centres of Excellence could be industry focussed or issue focussed but should be developed as central resources that build capacity, link and strengthen private and government resources and result in widely recognised skills for industry.





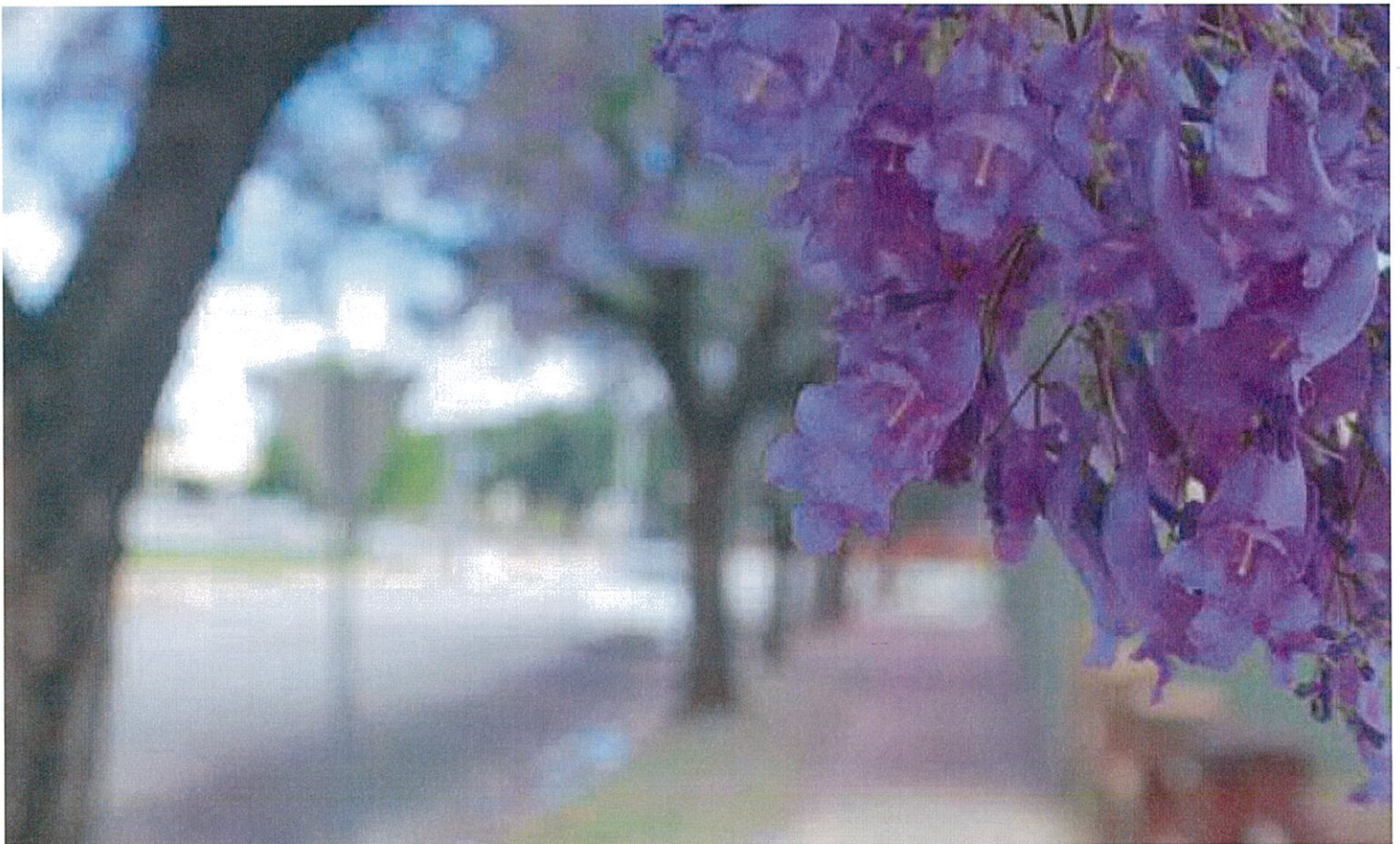
## **Industry Promotion**

Industry and business have a role to play in promoting their business, encouraging industry identification and career pathways in High Schools, TAFE's, jobs expos and universities. It is an opportunity for local business to actively recruit for trainees and apprenticeships. This is also a key activity of peak activity groups.

This can be achieved through marketing your business as an employer of choice. Having a strong web presence is part of this mix, ensuring that there is a jobs vacant page.

## **Industries**

Businesses can also participate in the RDA – Riverina Country Change program. Businesses can register and set up a profile on the Tell Us Your Skills program on the Country Change website as well as the Evocities websites.



# WHERE TO FROM HERE?

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## *Developing a Workforce Plan*

Workforce planning makes good business sense.

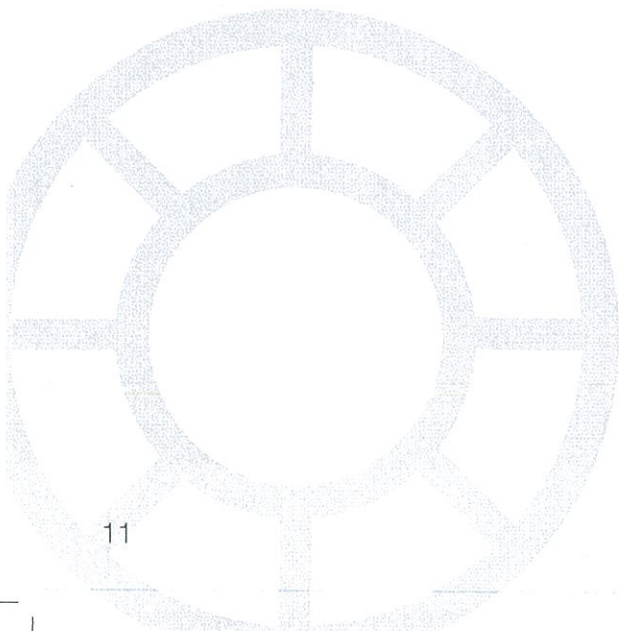
Workforce planning is the process of forecasting your staffing needs and working out the range of ways you can create and maintain the workforce in line with your business goals.

For any industry or business understanding your current capability and capacity is a key to shaping Workforce Plan. Identifying any gaps between what you want, and what you have currently, will also allow you to target skill shortages impeding increases in productivity and efficiency.

For a business, workforce planning means you can develop staff to improve your ability to respond to changes in;

- business or job requirements;
- client and customer demands; and
- market conditions.

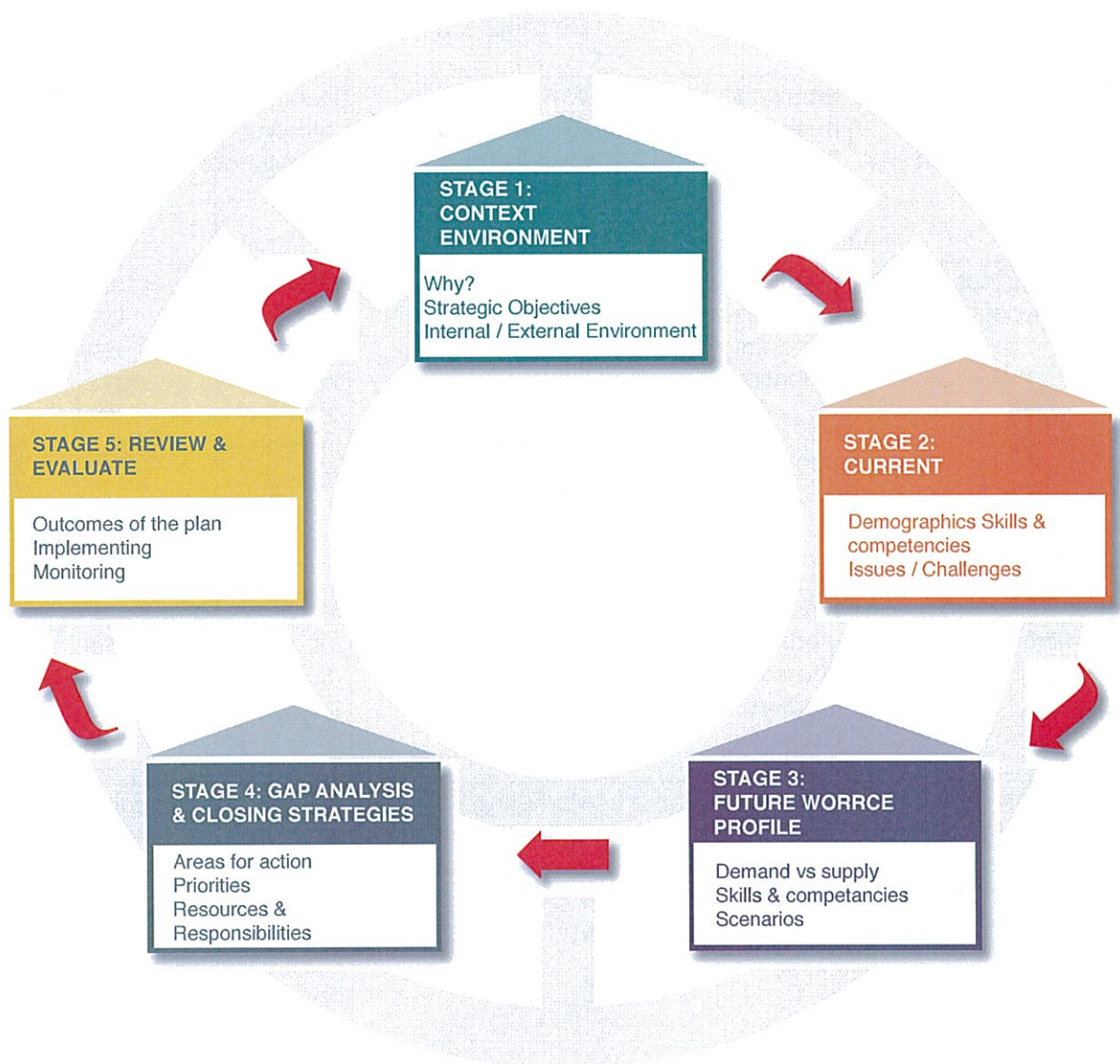
Key to a successful Workforce Plan is a practical impetus. This can be any of (or all of) growth in new markets, new products / services or sales demand, identifying decline in supply chain, existing and new clients or changes to the market, competitors, the economy, technology, finance, productivity or job requirements.





# WORKFORCE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MODEL

There are 5 stages in a workforce plan;



# MEETING THE CHALLENGES,

## *Capturing the Opportunities*

Workforce development challenge	Impact on	Critical future skills	Opportunities
Challenges in attracting staff to our region	Small and medium business operators & Industry	Workforce Planning & Development	Regional branding Regional website – Country Change
Lack of family support when recruiting from elsewhere	Small and medium business operators & Industry; Potential employee	Workforce Planning & Development	Build a mentoring system into Workforce Plan, flexible recruitment skills
Wages less than in metropolitan areas	Small and medium business operators & Industry; Potential employee	Innovation Workforce Planning & Development Understanding what motivates employees, implementing flexible workforce	NSW government's \$7,000 relocation grant rebate, Sell our lifestyle. Wages may be less than metropolitan, but living conditions are also reduced.
Social inclusion – fitting into the culture of our area	Small and medium business operators & Industry; Potential employee,	Workforce Planning & Development	Mentor programs, introduction to service clubs, other social and sporting clubs.
Promoting & Selling our region to skilled workers Promoting lifestyle, educational and health	Small and medium business operators & Industry Councils; Potential employee	Marketing Promotion Creating a brand – Employer brand and regional brand	Become involved in the Country Change program Become proactive with publicity – good news stories Create lifestyle opportunities Build a dedicated jobs website Opportunity for a bulk billing clinic



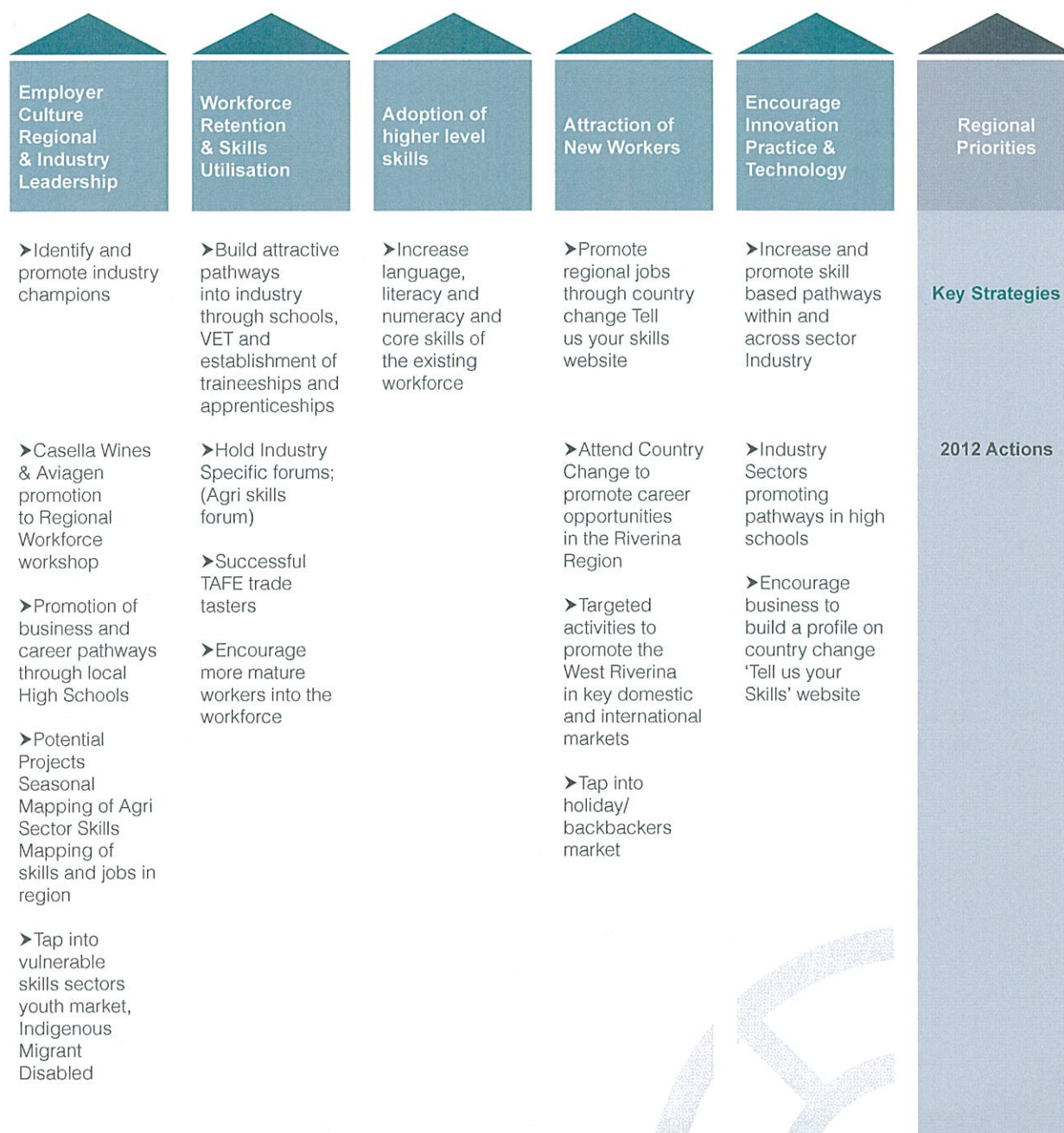
Workforce development challenge	Impact on	Critical future skills	Opportunities
Multiculturalism	Small and medium business operators & Industry; Potential employee	Understanding different cultures needs in the work place Innovation	Workshops Promote a diverse workforce
Fine line between not quite qualified and being over qualified for some roles	Small and medium business operators & Industry; Potential employee	up skilling	Better skilled workforce. Introduce standards for tickets/qualifications.
Perception of location	Potential employee	Innovation Understanding what motivates employees Marketing our region	Build company reputation as an Employer of Choice
High cost of living	Potential employee	Innovation Workforce Planning & Development	NSW government's \$7,000 relocation grant rebate
Infrastructure	Potential employee	Marketing our region	Using marketing material from Council's or Country Change website to sell our region
Overtime costs to hospitality trade – weekend and public holidays	Business Tourism market	Working Collabar actively across industry sectors	Establishing a tourism market and weekend trade to support businesses
Imparting clear career pathway messages to school based students as well as alternative pathways	Business and Industry Schools DEEWR Get Set Partnership Brokers Students	Preparing students for the workforce Understanding career pathways	Local businesses to promote their business and pathways Promote traineeship, apprenticeship opportunities, scholarships and internship programs Guest speakers, ex-students talking about career paths Industry / business visits

Workforce development challenge	Impact on	Critical future skills	Opportunities
Understanding how best to engage parents / school career counsellors	Business and Industry Schools DEEWR Get Set Partnership Brokers Students	Across school - Industry forums?	Obtaining support from parents or an understanding of career paths can assist.
Consolidating information	DEEWR, Get Set, School Career Counsellors	Sharing information to provide better access for information	Central website County Change website
Adaptive work experience programs	Business and Industry Schools DEEWR Get Set Partnership Brokers Students	Shorter periods rather than 2 weeks	For Businesses to develop a work experience program. A better experience for students and businesses
Career day expos	Business and Industry Schools DEEWR Get Set Students Service Clubs	More interactive activities	Hands on practical activities Aptitude tests
Raising the profile and value of trades	Business and Industry Schools DEEWR Get Set Partnership Brokers Students Service Clubs	Increasing trade participation Ensuring regions have good succession plan for trades	Creating Awareness of trades and career paths at schools Promoting specialist roles Shaking industry perceptions Showcase earning capability Schools keep in touch with market trends Promote idea to young people of careers rather than short term employment.



# WESTERN RIVERINA REGIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Sustainable Regional Development of Riverina Business & Industries



# RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

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## *Monitoring, Reporting and Resources*

To ensure the on-going relevance of this strategy there is a need for strong and robust monitoring and reporting on the implementation and achievements of the strategy as well as an understanding of the current conditions and potential future trends in our region.

Businesses will be encouraged to identify and progress with Workforce Development Plans actions that have a positive impact on their industry. Council will then need to determine the resources required to implement each project; with potential three options available:

1. Internal – project managed by internal staff;
2. External – Project managed and implement by an external source such as consultant or collaborative Project Manager;
3. Industry – Project will have an impact on member businesses.

It is recommended that the strategy is reviewed on a 12 month basis and a full strategy update on the workforce conditions be maintained on a yearly basis to enable the strategy to accurately reflect the needs of business and industry continue to be addressed. The strategy is endorsed by the steering committee, partners and other stakeholders who will be the driving force of the strategy.





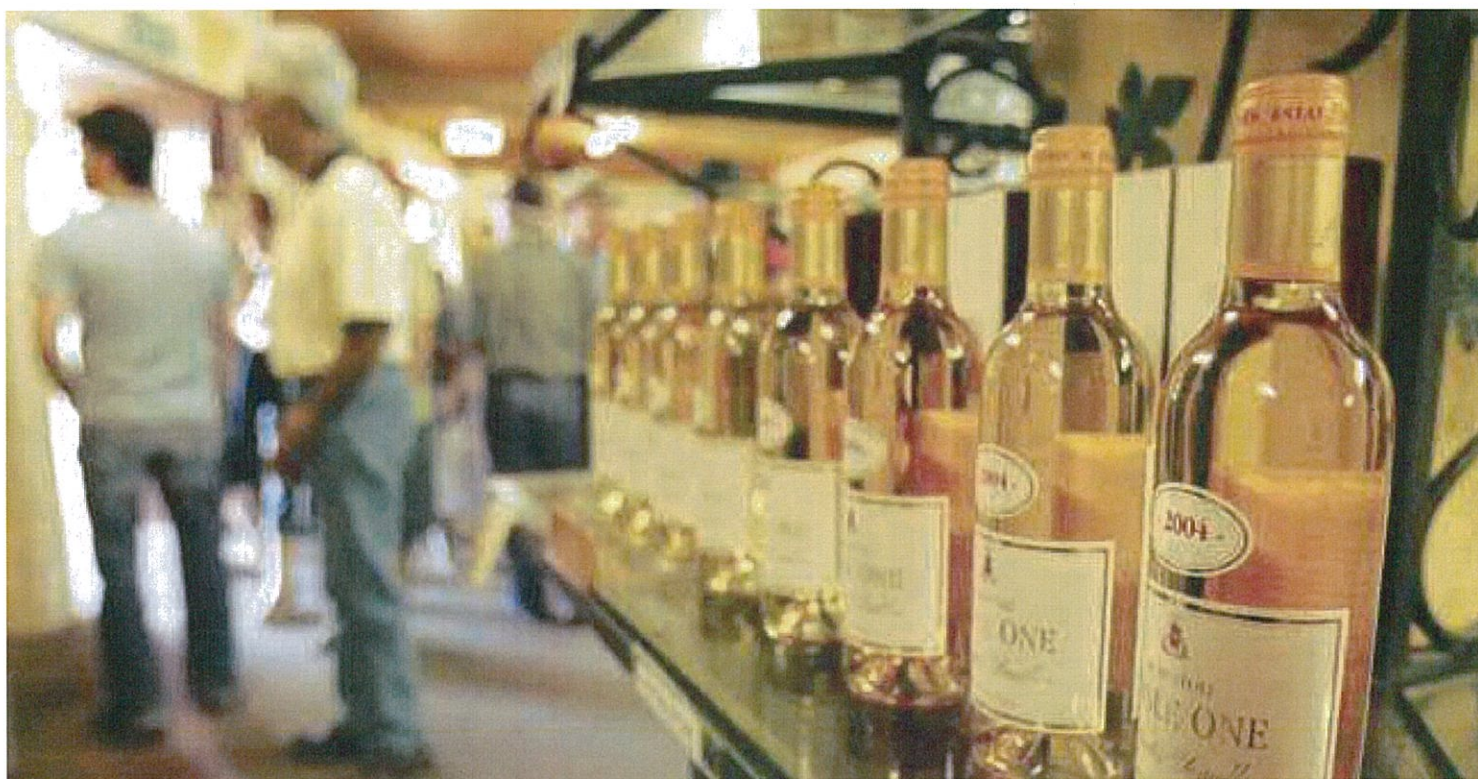
# POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Identify Opportunity	Impact on	Who - Partner	When - timeline	Outcome
Develop partnerships between schools – business sector and RTO's	Small and medium business operators & Industry Schools Get Set RTO's	Small and medium business operators & Industry Schools Get Set RTO's	Ongoing	Better flow of information
Identify jobs available in each Industry	Small and medium business operators & Industry	Councils DEEWR	Dependent on funding	Better understanding of jobs in region
Industry Job Promotion	Small and medium business operators & Industry	Councils	December 2012	School based leavers better understand career pathways and subject choices
Industry Specific Forums	Small and medium business operators & Industry	NSW Business Chamber Chambers Council's Business / Industries	On going – bi-monthly	Increased awareness of issues
Training / jobs register	Small and medium business operators & Industry	Industry Business Schools GET Set Partnership Brokers	Ongoing	Assist like minded industries to capture skilled workers suitable for their industry as well as share industry training.
Parent Forums	Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry	All	Ongoing	Promotion, marketing, social media, web presence

Identify Opportunity	Impact on	Who - Partner	When - timeline	Outcome
Higher level training for higher level positions	Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry	Industry / Business RTO's DEEWR	Ongoing	Suitably skilled workforces for the region
Increased flexibility in training	Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's	Industry / Business RTO's	Ongoing	Higher participation rates / completion rates
Increase VOC – ED training / apprenticeship and traineeship participation and completion rates	Schools Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's	Employers RTO's	Ongoing mentoring	Higher participation rates / completion rates
Meeting productivity needs and skills shortage solutions	Schools Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's	Council's Business & Industry RTO's DEEWR	Regular 12 monthly skills audits	Increasing workforce capability and reaping the economic benefits
Identify why workforce participation is an issue	Society Community Services Individuals and their families	Community Services Job Network	Develop a program to understand the issues and to try to come up with a solution	Tapping into an underutilised resources, reducing unemployment, improving job prospects and skills
Work with schools on 'soft skills' – employability skills	Schools Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's Get Set Partnership Broker	Schools Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's Get Set Partnership Broker	Develop a program in conjunction with existing curriculum to work with students on improving employability skills.	Deliver program to ensure students are work ready



Identify Opportunity	Impact on	Who - Partner	When - timeline	Outcome
Targeting priorities for the region	Councils Business / Industry	All Stakeholders	Develop resources / forums	Maintaining relevance
Better promotion of pathways, RTO providers, Incentives	Schools Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's Get Set Partnership Broker	Schools Potential employee, small and medium business operators & Industry RTO's Get Set Partnership Broker	Guest Speakers, field trips	Young people more willing to enter career paths they may not have considered
Forecast workforce requirements	Council Business / Industry DEEWR	Councils Business / Industry	Conduct yearly skills audits with business community	Develop regional solutions to address emerging trends to avoid skills shortages





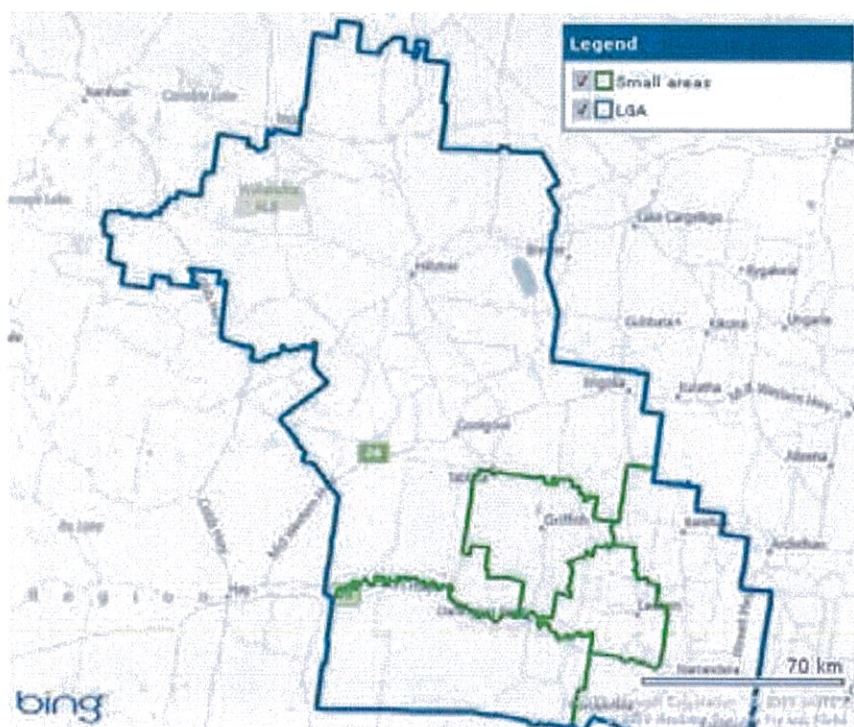
# APPENDIX A

## Regional Profile

The Western Riverina Region is located in south-western New South Wales, between 420 and 570 kilometres north of Melbourne, and between 550 and 680 kilometres west of Sydney. The Western Riverina Region is bounded by Central Darling Shire and Cobar Shire in the north, Lachlan Shire, Bland Shire, Coolamon Shire and Wagga Wagga City in the east, Lockhart Shire, Urana Shire, Jerilderie Shire and Conargo Shire in the south, and Hay Shire and Balranald Shire in the west.

The Western Riverina Region includes five municipalities: Carrathool Shire, Griffith City, Leeton Shire, Murrumbidgee Shire and Narrandera Shire. About half of the population in the Region live in Griffith City, a quarter in Leeton Shire, and the remaining quarter across Narrandera, Carrathool and Murrumbidgee Shires.

The Western Riverina Region is a predominantly rural area, with rural-residential areas in the main township of Griffith and numerous small townships and villages. The Region encompasses a total land area of about 29,000 square kilometres. Rural land is used largely for agriculture, horticulture and viticulture, particularly sheep and cattle grazing, and rice, cotton, cereal crop, citrus fruit, canola, grape, vegetable and nut growing. The original inhabitants of the Western Riverina Region area were the Wiradjuri Aboriginal people.





## APPENDIX B

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### *Demographic trends relating to residents in the Western Riverina include;*

Population 49, 599 as of June 30, 2010.

Our communities are made up of Australian, Italian, Indian, Persian, Indigenous and other backgrounds. Our region comprises of many young families with an increase in 50-59 year olds from 2001-2006 and a decrease during this time in 25-34 year olds, 5-11 and 0-4.

There are more couple families with children (47.2%) and less one parent families (14.6%) than the state average, however during the 2001-2006 period there were more one parent families with children under 15 and over 15.

Family households account for 70% of total households while lone person households are at 23.9%.

Almost 12.4% of the population earned a higher income and 42.4% earned a low income than the state average.

Qualifications – 30.1% of the population holds an education qualification, however 56.3% held no qualifications, as opposed to the Indigenous community who had very low levels of qualifications with 70% of the population not having any qualifications as well a large number of one family house holds.

Employment – During 2001-2006 95.7% of the population were in the labour force with 4.3% unemployed. Our main industries for the Western Riverina comprised of Agriculture, Manufacturing and Retail Trade with Managers, Labourers, Technicians and Trades and Professionals making up the largest occupations of the workforce.

Forecasting predicts growth in our region in Finance & Insurance Services sector, Health sector particularly aged care, Transport Postal and Warehousing and hospitality.

## APPENDIX C

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### *Influences relating to our regional economy*

There are external and internal influences that will impact on our regional economy in the near future. These may change the way businesses operate and could be considered opportunities to diversify or grow, but ultimately will require businesses to adapt in order to meet these challenges head on.

**The Digital Economy** – Whether businesses are prepared or not, the introduction of the National Broadband Network to our region will dramatically change the way in which businesses conduct business. Faster speeds will enable businesses to become more globally competitive in the marketplace and may require staff to up skill, understand the potential possibilities and how the digital age can maximise productivity.

**New technologies** – are constantly emerging and business needs to understand how these technologies can improve productivity in the workforce.

**Shrinking labour force** – one of the greatest challenges for our region is our shrinking workforce. This will become worse once our baby boomers retire leaving a gaping hole in our regional workforce. Businesses need to think about where their future workforce will come from and what make-up it will look like.

**New industries** – are great news for regions, however ensuring the workforce can adapt or have the skills needed for new industries can be a challenge. New Industries can bolster existing business by value adding products / services.

**Change in shopping behaviours and customer expectations** – Consumers are now better informed about the product or service they seek and will usually conduct research online prior to making a decision. People have less time and available funds. Price is a major consideration when making a purchase. There is more e-commerce transactions and less passing foot traffic. Consumers know the value of the product and are often better informed than some staff. Providing a unique shopping experience to build up a loyal clientele base is essential to long term business viability.



**Increasing reliance on Visa Migration Program** - The business community is becoming more accepting of employing migrant settlers and procuring workers through the regional sponsored visa migration program. It is important that business owners continue to understand the unique cultural practices in the workplace, bridging skills to ensure workers are able to perform their duties as well as supporting and mentoring workers. Another important aspect for our industries is to ensure that skills shortages in our region relate to the Australian Government's skills list in demand to enable our industries to continue to access this program and the benefits related to it.

**High Aussie Dollar** – great for importers, not so good for exporters who may need to look at ways that they can still export and make a profit.

**Changing world economies** – this will always be a concern and a major influence on commodity prices and end markets.

**Government regulations** – one of the biggest challenges for business is the constant changing of regulations in the workforce. Ensuring that businesses keep on top of these changes, implement appropriate changes and adjust is vital for long term sustainability.



# APPENDIX D

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## References

A number of resources were utilised for the completion of this report, including;

DEEWR labour force survey 2011

Griffith Business Skills Audit 2011

Western Riverina Economy id.

Western Riverina Profile id.

Leeton Shire Council 2012 Business Survey Report

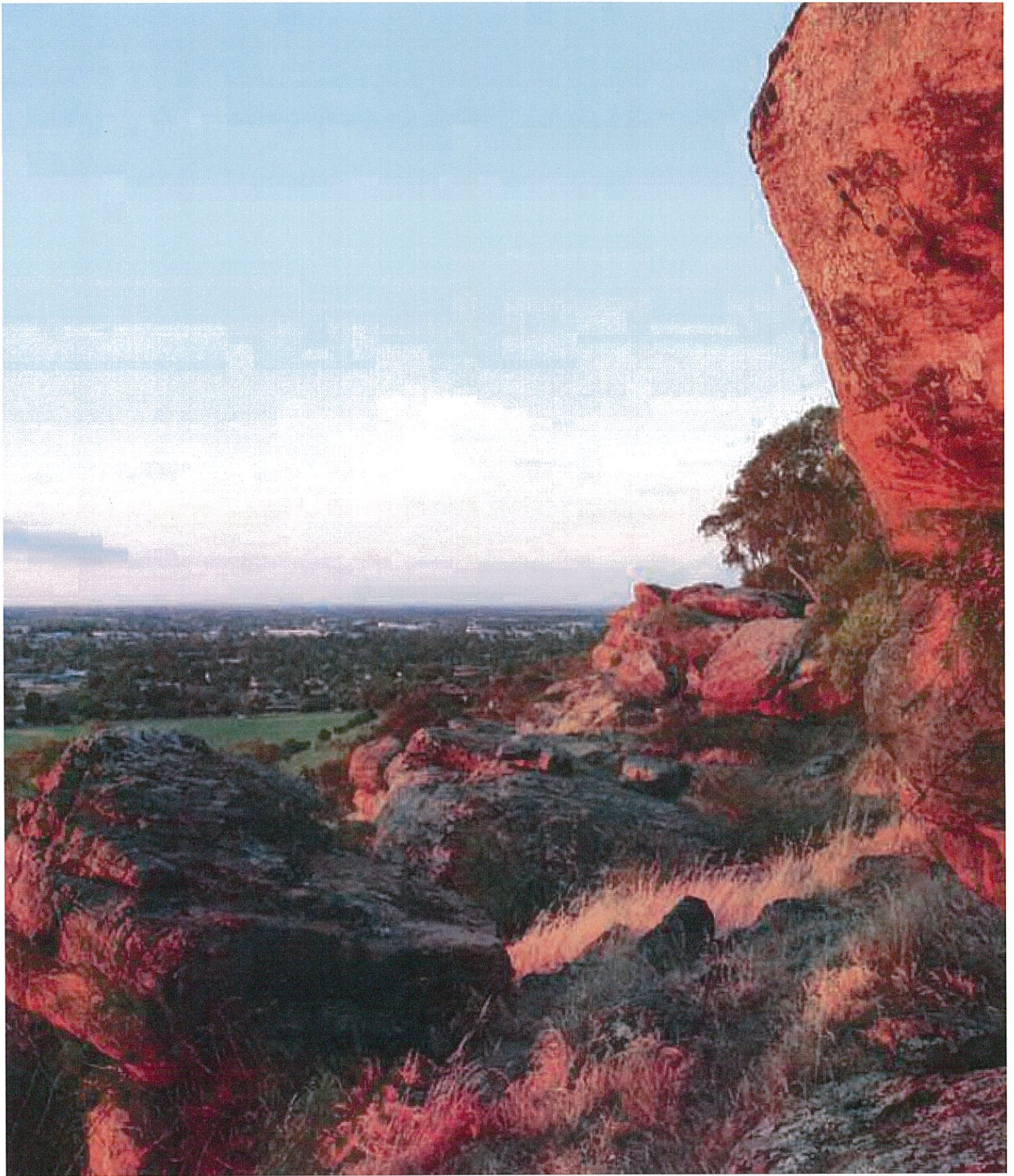
Regional Workforce Stakeholder consultation with thanks to;

NSW Business Chamber, RDA – Riverina, Griffith Business Chamber, RIT – TAFE, Wade High School, Marian Catholic College, Leeton Shire Council, MeGT, APM, Department Education & Training – Griffith, State Training Services, DEEWR, Casella Wines, De Bortoli Wines, Griffith City Council, Country Change, Get Set, Western Riverina Higher Education project, Pinnacle Accounting

NVIC

Regional Workforce Forum – business and participant feedback













Slide 1



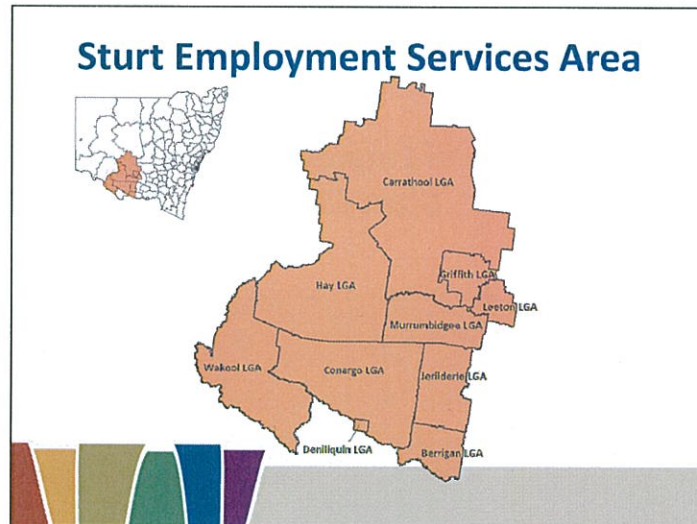
Australian Government  
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

## Survey of Employers in the Sturt ESA



Presenter: Chris Sainsbury  
Director, Regional and Industry Employer Survey  
Section

## Slide 2



The Sturt Employment Service Area (ESA) fits wholly in the Murray-Murrumbidgee labour force region and comprises of 10 local government areas

Berrigan  
Carrathool  
Conargo  
Deniliquin  
Griffith  
Hay  
Jerilderie  
Leeton  
Murrumbidgee  
Wakool



Slide 3

Local Area Profile				
LGA	2011 Population	2006 Population	% Change	Unemployment Rate
Berrigan	8,280	8,320	-0.4%	4.7%
Carrathool	2,670	2,920	-8.6%	3.2%
Conargo	1,590	1,730	-8.6%	4.5%
Deniliquin	7,320	7,730	-5.4%	4.7%
Griffith	25,290	24,920	1.5%	4.5%
Hay	3,100	3,520	-11.9%	3.0%
Jerilderie	1,530	1,710	-10.1%	3.4%
Leeton	11,410	11,790	-3.2%	5.7%
Murrumbidgee	2,340	2,590	-9.8%	3.7%
Wakool	4,080	4,550	-10.4%	3.6%
Sturt ESA	67,600	69,780	-3.1%	4.5%

Source: ABS, Estimated Residential Population, 2011; DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets data, December Quarter 2012.

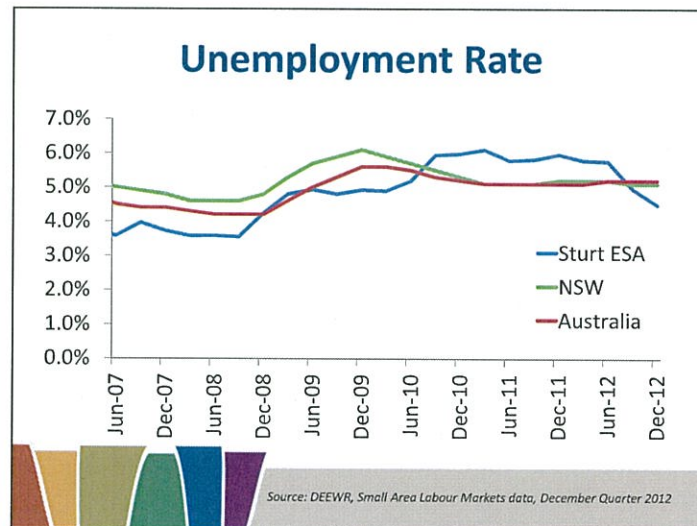
### Unemployment Rate

Source: ABS, Estimated Residential Population, 2011; ABS, Census of Population and Housing; 2011; DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets data, December Quarter 2012

### Total Population

- Inter censuses population growth was only experienced in the Griffith LGA 1.5 per-cent (or 371 people).
- The largest decline in population was experienced in Wakool 10.4% (or 470 people).
- Overall, Sturt has experienced a population decline greater than NSW and Australia.

## Slide 4



### Unemployment Rate

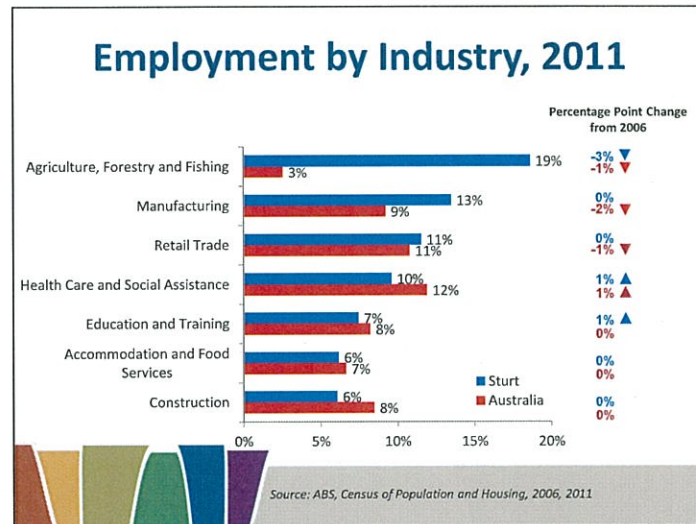
Source: DEEWR, Small Area Labour Markets data, December Quarter 2012

The Sturt ESA unemployment rate was higher than the state and national unemployment rate from late 2010 to mid-2012.

It should be noted that there is some volatility in the Sturt ESA unemployment rate series, and the recent decrease in unemployment rate should be observed with caution.



Slide 5

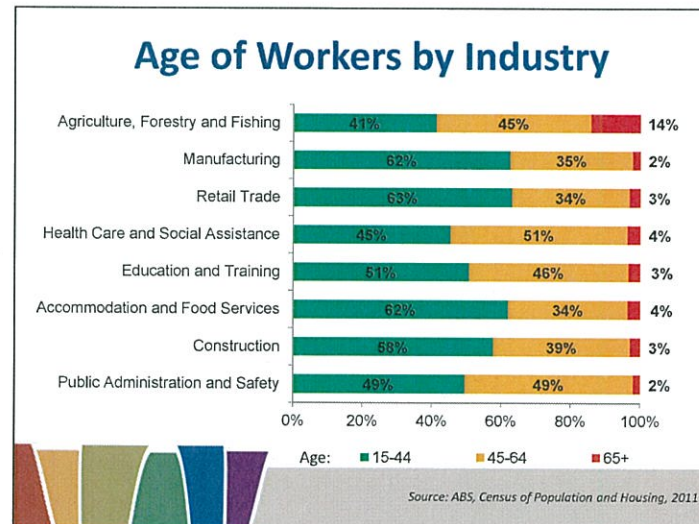


#### Employment by Industry

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the largest employing industry, despite a 3 percentage point decline in the region in the proportion of persons employed in the industry over the last 5 years.
- Farmers and Farm Managers make up 63 per cent of employment in the Agricultural industry in the Sturt ESA, which is not surprising given the amount of family owned farms in the ESA.

## Slide 6



### Industry of employment by age

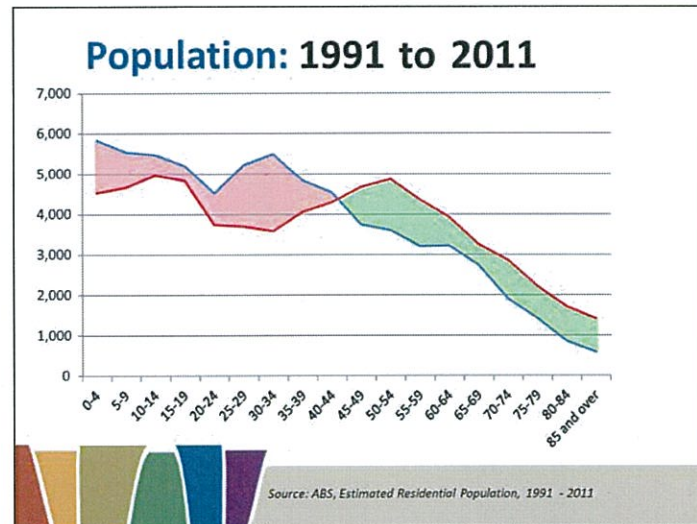
Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011

The age distribution of employed people differs by what industry they work in.

- 14% of people employed in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry division are aged 65 years or over, a much higher proportion than any other industry.
- The Health Care and Social Assistance and Public Administration and Safety industry divisions have a relatively high proportion of the workforce aged 45 years or over.



## Slide 7

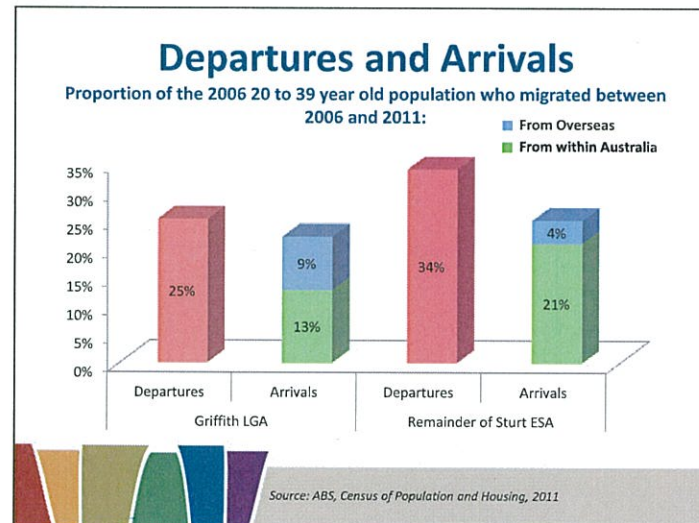


### AGE PROFILE

*Source: ABS, Estimated Residential Population, 1991 - 2011*

This graph shows the distribution of population in the Sturt ESA by 5 year age groups for 1991 (blue line) and 2011 (red line). While the population of the ESA is similar to what it was 20 years ago, there has been a noticeable shift in the age distribution. There was a decrease in population for all age groups under 45 (red shading), and an increase in population for all age groups 45 years and over (green shading).

## Slide 8



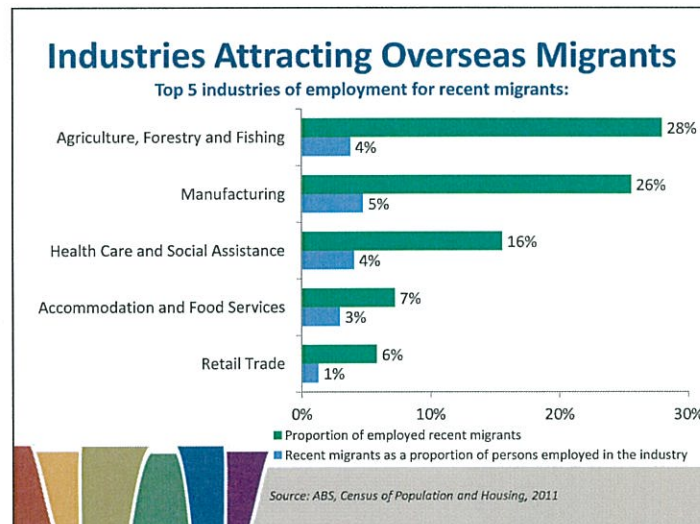
### Departures and Arrivals

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2011

This slide illustrates the level of departures from, and arrivals to, Sturt ESA between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, taken as a proportion of the 2006 population. The graph is restricted to 20-39 year olds, as they are considered prime working age people.



## Slide 9



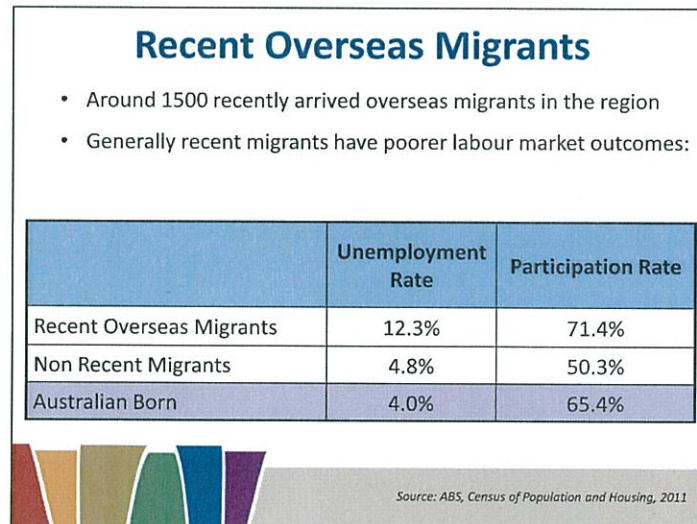
### Industries attracting overseas migrants

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011

Note: This is 2011 Census data, with a recent migrant defined as a person who arrived in Australia between 1 January 2006 and August 2011 (when the Census was taken).

Recent migrants are concentrated in the industries of Agriculture, Forestry and Finishing (28 per cent) and Manufacturing (26 per cent). Despite being concentrated in these industries they make up only a small proportion of those employed in each industry (4 per cent and 5 per cent respectively).

## Slide 10

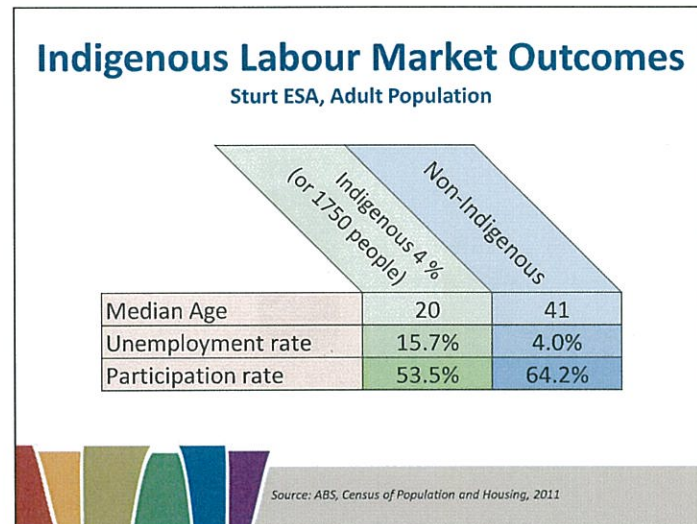


### Recent Overseas Migrants

- Recent migrants are more vulnerable in the labour market, as shown by high unemployment (12.3%) compared with non-recent migrants (4.8%) and people born in Australia (4.0%).



Slide 11



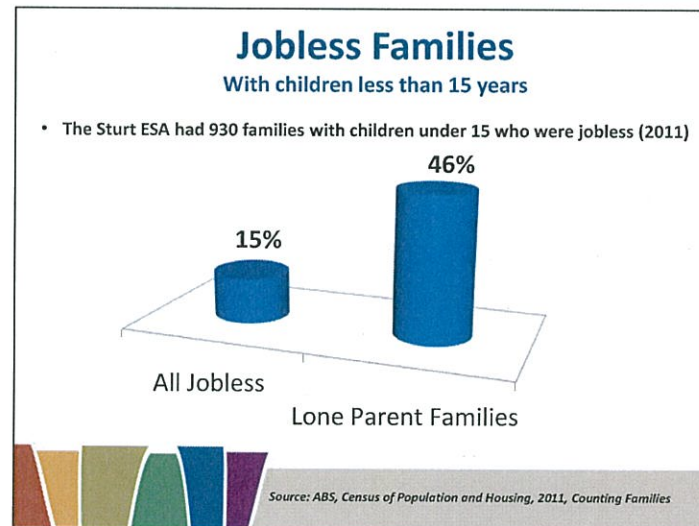
**Indigenous Labour Market Outcomes**

*Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011*

Indigenous populations often face huge barriers to employment.

- This table shows that the Indigenous unemployment rate for Sturt ESA is nearly 4 times higher than the Non-Indigenous rate despite the Indigenous median age being nearly half the Non-Indigenous median age.
- Participation in the labour market is lower for the adult Indigenous population than for the Non-Indigenous population.

## Slide 12

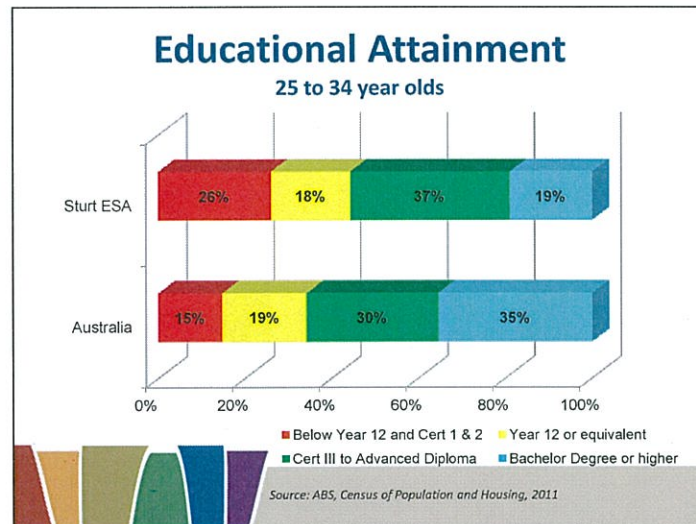


### Jobless Families

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011, Counting Families

In 2011 there were 6,280 families with children under 15 years living in the Sturt ESA.

- 930 (or 15 per cent of all families with children) were jobless.
- 660 (or 46%) lone parent families with children under 15 years were jobless.



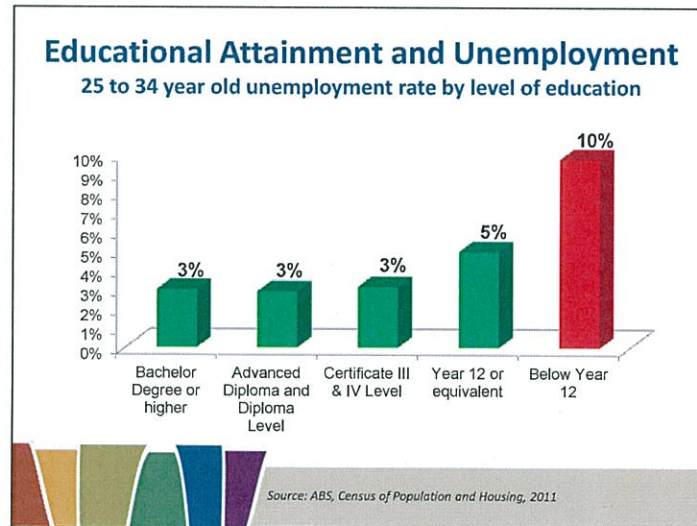
#### Educational Attainment 25 to 34 year olds

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011

- The Sturt ESA has a much larger proportion of people who have not completed year 12 or equivalent (26 per-cent) compared to Australia (15 per-cent), .



Slide 14

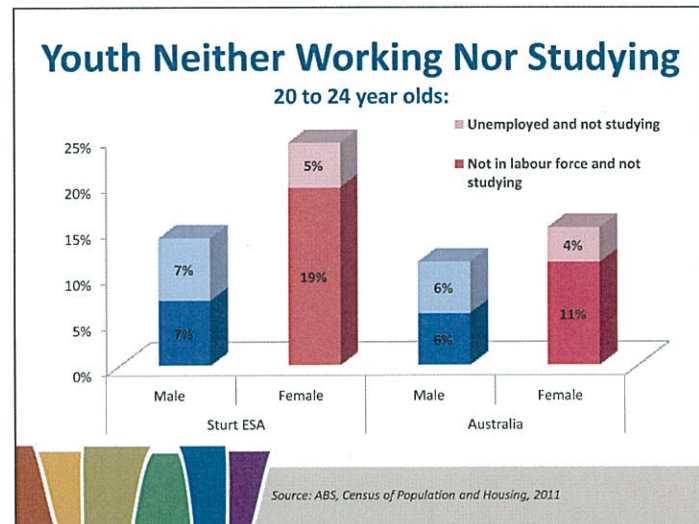


**Proportion of 25-34 year olds neither working nor studying**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011

- There is a strong relationship between educational attainment and employment outcomes.
- People with higher levels of education have a lower unemployment rate.
- Emphasis should be on the importance of continuing education to help job seekers obtain employment and participate in the labour market.

Slide 15



**Proportion of 20-24 year olds neither working nor studying**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011

- 24 per cent of women age between 20-24 years in the Sturt ESA are either not employed or engaged in the labour market and are not studying.



**Recruitment Experiences 12 months preceding the survey**

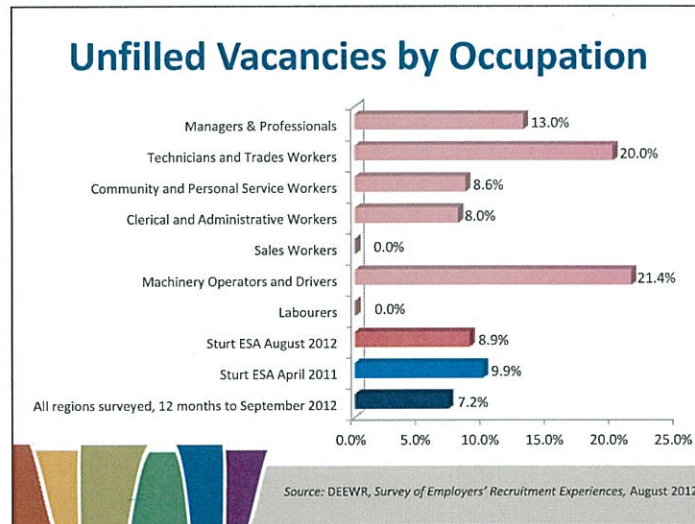
*Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012*

Sturt ESA was previously surveyed in April 2011

- Recruitment activity slightly less compared to 2011
  - 16 vacancies per 100 staff
  - Most recruitment to replace staff who left
- Fewer employers reporting recruitment difficulty or vacancies remaining unfilled than in 2011
  - 5.3 per cent of vacancies remained unfilled
  - 55 per cent of employers reported recruitment difficulty
- Recruitment highest in Health Care & Social Assistance and Accommodation and Food Services



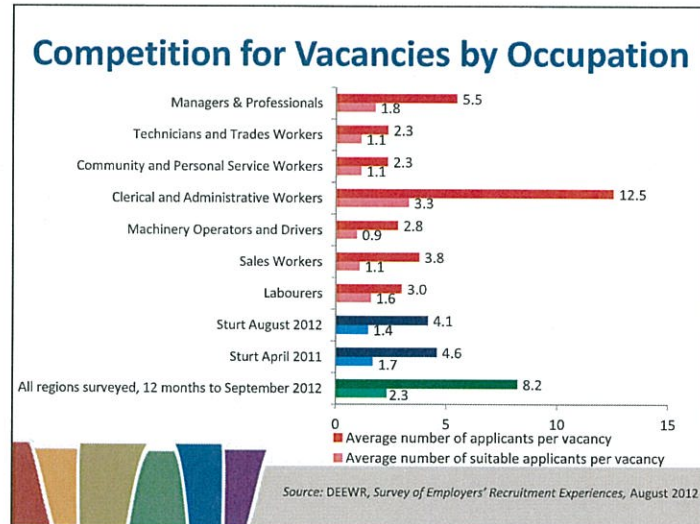
## Slide 17



### Unfilled vacancies by Occupation

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012

- Around one in five vacancies for Technical and Trades workers and Machinery Operators and Drivers went unfilled.
- Overall the level of unfilled vacancies has decreased from the time the region was last surveyed in April 2011.
- There continues to be a higher level of unfilled vacancies in Sturt ESA (8.9 per-cent) than in all regions survey in the 12 months to September 2012 (7.2 per-cent).



### Competition for vacancies by Occupation

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012

Competition for vacancies remained stable between surveys, although there are fewer applicants than for all regions surveyed. Clerical and Administrative Worker positions continue to attract the highest level of competition, while there were very few suitable applicants for Machinery Operator and Driver positions.

### **Reasons applicants unsuitable**

Insufficient experience	43%
Insufficient qualifications or training	33%
Lack of soft skills	21%
Incompatible personality	19%
Poor interview skills / application	17%
Not interested in the job	17%

Slide 19

Occupations Difficult to Fill	
Bachelor Degree or Higher VET Qualifications	
Motor Mechanics*	Panel Beaters
Registered Nurses*	Chefs
Electronic Trades Workers	Early Childhood Teachers
Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers*	
Other Occupations	
Sales Assistants (General)*	Housekeepers
Bar Attendants and Baristas*	Truck Drivers*
Automobile Drivers	

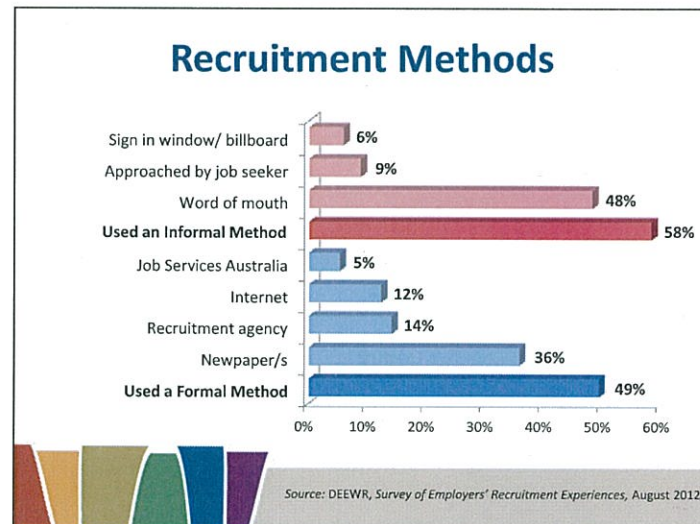
\* These occupations were also reported as difficult to fill in the April 2011 survey

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012

**Occupations Difficult to Fill**

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012

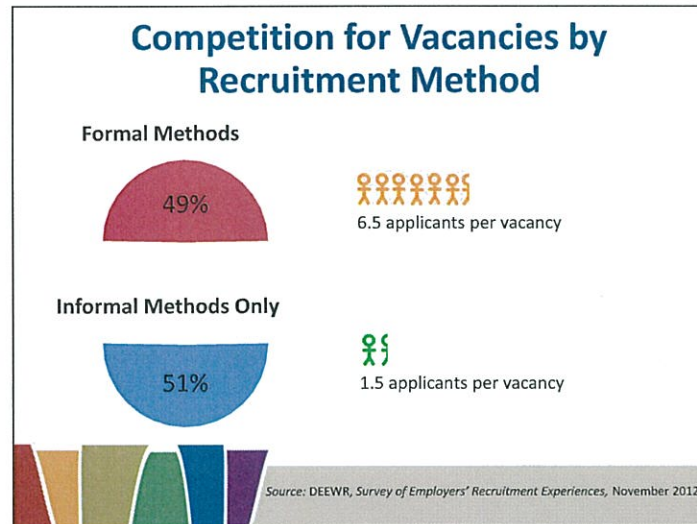




### Recruitment Methods

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012

A high proportion of employers used an informal method (58 per-cent), especially word of mouth (48 per-cent).



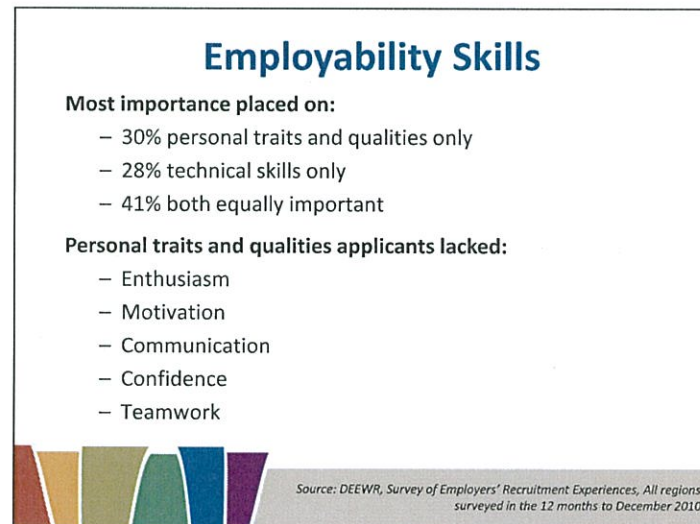
**Most employers recruit formally:**

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, November 2012

Formal methods of recruitment include advertising online or in a newspaper.

- 49 per cent of employers surveyed used formal methods of recruitment, receiving an average of 6.5 applicants per vacancy
- 51 per cent employers used informal methods only (word of mouth, approached by job seeker), receiving an average of just 1.5 applicants per vacancy
- Job seekers can increase their chances of employment by engaging these informal methods used by employers

## Slide 22



### **Basic Employability Skills:**

*Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, All regions surveyed in the 12 months to December 2010*

Most importance placed on:

- 30% personal traits and qualities only
- 28% technical skills only
- 41% both equally important

Personal traits and qualities applicants lacked:

- Enthusiasm
- Motivation
- Communication
- Confidence
- Teamwork



## Slide 23

### Recruitment Expectations

12 months following the survey

- Recruitment activity expected to remain at current levels
  - Strong recruitment anticipated in Health Care and Social Assistance
- Occupations with largest employment growth over last 5 years listed below:

Bachelor Degree or Higher VET Qualifications	
Child Carers	Electricians
Gardeners	Welfare Support Workers

Other Occupations	
Aged and Disabled Carers	Sales Assistants (General)
Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	Other Sales Assistants and Salespersons
Education Aides	Bookkeepers
Cafe Workers	Forklift Drivers

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012, ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006 & 2011

### Recruitment Expectations

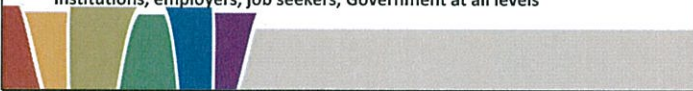
Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, August 2012, ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2006 & 2011

Results from the survey indicate that recruitment is expected to remain at current levels, with the highest anticipated recruitment in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry.

## Slide 24

### Conclusion

- **Labour market activity slightly softer than 2011**
  - Still has relatively low unemployment
- **Population decline and ageing a significant challenge**
  - Retaining a higher proportion of young people
  - Griffith faring better than remainder of ESA
- **There are still disadvantaged groups within the ESA:**
  - Jobless families, Indigenous people, lower educated, long-term unemployed
- **The region offers many ongoing employment opportunities**
  - Low competition for vacancies for many occupations
  - Broad range of occupations difficult to fill
  - Growth industries like Health Care and Social Assistance
  - Many workers in Agriculture moving into retirement
- **Job seekers need to be job ready**
  - Tap into informal recruitment
- **Stakeholders need to work together with RESJC: providers, educational institutions, employers, job seekers, Government at all levels**



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  - Still has relatively low unemployment
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## Slide 25

### Further Information

[www.deewr.gov.au/lmip](http://www.deewr.gov.au/lmip)  
[www.deewr.gov.au/SkillShortages](http://www.deewr.gov.au/SkillShortages)  
[www.deewr.gov.au/regionalreports](http://www.deewr.gov.au/regionalreports)  
[www.deewr.gov.au/australianjobs](http://www.deewr.gov.au/australianjobs)  
[www.skillsinfo.gov.au](http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au)  
[www.joboutlook.gov.au](http://www.joboutlook.gov.au)  
[www.keepaustraliaworking.gov.au](http://www.keepaustraliaworking.gov.au)



### **Further Information**

More information on labour market conditions and other research on small areas can be found on these web sites.

A report on the survey findings for the Sturt Employment Services Area will be placed on the regional reports section of the DEEWR web site.

Thank you.



Slide 26

