

Local Jobs Plan

North Eastern Melbourne Employment Region | VIC | July 2024

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

Local Jobs elements

Local Jobs Plan

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

Employment Facilitators

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

Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce

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

Local Recovery and National Priority Funds

The Local Recovery Fund supports projects that meet the priorities identified in the Local Jobs Plan. The National Priority Fund provides funding for innovative local solutions to address structural barriers to employment.



Explore labour market insights for the [North Eastern Melbourne Employment Region](#)

Local labour market challenges in the region

- Challenges to inclusion of people with lower participation in employment, such as people with a disability, women over 45, or who are primary carers, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people, disengaged youth and First Nations people.
- Skilled worker shortages in sectors such as care and support, manufacturing, and construction.
- Small and medium businesses finding it difficult to expand recruitment pathways beyond traditional options due to lack of resources, further compounded by existing staff shortages.
- A misalignment of the skills and experience businesses expect from job applicants, and the skills and experience of individuals currently supported by employment service providers.
- Fragmented awareness of the wide range of available skills, training, and employment support pathways within the region.
- Limited transport options for those living outside of main transport hubs, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas with dispersed populations. This is even more difficult for individuals looking to travel north-south and east-west across the outer suburbs.

Local jobs and skills priorities and strategies in the region

Priority 1 – Addressing challenges to labour market participation

What are our challenges and opportunities?

The current labour market's low unemployment rates have created employment opportunities for many individuals including those facing challenges. Businesses are reforming their recruitment practices to support a wider range of individuals, although some businesses require assistance with this transition.

How are we responding?

- Working closely with employment services providers to understand the nature of challenges facing individuals in a rapidly changing labour market to provide a timely localised support.
- Working with First Nations groups to support meaningful and culturally safe employment for First Nations peoples, and to assist First Nations businesses hiring from their local communities.
- Working closely with a range of specialist groups to address the gender imbalance in the construction and manufacturing sectors.
- Funding projects through the Local Recovery Fund to provide vocational training and support to individuals facing challenges to employment.
- Working with businesses who have integrated inclusive hiring practices into their business models and sharing their stories of success.
- Working with local culturally and linguistically diverse community groups to better understand the unique nature of the challenges faced by each community and develop responses to overcome these challenges.
- Working in partnership with local TAFEs and Skills and Jobs Centres to develop and promote innovative training programs to assist individuals facing challenges to participation.

The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce is:

- Promoting social enterprises as a pathway to private-sector employment, especially for businesses with social procurement or inclusive hiring targets.
- Utilising existing programs, where possible, and developing tailored programs and initiatives to provide support to reduce economic challenge faced by women and primary carers in the region.
- Collaborating with state and local governments in creating programs which educate businesses on the benefits of inclusive employment practices.

Priority 2 – Supporting collaborative engagement with industry

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Ongoing staff shortages have created a complex operating environment for many businesses in the region. Whilst there is interest in engaging with employment support services to develop inclusive recruitment strategies, many businesses face challenges allocating resources to such strategies. Reliance on casual or sub-contracted staff to fill gaps, and the increased workload due to lack of staffing leave businesses with limited resourcing to be proactive in recruitment practices.

How are we responding?

- Coordinating regional stakeholders to assist with ensuring sustainable, ongoing engagement with small to medium businesses.
- Funding projects through the Local Recovery Fund that assists resourcing employers to initiate or further develop inclusive recruitment practices.
- Sharing the success stories and benefits of businesses who have integrated inclusive hiring practices into their business models.
- Developing a business resource pack to assist with recruitment and retention strategies.
- Continuing the mapping of service providers, with Taskforce support, that assists in the provision of recruitment and training services to businesses collaborating in inclusive employment projects.

Priority 3 – Addressing regional skills shortages

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Skills shortages in the region have been exacerbated by the post COVID-19 labour market, changes in sector development and investment, current and expected policy adjustments and major capital projects. Existing training and recruitment pathways are not providing sufficiently skilled staff, as such there are an increased number of instances where economic and community development opportunities may be restrained by workforce limitations.

How are we responding?

- Working with local businesses to maintain a thorough understanding of current skills shortages and broader recruitment challenges.
- Coordinating sector specific project groups to develop industry-led training programs tailored to specific roles, providing skilled staff substantially faster than traditional training pathways.
- Exploring innovative employment pathways for non-traditional trades utilised in the advanced manufacturing sector.
- Working with businesses undergoing structural adjustments to ensure skilled staff are redeployed.
The Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce is:
- Actively promoting the substantial social inclusion hiring targets placed by major projects and working directly with project recruitment teams, such as those at SPARK Consortium, lead builder of the North-East Link Project, to create accessible pathways into white collar and trade roles for a wider range of individuals.
- Developing a resource pack addressing common misconceptions on work safety practices and career pathways that will be accessible to CALD communities.
- Supporting the development of supported learning models that will allow a broader cohort of participants to engage with training providers and businesses in priority sectors.

Priority 4 – Accessible and responsive transport

What are our challenges and opportunities?

Transport disadvantage contributes greatly to staff shortages and compounds vocational challenges faced by individuals. These challenges are especially evident in outer-suburban and peri-urban areas where public transport services are poorly connected and limited, and taxi and ride share services may not regularly service or be cost effective. Transport challenges are further compounded for roles outside of standard business hours.

How are we responding?

- Working with local governments to identify the exact nature of current transport infrastructure and exploring its impact on service delivery.
- Investigating the use of state government 'Flexible Transport' funding to enhance employment-based transport services in our region.
- Liaising with the VicTas Community Transport Association to explore the use of community transport models in the employment sector.
- Working with the Northern Councils Alliance and the Eastern Transport Coalition to explore existing transport research through an employment lens.
- Utilising the Local Initiative Fund to provide bespoke employment-based transport solutions where possible.

Priority 5 – Responding to emerging regional needs

What are our challenges and opportunities?

As the region continues to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, significant shifts in labour demand and skill requirements, changes in state employment services policy and unprecedented labour market conditions, there is a continued necessity to quickly adapt. Sudden changes in demand have placed strain on businesses, training organisations and service providers alike, leading to rapid expansion in some cases, and loss of high value roles in others.

How are we responding?

- Utilising current staff demand as an opportunity to encourage businesses to adopt inclusive hiring practices which will benefit the broader labour market.
- Providing strategic advice to Australian and state government bodies on updated labour market developments to inform future policy.
- Working closely with a range of community and government employment service providers to ensure any gaps created by the reduction in state government employment services are minimised.
- Intervening in retrenchments to help workforces transition smoothly to new employment, and to ensure skilled workers are not lost from high-demand and high-value industries.
- Exploring predicted sector recruitment trends and providing information and strategic direction to local governments, businesses, and employment support organisations.
- Providing a range of educational support services to employment service providers and community training organisations who are working with an increasingly complex caseload to assist effective delivery of services.

Want to know more?

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