

## **INQUIRY INTO SKILLS SHORTAGES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW**

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**Theme:**

**Summary**



# PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

*Serving Our Community*

Our Ref: DW:dw

19 August 2005

Mr Tony Catanzariti  
Chair  
Standing Committee on State Development  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Catanzariti

This letter is in response to a request by the Legislative Council to provide information on skills shortages and their impact across NSW. Information addressing skills shortages in the Penrith Region and steps taken to address them is provided.

Penrith City Council has established an Economic Development Unit to implement Council's economic development program for, inter alia, the following activities:

- undertake research and analysis of economic and business issues and other conditions affecting the development of Penrith and employment in the City
- identify, attract and service new investment and enquiries
- coordinate and manage projects and programs to support, promote and foster local employment, industry development, business innovation, and workforce development
- represent Council in meetings, forums and other discussions as required which promote its economic programs.

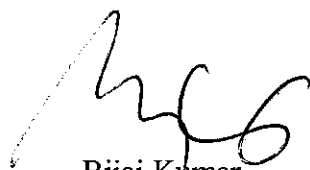
Council has initiated a number of projects that focus specifically on skills development in Penrith and these include:

- a comprehensive local workforce skills audit, which profiles local skills and assesses skills needs of business – please see Attachment 1, which provides an executive summary and action plans for addressing skills shortages.
- establishment of a network of business organisations, schools (careers advisors), education and training institutions and private training providers working together to address the skills and other training needs of industry with particular emphasis on the needs of small businesses in Penrith, known as the PEATS Network – please see Attachment 2, which is a document providing an overview of the goals, objectives and membership of PEATS.

- a submission to the Commonwealth to establish an Australian Technical College in Penrith (the Commonwealth Government has announced as part of a national program that a College will be funded in Western Sydney).

I hope this information is of assistance in your review. Please contact the undersigned on 02 4732 7545 if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bijai Kumar', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Bijai Kumar  
Local Economic Development Program Manager

**The Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit Project**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Executive Summary and  
Action Plans Only**

**Prepared by GROWES  
The University of Western Sydney**

## Executive Summary

## Introduction

The following report presents the findings associated with the Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit project. This research, undertaken on behalf of Penrith City council, aimed to identify the knowledge and skills that employers needed to support their businesses in the Penrith region so that strategies could be developed to deliver these skills via responsive, quality education and training.

Specific enabling objectives associated with this research included the following:

- ❖ To provide insights in to the labour market dynamics of the local Penrith economy as gauged by the structure and nature of jobs being generated in the region and trends in industry and occupational growth patterns.
- ❖ To gather comprehensive data on:
  - Current and projected skills needs of employers in targeted industries.
  - Recruitment difficulties by occupation and industry
  - Causes of skills shortages
  - Extent and nature of skills deficits on an industry basis and the implications of this.
- ❖ To elicit a grassroots perspective on the nature and diversity of training undertaken at workplace as well as stakeholder perceptions about how training systems could be improved to meet industry's needs.
- ❖ To identify international examples of success in promoting regional skills enhancement and assess their potentialities for use in the Penrith region.
- ❖ To assess the capacity and potentialities amongst existing learning institutions within the region to respond to regional skills deficits through application of innovative learning initiatives.

The data from the research has provided a toolkit to inform the development of action plans. These plans have been developed to implementation stage and are attached to the end of this report. They aim to assist specific industries overcome the skill deficits identified by the research as well as to provide cost effective and flexible training solutions to meet businesses needs.

The methodology used to achieve the research aims was eclectic in nature and involved the utilization of secondary and primary sources of data as well as a judicious use of qualitative and quantitative elements. The research was conducted in phases which involved the following elements

- ❖ A review of ABS statistics and a job vacancy survey analysis
- ❖ A review of the literature relating to best practice learning from around the globe
- ❖ A broad survey of Penrith businesses involving 530 respondents
- ❖ Personal interviews with Penrith business and learning stakeholders

The final report is the product of this diverse research as well as intensive consultations and collaborations with Steering committee members. The findings, recommendations and action plans are presented in the following pages

## Key Research Findings

### Skills Shortages/Needs

- ❖ The existence of skills shortages was evident across a wide range of Penrith occupations and industries but were found to be especially arising in the skilled trades classifications with the greatest concentration of problems in the Automotive Trades areas.
- ❖ Automotive trades shortages (especially Motor Mechanics) were evident across a range of industries with most acute problems concentrated in the Motor Vehicle Retail and Vehicle Services sector of the Retail Trades industry. Both ABS statistical data and job vacancy survey data confirm the importance and centrality of this industry to Penrith's regional labour market. It is Penrith's largest employer and both industry divisions make a substantial contribution to the local economy. Approximately 6% of all workplaces in the region are sourced from these industry divisions. Due to the impact of new technologies, the automotive trades industry is increasingly recognized as an industry which must rely upon its employees possessing sophisticated knowledge and new technical competencies in areas such as computerization and electronics. Given these skills needs and the breadth of problems identified by the research, it is likely that these shortages are impacting negatively upon the capacity of this industry to innovate and grow as a whole. The findings clearly suggest that attracting new entrants is necessary to redress the problems of skills shortages arising in this occupation and industry.
- ❖ To a lesser extent other skilled trades shortages were found to be arising amongst Sheet Metal Workers, boilermakers and specialist building construction workers, especially cabinet makers.. These skills were found to be in short supply across a range of industry divisions in the Retail, Manufacturing, Construction and Wholesale industries.
- ❖ The pattern of skilled trade shortages arising in the Penrith economy show strong parallels with both cyclical and long term trends evident in the Australian labour market over two decades where acute skills shortages have arisen in occupations such as metal trades, automotive trades, construction trades and wood & furniture trades.
- ❖ Shortages in these trades areas have overwhelmed other significant skills problems that are arising in other sectors and occupations within the Penrith economy including:
  - Widespread shortages of personnel with specialist sales skills especially evident in Furniture, Housewares and Appliance Retailing but generally spread across a range of divisions in the Retail Trades and Property and Business Services industry
  - A shortage of pharmacy assistants evident in the Medical and Dental Services division and Other Health Services division of the Health and Community Services Sector.
  - An increasing number of shortages in Intermediate Production and Transport grades especially amongst Truckies, Plant Operators and Spray Painters in the Site Preparation Services sector of the construction industry.
  - A shortage of personnel with Professional skills in pharmaceuticals and nursing in the Health and Community Services Sector.
- ❖ The findings also identify a large number of specific skills shortages which are a mix of shortages of workers with workplace specific qualifications, generic and vocational

skills, knowledge and experience. Again supporting the major findings of the research, employers were struggling to find people with qualifications and experience in the automotive trades and to a lesser extent, in the Building Trades area. Again two industries stand out as suffering disproportionately from these shortages – the Motor Vehicle Services sector of the Retail Trade industry and the Building Trades division of the Construction industry.

- ❖ Most employers recognised that the nature of their skills requirements were much broader than technical skills alone. Generic skills were also regarded as important in forging employee success at the workplace and a high value was placed on good communication skills, ability to work in a team and a strong capacity for life long learning. Findings from the research suggest that these competencies could be strengthened within educational systems and that any strategies to enrich Penrith' skills base should aim to develop these skills and foster their entrenchment to the same level as technical skills sets.

### Causes of Shortages

- ❖ Erosion of traditional labour pools caused by insufficient career entry was expressed as the most intractable problem perpetuating shortages across the majority of industries represented in the research but especially evident in those industries relying on skilled trades. These difficulties were again concentrated in automotive trades area.
- ❖ Local labour shortages were also reported as arising in the professional grades due to perceived problems of image, limited career opportunity and remoteness associated with the Penrith region.
- ❖ The findings suggest that attention needs to be directed towards strategies which will expand labour pools available to industries/occupations suffering from labour shortages. An emphasis should be placed upon overcoming labour shortages in the automotive trades areas through judicious marketing of career opportunities. Attention should also be given to strategies which will increase professional labour pools available to Penrith industries by promoting the region as a positive place for professionals to work in.
- ❖ Poor career advice was also mentioned as perpetuating many shortages and informants generally argued that this should be better carpented to meet skills needs of businesses. Strategies to promote articulation and greater communication between job search bodies, training institutions, employers and career intermediaries was seen as a necessary step in this process. Strategies such as these could be used in conjunction with more generalized marketing campaigns which aim to update and improve the image of some industrial sectors and occupations.
- ❖ Low uptake of training generally in the region was also stressed as a common underlying factor generating skills shortages. Increasing the quality and range of training information available to businesses and individuals was seen as an important strategy stimulating the demand for training.

### Training

- ❖ Respondents demonstrated a fairly solid disposition towards training and most employers reported that they had sponsored their employees in some form of over the last year. A heavy reliance on informal on the job training was noted.
- ❖ Increased levels of investment in training were constrained by what employers saw as their inability to sponsor time off work and to a lesser extent a perception amongst many businesses that the cost of training (both conventional and customized) was prohibitive.



- ❖ Diseconomies of scale associated with meeting diverse training needs was also reported throughout the research as being problematic for educational providers in the region.
- ❖ Despite advances made in recent years to improve the responsiveness of the Australian educational system, training delivery methods used by external providers were generally regarded as too inflexible and the cost of training packages was perceived as beyond the reach of many employers. The findings suggest that strategies which will build the capacity of Penrith employers to offer continuing training to their employees in a flexible and cost effective manner are likely to be well received in the region
- ❖ To a lesser extent, many employers also felt that educational provision could be improved by authorities acting to increase the relevance by:
  - ❖ providing a much broader range of training packages
  - ❖ better systems of needs analysis
  - ❖ provision of more targeted training programs which would expose students to greater work experience components.

#### **Capacity of Penrith Learning Institutions to respond to skills needs of Penrith businesses.**

The findings relevant to this phase of the research were benchmarked against the best practice learning initiatives investigated in the early phases of the project. The results clearly indicate that:

- ❖ Systems which will facilitate more effective industry articulation of needs to learning providers require strengthening in the Penrith area and a much greater flexibility and speed in educational response is needed. The results uncovered systemic weaknesses in the capacity of many educational providers to adjust curricula in line with businesses needs in a timely manner. Inertia was especially noted with respect to accredited organizations which were constrained by lengthy accreditation processes and central office control. Delivery processes utilized by providers were largely modelled on traditional classroom methods and required much greater adaptability to workforce needs through technology driven means. The findings indicated an obvious lack of awareness amongst learning providers of employers' requirements for flexible delivery.
- ❖ Most learning providers identified cost of training as the most significant barrier to their clients. The findings again support the view that training strategies which aim to promote greater cost effectiveness and delivery flexibility would be well placed within Penrith
- ❖ The findings also suggested that industry skills needs could be better met by more effective dissemination methods to promote regional training options. Aspects of this include:
  - Strengthening local training distribution networks through multiple sites (community, workplace and learning institution) as well as through virtual mediums.
  - More systematic processes which support the flow of information between businesses and learning institutions themselves.
  - Greater connectivity and co-operation between training providers so that more flexible and holistic responses can be developed to meet diverse learning needs. This would require learning organizations working more collaboratively with one another and, if appropriate, brokering clients into

the most suitable course(s) so that individual needs could be met in a more optimum manner. "Most suitable" programs of study may offer to learners a capacity to mix and match modules/subjects from a range of different providers.

- In order to facilitate the above, a proper central register of VET and post secondary training or education going on in the Penrith area should be developed. This website could be hosted by Council and would be accessible to residents and other learning providers in the region.
  - Approaches such as these would hold marketing advantages especially for small trainers who were identified by the research as being poorly positioned to leverage existing facilitates to promote their programs in a cost effective manner.
  - The approach also holds potential to overcome the "islands of knowledge" syndrome. This situation defines contemporary learning provision where knowledge which can only be drawn from isolated sources often in direct competition with one another. More collaborative and brokering approaches amongst learning institutions themselves could potentially overcome this barrier and result in the promotion of the more integrated, multi skilled knowledge that workers require today.
- ❖ Collaborative learning network building between organizations and learning institutions has worked well both in Australia and overseas in facilitating many of the above best practice features. The research found that such approaches have proved successful in meeting the needs of businesses in situations where there is a wide diversity of need, coupled with a lack of sufficient numbers to make conventional courses viable. As well as providing compelling cost and flexibility benefits, networks, facilitated by linkers, have been reported to deliver the following positive outcomes.
- More proactive needs analysis and greater capacity to generate awareness of different learning and training needs of target population.
  - Better planning of educational response to these needs.
  - Increased marketing opportunities and better conduits for learners so that they can know how and when to make contact.
  - Opportunities to overcome training inertia in non-developmentally ready businesses by connecting them to organisations which value training.
- ❖ Best practice evidence suggests that networking approaches are likely to "fit" the Penrith landscape and could potentially offer solutions to many of the problems identified by the research. Such an approach is likely to be well received within the region as the majority of employers and learning institution representatives in fact expressed a firm interest in involvement in local community networks

If adopted in Penrith, this type of program could be facilitated by an executive officer working inside key business support organizations in the region such as the Chamber of Commerce, Penrith City Council or PVEDC. The role of the Executive Officer would be to provide ongoing skills development support to businesses and encourage closer links between key stakeholders so that more holistic responses to meet the region's diverse learning needs can be developed. Such an arrangement is likely to be a relatively cost effective option if leveraged off existing resources embedded within these support organisations.

## Recommended Action Plans

The findings emanating from the research phases of this project have given rise to important conclusions, challenges and policy recommendations which aim to:

- Overcome acute skills shortages in affected industries and occupations by promoting these occupations as viable careers for people living and working in the region.
- Attract professional talent to the region by judicious marketing strategies which positively profile Penrith as attractive to this type of worker
- Identify strategic needs and priorities of businesses in the region on a proactive and ongoing basis so that the likelihood of skills gaps and shortages can be reduced and training relevancy increased.
- Increase the uptake of continuing skills development by supporting the delivery of relevant, flexible, accessible and cost effective training within the region..
- Stimulate demand for and participation in training in the region by supporting the development and communication of marketing approaches which provide easily assessable and transparent information on training opportunities in the region.

In line with the original research proposal, these recommendations have been distilled into two Action plans attached to the end of this report. These plans are:

1. The Penrith Automotive Learning Strategy (PALS) which aims to overcome skills shortages arising the in the automotive trades area and
2. The Penrith Linking and Networking Strategy (PLANS) which aims to improve networking within the region and support the uptake of quality, cost effective and flexible skills development amongst Penrith businesses.

## Action Plans

# **Penrith Linking and Networking Strategy (PLANS)**

## **Proposed Action Plan**

### **Including Action Steps and Strategic Marketing/Communication Actions**

**February 2004**

## PENRITH LINKING AND NETWORKING STRATEGY (PLANS) ACTION PLAN PROPOSAL

This proposal is based on the identified need to improve networking within the Penrith Region in such a way as to enhance the survivability and long term development of local businesses. This will be achieved by assisting businesses to adopt systematic processes to skills development, promoting greater knowledge connectivity between stakeholders and encouraging the delivery of relevant, flexible and cost effective training in the region.

Collaborative learning network building between organizations and learning institutions worked well both in Australia and overseas. Research conducted as part of the Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit Project found that such approaches have proved successful in meeting the skills needs of businesses in situations where there is a wide diversity of need, a lack of sufficient numbers to make conventional courses viable and where systems for facilitating industry articulation of skills needs to learning stakeholders require strengthening.

Best practice evidence suggests that such networking approaches are likely to "fit" the Penrith landscape and could potentially offer solutions to many of the barriers identified in the research as curtailing skills development capacity, effectiveness and inclusiveness in the region as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Barriers to Skills Development and How Delivery and Community inclusiveness Could be improved.**

Item	Telesurvey Group Response	Focus Group Response	Learning Institution Response
<b>Perceived Barriers to Skills Development</b>			
Too much time off the Job	✓	✓	
Cost	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Information re training options			✓
<b>How Skills Development Could be Improved</b>			
More Information on training options	✓	✓	✓
Greater Flexibility of Delivery	✓	✓	
More Relevant to Needs	✓	✓	
More Cost Effective	✓	✓	✓
<b>How to Achieve Better Links with the Community to Promote Skills Development</b>			
Joint Publicity			✓
Better Networking			✓
Preparedness to become involved in community learning networks NB Majority response	✓	✓	✓

**KEY:**

	Item identified as of high importance to the respondents
	Item identified as of high importance to the respondents – only asked of Learning Institutions
✓	Item addressed by the PLANS Proposal

Table based on findings from Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit project.

Whilst it is true that the Region is well served by a number of Business Support Organisations (BSO's) and a range of learning institutions which do an excellent job in promoting linkages between stakeholders, the research clearly found that the existing linkages in the region could be strengthened by more systematic networking processes. A clear majority of participants in the research (including both businesses and learning institutions) also welcomed the idea of becoming involved in learning networks. This proposal therefore, is not an effort to replace any of the BSO's or the marketing arm of learning institutions. Rather it aims to complement these services by providing a short term resource to act as a catalyst to bring disparate needs and resources together so that quality skills development can be delivered in the region in line with business needs.

It is proposed that the Project be guided and monitored by a Steering Committee comprised of key stakeholders and specialists who can assist in the mobilisation of support for the project and provide clear and precise input regarding the direction that project activities should take in line with the needs of their constituents. The Steering Committee should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- ❖ Penrith City Council
- ❖ Business support organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the PVEDC
- ❖ Key business leaders and representatives of the potential user groups.
- ❖ Key skills development providers that are located within the region. Care should be taken not to limit membership in this area to the big two ie UWS and TAFE
- ❖ Relevant government representatives from DEST, DET and the Department of State and Regional Development

The Steering Committee must also address the critical issues of:

- ❖ Location of the Executive Officer
  - The choice of location will have an impact on the budget in many areas. For example, if the Executive Officer is co-located with an existing organization the costs for accommodation, computing and communications infrastructure as well as administrative support will be considerably reduced.
  - The selection of a co-located arrangement may however, make it difficult to gain full cooperation across the region. For example, co-locating with the Chamber may not sit well with the PVEDC or co-locating with a private RTO may not please the TAFE etc.
  - The advantages of co-locating should outweigh the problems associated if the matter is handled well and consensus achieved with the key stakeholders
- ❖ Accountability
  - The Steering Committee will need to determine the nominal employer of the Executive Officer to ensure that management, accounting and legal requirements are met. The accountability requirements may be more stringent if federal funding is obtained. In the case of federal funding the use of a government body to administer the funds may be an advantage. This may lead to a decision to make PCC the nominal employer and funds administrator.

The work of the Project will be carried out by an Executive Officer, recruited by competitive selection for employment for a maximum period of two years. The aim of the Executive Officer is ***to be so effective at creating a relevant and vibrant network within the Region that there will no longer be a need for such a position at the expiration of the Project.***

The role of the Executive Officer will be to implement the Action Plan as directed by the Steering Committee. Specifically, the incumbent will work directly with key stakeholders to:

- ❖ Identify critical skills needs for businesses growth and development and assist businesses in adopting planned approaches to meeting these needs as part of their overall business growth strategy

- ❖ Investigate and source a skills development response which meets business requirements for relevance, flexibility and economy. This might require sourcing solutions from a range of learning providers, working with learning institutions to tailor programs to meet individual needs, connecting businesses with similar developmental needs together so that viable and cost effective groups can be established.
- ❖ Provide ongoing support to the businesses by monitoring the outcome of skills development and assessing the benefits.
- ❖ Continuously improve learning delivery in response to customer feedback and changed circumstances.
- ❖ Develop inclusive partnerships amongst businesses to support the delivery of cost effective and flexible skills development. This will include promoting connections between businesses with a common skills development need so that viable cohorts for learning can be assembled and investigating strategies to reduce costs through mentoring and coaching and sharing the costs associated with skills development.
- ❖ Support closer links between local training providers so that more holistic responses to meet the region's diverse learning needs can be developed. This may include investigating co operative marketing strategies, innovative ways of sharing clients as well as supporting the dissemination of best practice learning throughout the region by encouraging regular exchange of information.
- ❖ Facilitate the development of systematic processes that support the flow of communication and information between business and learning organizations so that these become mature stand alone relationships by the end of the project.
- ❖ Support the development and communication of marketing approaches which provide easily assessable and transparent information on training opportunities in the region.
- ❖ Raise the profile of skills development as a holistic businesses development tool through targeted approaches which market the value of training to developmentally immature organisations.



Strategic Objective: Support the Delivery of Relevant, Flexible and Cost Effective Skills Development to Businesses in the Region					
Action Plan 2 – Promote the amount and quality of skills development programmes offered in the region and build the capacity of businesses to engage in skills development which meets their needs, through networking approaches. i					
Action Steps		Strategic Marketing Actions			
		Promotional Technique	Promotional Resources Needed	Target Market	Who Responsible
<b>Set Up</b>					
1. Prepare funding Plan and Application if necessary					
		Well developed application based on findings of the Penrith Workforce Skills Audit (PWSA) project and proposal which clearly identifies aims and outcomes of the PLANS project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Proposal/Action Plan</li> <li>❖ Copy of PWSA research</li> </ul>	Potential funding bodies	PCC
2. Appoint Steering Committee					
		Personal approach to explain the aims of the Project and the key role that the Steering Committee will play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Copy of PWSA research</li> <li>❖ Action Plan</li> </ul>	Potential members ❖ Penrith City Council ❖ Business support organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the PVEDC ❖ Key business leaders and representatives of the potential user groups. These people could be selected	PCC

			<p>with the assistance of the business support organizations, PCC officers or with the assistance of the list of people who expressed an interest in being involved in networks from the Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit project.</p> <p>❖ Key skills development providers that are located within the region. Care should be taken not to limit membership in this area to the big two – UWS and TAFE</p> <p>❖ Relevant government representatives from DEST, DET, and Department of State and Regional Development</p>
3. Obtain funding approval	Possible need for formal	❖ Electronic	Potential funding PCC

	presentations as part of the evaluation and approval process	presentation	bodies	
4. Making administrative decisions regarding the operation of the Project with particular emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Selecting the nominal employer</li> <li>❖ Making suitable Workers Compensation and insurance decisions</li> <li>❖ Formalising the accounting arrangements</li> <li>❖ Identifying lines of control for management purposes</li> </ul>	N/A	❖ N/A	N/A	Steering Committee
5. Recruit the Executive Officer	Advertise the position in local, regional press and major daily papers serving the Sydney area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Suitable advertisement</li> <li>❖ Information package</li> </ul>	Potential applicants NB: The intention is to recruit a skilled applicant who can be effective from the beginning of the Project. The life cycle of the Project does not permit time for training an inexperienced Executive Officer	Steering Committee
6. Market Project through high profile Project Launch and targeted marketing campaign	A well publicised public launch, attended by the mayor, key community and business leaders as well as potential customers and providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Press release</li> <li>❖ Fliers</li> <li>❖ Formal invitations</li> <li>❖ Electronic presentation</li> </ul>	Community generally, business managers/owners, as well as organizations that provide services to business with particular emphasis on learning organizations, peak body representatives and organizations that assist business development	Executive Officer

Action Steps	Strategic Marketing Actions			
	Promotional Technique	Promotional Resources Needed	Target Market	Who Responsible
<p>Operations</p> <p>7. Gain commitment to Project aims and functions amongst key stakeholders</p>	<p>Meetings, presentations, direct face to face approaches as well as electronic and hard copy publicity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Electronic presentation</li> <li>❖ Document outlining Project aims and methods as well as potential advantages for each participant – able to be sent in hard copy and electronically</li> <li>❖ Consider recognition for all participants eg mayoral awards, free publicity in project newsletter.</li> <li>❖ Project newsletter outlining aims, progress, successes and current issues regarding development.</li> </ul>	<p>Business managers and owners, learning organizations, peak body representatives and organizations that assist business development. Government representatives with a particular interest should also be invited eg DEST, DET, and Department of State and Regional Development</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>

<p><b>8. Diagnose Skills Development Needs</b></p> <p>Identify those business who could benefit from the Project and who are prepared to participate. As a starting point consideration should be given to utilising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ List of people who expressed an interest in being involved in learning networks as identified by the Penrith Local Workforce Skills Audit project</li> <li>❖ Existing member lists of organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce etc</li> </ul> <p>Identify skills development needs of existing businesses as part of their overall strategic approach to developing their business. (Investigate the existence of checklist based tools to help employers identify their needs)</p> <p>Work with emerging industries and those businesses with new skills needs to access appropriate sources of services</p>	<p>Offer service to businesses through a range of forums, direct visitations and electronic mailouts. If appropriate, assist businesses in the preparation of a skills development plan.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Businesses</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>
<p>Utilise skills needs data collected as part of the PLWSA project, electronic checklists and direct visits</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Identify businesses which fit within this category and specifically target them for direct approach or through any peak body to which they belong</p>	<p>Businesses</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>
<p>Investigate the range of regional training options available to meet identified needs and source a Suitable Training Response</p>	<p>Build on the commitment developed and fostered during the introduction of the project through both individual and group</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Emerging industries and businesses facing radical change</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>
<p>Liaise with all regional training providers to gather information about offerings. Develop a database of participating learning organizations detailing the skills development courses that they offer including specific content and</p>	<p>Regional training providers</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>	

<p>methods of delivery. (Data base to be used by executive officer as a guiding resource to locate suitable training response. It will also form the basis of electronic information on regional training opportunities to be made available to the general public. See item 15 below.)</p> <p>Identify suitable training responses which meet the needs of businesses. Broker the business into an arrangement with the most appropriate learning institution or skills development opportunity</p>	<p>discussions with interested training providers</p> <p>Work closely with both the client businesses and the training providers to make connections</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>
<p>10. Monitor skills outcomes and assess the benefits to business</p> <p>Where appropriate, evaluate return on training investment as well as satisfaction with content, delivery and cost of training</p>	<p>Ongoing contact with clients both face to face and electronically. Supported by focus group sessions where training has been provided to multiple employers through networked groups.</p> <p>(This feedback would be formalised in an end-of-project Customer Satisfaction Survey. Refer Pt 16)</p>	<p>❖ Customer feedback checklist</p>	<p>Business owners and managers</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p>

<p>11. Assist in the improvement of skills delivery</p> <p>Transmit findings in 10 above to learning institutions and work with them to adjust their methods and offerings nimbly in line with required client outcomes.</p> <p>Work generally with learning organizations to promote understanding of culture and skills development needs of Penrith's businesses</p>	<p>Individual and group feedback sessions with participating learning organizations</p> <p>Facilitate meetings between the learning organizations and key businesses stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Feedback forms</li> <li>❖ Evaluation reports</li> <li>❖ Completed needs analysis and findings of the Penrith Skills Audit project</li> </ul>	<p>Learning organizations</p> <p>Learning organizations and businesses</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p> <p>Executive Officer</p>
<p>12. Develop inclusive partnerships amongst businesses to support the delivery of cost effective and flexible training</p> <p>Promote connections between businesses with a common skills development need to assemble viable cohorts for learning. Investigate strategies to reduce costs through mentoring and coaching, sharing cost of training venues and trainer.</p> <p>Connect organizations which value training to those less developmentally ready organizations.</p>	<p>Identify common needs through individual analysis undertaken in Pt 8. Also utilise data on skills needs of employers found as part of the PWSA project to find commonality in skills needs</p> <p>Work with existing businesses and peak body groups to identify employers in the region which are active in and value learning. Approach these businesses to assist with marketing the value of learning to other businesses. Use mentoring</p>	<p>Not applicable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Articles in the project newsletter highlighting best practice learning outcomes for business bottom line.</li> </ul>	<p>Business owners and managers</p> <p>Business owners and managers, particularly those that do not value training highly</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p> <p>Executive Officer</p>

	and coaching to develop "support cells" based on common skills need, common location or even common business.				
13. Establish closer links between learning institutions to improve delivery of learning to the region.  Investigate possibility of joint publicity campaigns as a visible and cost effective means of disseminating their combined messages to the maximum number of potential business users within the region	Build on the commitment developed and fostered during the introduction of the project through both individual and group discussions with training providers	❖ Joint web page linked to the database mentioned in 9 above and the electronic interface mentioned in 15 below	Learning organizations	Executive Officer	
Investigate strategies for the sharing of clients where no one provider can supply the services required. Encourage acceptance of the view that collaborative brokering of clients is preferable to losing the clients to providers outside the region	As above		Learning organizations	Executive Officer	
Investigate ways of assisting individuals to record their achievements and promote transferability eg skills passports.	As above plus the involvement of key employers and an overarching body to provide ongoing impetus for such a scheme eg DEST or DET	❖ Possible "Penrith Passport"	Learning organizations, employers and PCC	Executive Officer	



Encourage best practice learning techniques across the region through regular forums and articles in the newsletter.	Work with learning institutions to leverage existing forums where possible eg have learning institutions report to regular Chamber of Commerce meetings on their best practice activities. Utilise the PLANS newsletter to disseminate this information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Various presentations and handouts</li> <li>❖ Articles in project newsletter.</li> </ul>	Learning organizations and businesses.	Executive Officer
<p>14. Encourage greater interface between employers and learning providers to facilitate more effective industry articulation of needs to providers and their input into the learning response.</p> <p>Encourage the transition of all brokered relationships between business and learning organizations into mature stand alone business relationships by end of project</p> <p>Develop and/or source resources to assist businesses to identify their own training needs and in obtaining responsive training.</p>	<p>Participate with all parties to develop mature relationships through networking activities outlined in this proposal..</p> <p>Use successful examples disseminated in PLANS newsletter to encourage others to take the same approach</p> <p>Investigate skills analysis checklists which can be self administered by businesses and develop the highly visible web page in Pt 15 below so that businesses can both determine autonomously their skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Utilise the newsletter to publicise success stories</li> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>All parties</p> <p>Business owners and managers</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p> <p>Executive Officer</p>

	needs and easily source a suitable skills development opportunity without the assistance of a broker			
15. Promote greater awareness of the range of regional training options amongst all community stakeholders by:	<p>Build on relationships developed at 9 and 13 regarding database development and joint publicity campaigns.</p> <p>Develop an electronic interface that permits the marketing of available products and services to business and which is easily accessible by and user friendly for businesses. Develop this facility to the point that it becomes a one stop shop providing information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Training in the region</li> <li>o Job opportunities in region</li> <li>o Job vacancies</li> <li>o Mentoring facilities</li> <li>o Guidance and counselling</li> </ul> <p>Act as an effective conduit for other forms of advertising material regarding training offerings, VET displays, career advisory publications, industry brochures,. Work with key stakeholders to promote these through multiple sites including the workplace and the community.</p> <p>Leverage monthly newsletter as in 7 above to maximise publicity effort and achieve greater awareness</p>	❖ Electronic web based interface	All stakeholders	Executive Officer
	Provide ongoing facility as honest broker in this regard	PLANS Newsletter and website	All stakeholders	Executive Officer
	Utilise monthly newsletter	Not applicable	All stakeholders	Executive Officer

Action Steps	Strategic Marketing Actions			
	Promotional Technique	Promotional Resources Needed	Target Market	Who Responsible
<b>Evaluation</b>				
16. Assess Project Outcomes Conduct customer survey	Direct mail out to all businesses and organizations that have used the services of the Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Cover letter</li> <li>❖ Easy to use customer survey form with return mail/fax/email option suitable for statistical and qualitative analysis</li> </ul>	All business that have used or could have used the service, learning institutions and Steering Committee	Executive Officer
17. Prepare Project report for dissemination.	To be prepared in a format suitable for distribution to all key stakeholders		All key stakeholders, subject to Steering Committee agreement	Executive Officer and Steering Committee
18. Project Close Out				Executive Officer, Steering Committee and Nominal Employer

**Proposed Action Plan**

**Penrith Automotive Learning Strategy  
(PALS)**

**Including Action Steps and Strategic  
Marketing/Communication Actions**

**For**

**Overcoming Skills Shortages in the Automotive  
Trades**

**January 2004**

**Strategic Objective No: 1** – To overcome skills shortages in automotive trade occupations by promoting these as viable career aspirations for people living and working in the region.

**Action Plan 1** – Targeted marketing campaign to promote Motor Vehicle Retail industry and the Automotive Trades occupation as a positive career choice for school leavers and other career aspirants

Action Steps		Strategic Marketing Actions			
Details	SMA No	Promotional Techniques	Promotional Resources Needed	Target Market	Timeframe
Mobile key industry and support services involvement at the local level. This action to include the identification of Industry Champions as well as the selection and forming of a project Steering Committee and the negotiating of roles and responsibilities.	1	(a) Direct approaches to key employers in the Motor Trades industry in Penrith  (b) Direct and written approach to peak industry bodies eg MTA and other suitable service or support bodies eg Chamber of Commerce, PVEDC, TAFE or Group Trainers	A well developed presentation that focuses on the research findings and the PALS outcomes for the industry	Key employers in the Motor Trades industry in Penrith with some emphasis on those who showed an interest in being involved in focus groups during telesurvey interviews  Suitable peak industry and support bodies as well as vocational training and education bodies	1 month before launch  1 month before launch
Mobilise support amongst the careers advice groups serving the region and increase their knowledge of the industry as a whole including skills, training and career opportunities	2	(a) Presentations to local Careers Advisers by Industry Champions	A professional visual presentation that can be utilised at DET Careers Advisers regional meetings. Other opportunities will need to be sourced for non DET Advisers	Careers Advisers and related professionals	3 months after launch

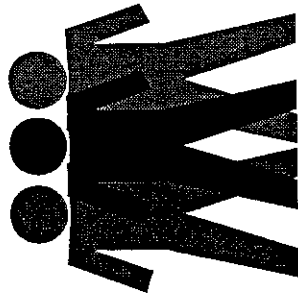
			including private schools, Job Network members, TAFE and university Careers Advisers		2 months after launch
			A professional brochure that can be used by Careers Advisers to demonstrate job opportunities/conditions within the Motor Trades Industry in Penrith		Careers Advisers and young people who could potentially select a motor trade as a future career
			A high quality press release with suitable and high quality photographs		Initially the press community and through them the general community at large
			Targeted invitation list to include all Motor Trades employers in the region, all Careers advisers and intermediaries.		Business, government and education representatives
			Handouts of Project aims, objectives and timeline		Initially the press
			A high quality press		2 days after launch
			(a) Press release and visuals to local and regional press aimed at outlining the current situation as well as increasing knowledge about the industry its new skill needs and the career opportunities that it represents		2 weeks before launch
			(a) High profile Project launch with invitees to include key business, education, government and community leaders.		Launch
			(c) Press release and		
			3		
			Increase awareness amongst the general community of the industry and the career/lifestyle opportunities that it affords		

		visuals to local and regional press reporting on the success of the Project Launch	release with suitable and high quality photographs	community and through them the general community at large	5 months after launch
		(d) High visibility presence of Industry Champions at education or vocational "open days", regional skills expos and visitations to schools by invitation	Brochure mentioned in 2 above plus the involvement of an Industry Champion	Young people who could potentially select a motor trade as a future career	5 months after launch
		(e) Leveraging special events in the region or nearby such as Eastern Creek Race meetings again achieved by the presence of an Industry Champion at a vocational "stand"	Brochure mentioned in 2 above plus the involvement of an Industry Champion	Young people who could potentially select a motor trade as a future career	5 months after launch
		(f) Vocational displays set up in Motor Trade businesses within the Region	Brochure mentioned in 2 above	Young people and the parents of young people.	6 months after launch
		(g) A series of student "site visits" to suitable Motor Trade businesses within the region in order to increase their understanding of the industry and its career opportunities	Brochure mentioned in 2 above plus the involvement of suitable enthusiastic employers	Young people who could potentially select a motor trade as a future career	6 months after launch

Mobilise the support and participation of the industry generally in the project particularly in relation to showcasing the industry (eg site visits, vocational displays and provision of Industry Champions)	4	(a) Presentations to a meeting of Motor Trade employers within the region with the aim of developing a firm commitment to the project and its aims. As part of this meeting, to develop a strategy for the "site visits" mentioned in 3 above	A well developed presentation that focuses on the many benefits and outcomes for industry	All employers in the Motor Trades industry in Penrith	3 months after launch
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## Drive the Project

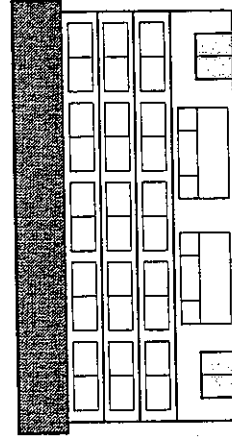


Committee

Create a Steering Committee  
 made up of Local District  
 Finance Officers, a  
 representative of the State  
 Education Agency,  
 District Training Association,  
 Trade Unions, and  
 Community Partnership  
 Councils and publish list of  
 members.

### Strategic Marketing Action 1

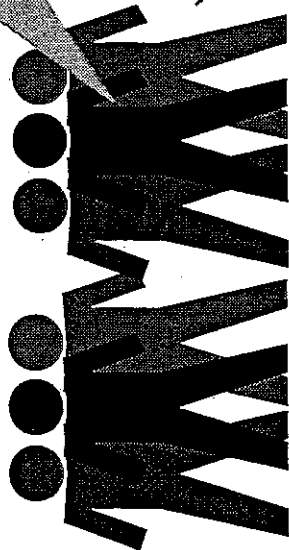
## Mobilise Support and Increase Awareness amongst Careers Advisers



Increase the awareness  
 of the initiative and the  
 opportunities it affords  
 with particular emphasis  
 on appropriate groups

### Strategic Marketing Action 2

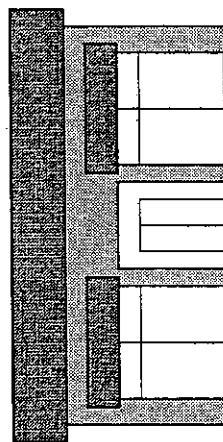
## Increase Awareness in the Community



"The first step in the  
 development of a  
 program is to identify  
 the needs of the  
 community. This  
 involves a thorough  
 assessment of the  
 current situation and  
 the identification of  
 the key issues. Once  
 the needs are identified,  
 the next step is to  
 develop a plan of  
 action. This plan  
 should outline the  
 objectives of the  
 program, the methods  
 to be used, and the  
 resources required. The  
 plan should also  
 include a timeline for  
 the implementation of  
 the program. Finally,  
 the program should  
 be evaluated regularly  
 to ensure that it is  
 meeting the needs of  
 the community and  
 making progress towards  
 its goals."

## Strategic Marketing Action 3

# Increase Involvement of Individual Businesses in showcasing the Industry



industry is really like a company, which means in the first place it is a school of life. Their principal is to school the participants in upon have and we must to ensure the long-term success of the industry in Brazil.

## Strategic Marketing Action 4

# Penrith Education and Training Providers Services Network

(PEATS Network)

Penrith City Council  
January 2005

PEATS is a network of business organisations, schools (career advisors), education and training institutions and private training providers working cooperatively to address the skills and other training needs of industry with particular emphasis on the needs of small businesses in Penrith.

PEATS represents the city as the principal organisational body augmenting the capacity of learning institutions and training providers to identify and meet skills shortages in the community and region at large.

The network was established as a result of a comprehensive local workforce skills audit which recommended that such collaboration was essential to effectively address the skills shortages affecting the region's businesses.

The greatest skills shortages were found to be in the automotive industry and as such this sector was chosen as the first area to have an action plan developed. Other sectors identified as experiencing shortages included manufacturing, construction and retail.

The PEATS network currently consists of the following members:

- Western Sydney Institute of TAFE
- University of Western Sydney
- Penrith Valley Business Enterprise Centre
- Penrith Chamber of Commerce
- Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Penrith Valley Youth Link Project
- Skillswest Training Co Ltd
- Job Quest
- Assign Recruitment
- Motor Trades Association Apprenticeships Plus
- Delfin Lendlease

The network is supported by two specialist groups:

1. the 'demand' group which aims to more effectively assess and articulate the needs of industry to training providers; and
2. the 'supply' group which works together to develop training strategies aiming to promote greater cost effectiveness and flexibility in delivering training programs.

The PEATS Network will focus its attention on the following key activities:

- Overcome acute skills shortages in affected industries and occupations by promoting these occupations as viable careers for people living and working in the region.
- Attract professional talent to the region by judicious marketing strategies which positively profile Penrith as attractive to this type of worker.
- Identify strategic needs and priorities of businesses in the region on a proactive and ongoing basis so that the likelihood of skills gaps and shortages can be reduced and training relevancy increased.
- Increase the uptake of continuing skills development by supporting the delivery of relevant, flexible, accessible and cost effective training within the region.
- Stimulate demand for and participation in training in the region by supporting the development and communication of marketing strategies which provide easily accessible and transparent information on training opportunities in the region.
- Identify resources required to deliver the objectives listed above.