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NATIONAL REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT



SCOTESE STANDING COUNCIL on
TERTIARY EDUCATION,
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Executive Summary

Australia-wide there is widespread interest in improving workforce planning, workforce development planning and approaches to workforce development. This is especially the case at the regional level, where many communities struggle to meet the demands of industries experiencing rapid growth, other industries facing readjustment, and local populations facing disadvantage in the labour market. The Workforce Research Centre (WRC) at the University of Sydney has produced Regional Workforce Planning and Development Best Practice Principles and a Regional Workforce Planning and Development Best Practice Framework. This work has been commissioned by the Workforce Development, Supply and Demand Principal Committee (WSDSPC).

Best Practice Principles

The Workforce Development Supply Demand Principal Committee proposes ten best practice principles.

Purpose:

1. **Regional workforce plans should encompass a balance of activities.** Regional workforce plans should include strategies to:
 - attract and retain new sources of skilled labour
 - increase the labour market participation of disadvantaged people within the region
 - improve the qualifications and skills utilisation of the region's current workforce.

Achieving these three elements involves regions undertaking workforce planning, workforce development planning, and the implementation of workforce development activities.

Structure:

2. **The division of states or territories into workforce planning and development regions should be organised around commonly understood areas of economic and workforce activity.** Although the regional structure need not be exhaustive, local workforce planning and development should be supported in all regions that meet the lead agency's mission. Metropolitan areas should not be ignored as sites for regional workforce planning and development.
3. **Workforce planning and development regions should be intertwined with other regional structures.** Local government areas (LGAs) and Regional Development Australia (RDA) regions are the most active and embedded regional structures in most states and territories.

Alignment with other plans

4. **Regional workforce plans should set goals that are correlated with state/territory and national workforce goals.** Regional workforce goals should support state/territory and national goals but be determined primarily by local workforce needs.
5. **Regional workforce planning and development should be integrated with other regional planning and development activities.** Regional workforce plans should support and take account of regional economic development, social inclusion, education and planning policies. Policies as well as plans can be integrated, such as through the use of social enterprises in local procurement and tying employment and training outcomes to local development processes.

Stakeholder involvement

6. **Regional workforce planning and development should be led by local stakeholders.** This requires a high level of commitment from stakeholders. Central workforce planning and development agencies have a responsibility to develop stakeholders' awareness of workforce planning and development as well as their capacity to participate in these processes where it is not already present.

7. **Regional workforce planning and development should encompass a broad cross-section of stakeholders**, including representatives from multiple industry sectors, education and training, local government and employment services, and representatives from local disadvantaged populations. To sustain this requires the championing of local coordinators.

Data

8. **Regional workforce planning networks and alliances should be resourced with data from a single contact point.** Regional workforce networks and alliances should have access to data that spans workforce demand, workforce supply and projections for future local population and workforce needs.
9. **Regional workforce planning should be informed by reliable and tailored data, including projections of future supply and demand.** Where reliable quantitative data are not available at the regional level, data at the state or territory level should be used alongside local intelligence. Regional workforce planning networks and alliances should be supported and resourced to conduct their own data collection, where that would assist decision-making.

Resourcing

10. **Regional workforce planning and development should be resourced adequately.** Ongoing resources should be available to support planning and network coordination activities. The implementation of regional workforce development activities should be funded primarily through existing programs but support should be available on a targeted basis to provide mentoring, program coordination and evaluation.

The main part of the report provides examples of these best practice principles taken from current practice.

Best Practice Framework

The best practice framework contains nine stages:

1. Deduce a workforce development need.
2. Identify a regional contribution.
3. Probe stakeholder investment.
4. Validate goals through analysis of data and modelling.
5. Refine the goals with stakeholder input.
6. Stocktake all current and recent workforce planning and development activities.
7. Identify solutions to goals not currently being addressed.
8. Implement solutions.
9. Evaluate initiatives and review workforce needs.

This best practice framework places local workforce planning alliances or networks at the centre of the regional workforce planning and development process. However, at each stage of the framework, there is a critical role for central workforce planning and development agencies to support the work of local alliances and groups. What follows is a summary of the nine stages. More detail, together with examples of current best practice, can be found in the main part of the report.

1. Deduce workforce development need

The purpose of this task is to establish an initial hypothesis on workforce development, which can then be tested and refined. This task is led by the agency with primary responsibility for workforce planning and development in the jurisdiction. The problem may be identified through parallel workforce planning and development regimes (at the national, state and occupational or industry levels); feedback from local stakeholders through existing mechanisms (such as environmental scans); referrals from other agencies; or input from political leaders.

This task may appear self-evident but the function served by this task becomes most obvious where the resources available for workforce development are limited. An implicit or explicit ranking of problems may even be necessary to prioritise more urgent or more worrying workforce development problems. All of the regional case studies presented in this report began with an implicit acknowledgement of a problem: whether it is expansion in the resources sector creating skill shortages in other sectors; difficulties attracting and retaining skilled labour to regional areas where agriculture and associated industries are in decline; or the under-participation of equity groups in the workforce. A more systematic example of how to assist the prioritisation of issues in the regions occurred with the selection of the Priority Employment Areas (PEAs). The selected regions were identified through an analysis of 70 labour market indicators, including unemployment, labour market participation rate, claim rates for Newstart and other Centrelink benefits and school and post-school attainment rates.

Long-term economic change can provide the stimulus for undertaking regional workforce planning, even in the context of limited resources and a lack of existing networks to argue the case for change. The resources boom has prompted a substantial amount of regional workforce planning activity, particularly in Queensland and Western Australia, despite neither state having an established tradition of workforce planning and development. Because of the scale of the activity, the workforce planning has spread well beyond just the resources workforce. The work conducted by the Community Services and Health Workforce Council (2011) on the Surat Basin is an example of this.

2. Identify a regional contribution

The purpose of this task is to establish whether, based on the working definition of the problem, there is a role for regional solutions. This task assumes that the problem can be solved by working at a regional level, is well understood and, ideally, already has some sort of organisational or network infrastructure in place. In this task, central workforce planning and development agencies begin to draw in existing regional structures (such as RDA committees, Regional Development Commissions [RDCs], or local governments) to the process. Central workforce planning and development agencies also apply their expertise to confirm that the workforce development problem is not limited to a single enterprise, occupation or industry, or is likely to involve action beyond the workforce development system, such as improvements to housing, infrastructure, or access to services such as child care and education.

If it does appear that the problem can be addressed by initiatives at the enterprise or industry level, it would be worthwhile suspending the regional-level activity so that demands are not made of stakeholders who are not committed to finding a solution. Many industry skills councils (ISCs; including AgriFood, Auto Skills Australia, Government Skills Australia and Manufacturing Skills Australia) and industry groups that responded to the survey indicated that their current focus was on working with individual businesses across their region to develop workforce development plans, either as part of a standalone exercise or in support of applications to the National Workforce Development Fund. In the course of developing these plans, commonalities may become apparent. In this case, the issue may subsequently reappear within the framework – either in the stocktake of current initiatives or if the problem is redefined after further analyses.

3. Probe stakeholder involvement

The purpose of this task is to probe stakeholder investment in the problem. At this point, leadership moves from the central agency to a resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development. There are a variety of approaches to achieving this. Agencies may choose to capitalise on their existing capability and place coordinators into regions. This is the approach adopted in South Australia and in the State Training Services (STS) network in New South Wales. Alternatively, central agencies may partner with other agencies or regional bodies (such as RDCs in Western Australia or Regional Development Victoria/RDA committees in Victoria) to embed the workforce development expertise in a regional development framework. A third approach that suits jurisdictions with

no established regional workforce planning and development infrastructure is to fund an existing organisation to employ additional staff capacity and take on the local coordination role. For example, the Surat Basin Health and Community Services Workforce Initiative involved funding for RHealth, a service provider in the region well connected to other organisations, to employ a part-time staff member to coordinate local activities. The work of the local staff member complemented the workforce development expertise provided by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council. Whatever the approach, the objective of this task is to confirm that local stakeholders are engaged with the issue and willing to participate in planning activities. It is important that this task does not generate expectations among stakeholders about possible outcomes. Stakeholders should have clear and realistic expectations about the available resources.

Local goodwill is the intangible factor that marks successful workforce development plans and initiatives. Networks of employers, industry groups, training organisations, schools and community groups take time to develop, and they rely on trust. Ensuring that a combination of industry and community representatives is involved is crucial. Developing networks is difficult in areas without a distinct regional identity, such as those in metropolitan areas, or areas that are rapidly growing with new populations, such as some coastal provincial cities and mining towns. If there are no resources available to develop local networks in places where none exist, it may be better to pursue an alternative workforce development approach. Even where jurisdictions have committed significant resources to conducting workforce planning across all regions, this ranking of stakeholder readiness is a useful task.

4. Validate goals with data

The purpose of this task is to translate the workforce development problem into goals and to validate them through an analysis of data and modelling. The availability of data and data capability are both necessary to undertake regional workforce planning successfully. Generally, data are available for regions at an appropriate unit of analysis but currently there are gaps, especially in more sparsely populated areas. There is also scope to develop best practice guidelines relating to custom data collection for regional workforce planning. More work could be done to increase awareness of the available data and modelling. This report has highlighted the positive role being performed by consultants, working with data specialists in relevant government departments, to increase and share data capability across regions. Leadership of this task moves to organisations, departmental units or consultants with data capability and expertise in workforce planning.

Data analyses should not commence without a set of hypotheses or research questions designed to test the existence of the problem and its determinants. These questions should go beyond 'what are the fastest growing industries and occupations in the region', to examine future growth, matching supply of new skills to likely demand, and using modelling and projections to develop a range of plausible scenarios. At the completion of this task, there will be a set of specific goals that relate to labour supply and demand and workforce development indicators. During this task, regional goals can also be correlated with goals from state and national workforce planning exercises. Where the capacity is well developed, it may be possible to perform some of this work in parallel.

The insights from data analyses should be disseminated widely. Even where regional workforce development priorities may not exist, the data analysis could be gainfully used by stakeholders participating in workforce planning development activities at other levels. For example, AgriFood ISC noted that more sophisticated national Workforce Development Fund (WDF) applications from businesses and consortia include some data on the labour or skill shortage they want to address. To develop their own industry strategies, AgriFood relies on plans developed by Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (RESJ) Coordinators, RDA regional road maps, state industry training advisory body (ITAB) plans and reports published by regional groups that focus on business and regional development.

5. Refine the goals with stakeholder input

The purpose of this task is to refine the workforce development goals with stakeholder input and assistance. The step relies on a network of engaged stakeholders with a good understanding of what is happening in their region as well as the resources to support consultation mechanisms such as working groups and forums. If stakeholders are able to relate the outcomes of the data analysis to their own experience, then the step also serves as a useful validation of the data. During this task, it is also possible to align the goals with objectives in other local plans (such as RDA or RDC plans and other economic development activities).

This task ends with stakeholders endorsing the goals and taking ownership of the progress and attainment of the goals. There is little point continuing with a regional workforce planning and development approach if the goals do not align with local stakeholders' interests. However, this is unlikely if stakeholder investment in the problem has already been established.

In this stage, it is important to identify the most appropriate representatives for providing input from business. In the Maryland (US) cluster initiatives, where school-to-work programs for particular industries were being developed, stakeholder feedback indicated that the employers providing input should not be managing directors but middle managers and frontline staff who knew the jobs well and the skills required (Hamilton 2012: 21). However, this needs to be balanced with an awareness that some employers may lack the time to participate in collective initiatives, particularly in regional areas, where the incidence of small businesses is higher or where there are industries with a high proportion of sole traders.

6. Stocktake current initiatives

The purpose of this task is to conduct a thorough stocktake of all workforce planning and development initiatives currently taking place in the region, even if these are not occurring in a regional workforce planning and development framework. This work should again be led by a resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development. However, support from central agencies to quickly identify local components of national and statewide activities is essential to completing this task efficiently. There is flexibility about when this task should be completed in relation to the other tasks: it can be performed at any point after local stakeholders have been identified and can operate in parallel with other processes, such as data analyses.

This task is complete when there is a consolidated list of current regional workforce development initiatives aligned with regional workforce development goals. Ideally, the exercise would also produce a list of lessons drawn from previous workforce development initiatives, to inform any future regional workforce development initiatives. If goals are being efficiently met through current initiatives, regions may not need to proceed with identifying and implementing solutions. However, if resources are available, they may wish to maintain local infrastructure to monitor progress of the existing initiatives.

7. Identify solutions

The purpose of this task is to identify regionally based solutions to goals that are not already being addressed through current initiatives. The task presupposes a set of agreed goals, clarity on available resources and commitment from stakeholders to assist with planning and implementation. Leadership of this task should rest with a local individual or an organisation with an excellent knowledge of the workforce development framework and brokering skills. The output of this task is a consolidated list of current and planned initiatives aligned with regional workforce development goals, along with strategies for achieving support for new initiatives and for monitoring progress. The strategies should detail possible funding sources and the resources that local stakeholders are willing to commit to the actions. The regional workforce planning and development framework is of no use this point, without the resources or stakeholder commitment for additional workforce development activities.

However, funding for initiatives is not always available. In the Surat Basin, for example, the Health and

Community Services Workforce Initiative was unsuccessful in its application for funding to support data collection on the current local workforce. Fortunately, the South-West Darling Downs Medicare Local has adopted the Workforce Initiative plan as its own workforce development plan and has been able to allocate some resources to deliver on some of the initiatives.

8. Implement solutions

The purpose of this task is to implement workforce development initiatives in partnership with local workplaces, training providers and other organisations. The initiatives stem from an agreed set of actions, which are supported by resources and assume existing local workforce development infrastructure and capability. Longer-term initiatives may be necessary where this is not already present. In a stable economic and social environment, the presence of existing workforce development infrastructure can sustain a 'business as usual' attitude, where even workforce development planning and the evaluation of existing initiatives are not high priorities for decision makers. While this may have been sustainable for some regions in the past, especially metropolitan areas, vocational education and training (VET) reforms have the potential to create widespread disruption to workforce development infrastructure.

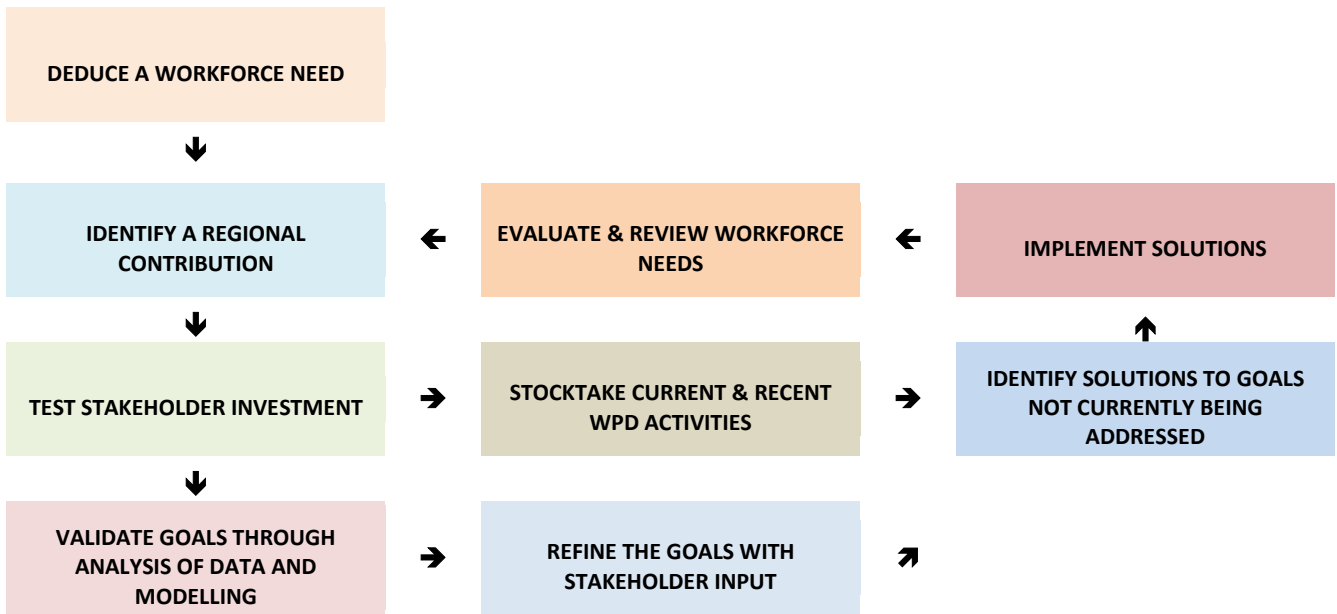
Leadership of this task rests with local organisations and institutions with experience in workforce development. Local coordinators and central workforce planning and development agencies may play a supporting role by monitoring progress and assisting with evaluation. Activities associated with this task result in workforce development needs being met, and may run for a fixed duration or be ongoing. The regional plan should clearly identify which stakeholders are to take responsibility for actions. Evidence from Australia and overseas strongly demonstrates the critical importance of promoting local entrepreneurial leaders to drive this stage.

9. Evaluate

Best practice should always involve some element of evaluation. Yet the survey elicited few examples of best practice evaluation, although this may be attributable to the fact that many of the initiatives included in the survey responses were still being implemented. The distinctive and ambitious goals of many regional workforce development strategies also make evaluation difficult.

Evaluation will become easier as data capacity and capability across regional alliances improve. Using data to inform evaluation will also help in determining whether the initial workforce needs have been resolved and whether new workforce needs have emerged, thus helping to re-initiate the cycle. Once regional networks and alliances become self-sustaining, they will be able to exercise more leadership over the initial phases of identifying workforce needs, verifying a regional contribution, and testing stakeholder investment with central agencies.

Figure 1: National regional workforce planning and development framework



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Introduction

Turning widespread but fragmented goodwill into better practice

The Australian economy is performing extremely well by international standards. It does, however, face a number of major challenges in sustaining this performance. One of the most widely recognised concerns is meeting the changing skill requirements of rising and falling industries. Closely linked to this is ensuring that employers fully utilise their workers' skills.

There is widespread interest in improving workforce planning, workforce development planning and approaches to workforce development. This is especially the case at regional level. What is particularly encouraging is the growing goodwill amongst all the relevant players in coordinating their efforts in each of these domains more effectively.

The Workforce Development, Supply and Demand Principal Committee (WSDSDPC) has commissioned the Workplace Research Centre (WRC) to conduct a national stocktake of regional workforce planning and development activities. The WRC has also been asked to develop draft Regional Workforce Planning and Development Best Practice Principles and a draft Regional Workforce Planning and Development Best Practice Framework. Both the stocktake results and the proposed best practice principles and framework are contained in this draft *National Regional Workforce Planning and Development Report*.

Arguably, the greatest challenge in improving regional workforce planning and development is harnessing this goodwill to achieve better outcomes in developing and deploying skilled labour more effectively. There are many agents and agencies interested in this issue and include:

- the multiple federal government agencies, including the new Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA)
- the states and territories
- all local governments
- a wide arrange of localised initiatives, many supported by Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- interested non-government organisations (NGOs) such as those involved in employment and disability services.

Also interested are those involved in a myriad of local sectoral initiatives such those associated with the dairy, cotton and resources sectors.

As such, the key challenge for this project is:

How can more effective networks of agents and agencies involved in planning, developing and deploying labour at the regional level be established and sustained?

Scope

This report has adopted the following definitions, according to the tender specifications set down by the principal committee:

Region: A geographic district or particular area, within a state or territory, defined by real or virtual boundaries which are used for planning and administrative purposes.

Regions can be identified throughout Australia, including in metropolitan areas.

Regional workforce planning and development:

Is the suite of planning and implementation activities that can increase workforce participation and maximise the availability of appropriately skilled workers required to meet the local industry's current and forecast workforce needs.

It encompasses the following three processes:

- (1) Regional workforce planning**, which is the identification of:
 - (a) a region's current workforce capability and capacity
 - (b) the forecast workforce capability and capacity required to meet the future needs of the region.
- (2) Regional workforce development planning**, which is informed by the outcome of regional workforce planning and is the process used to determine what workforce development activities are needed to address the workforce capability and capacity gap.
- (3) Regional workforce development implementation**, which is the provision of training, career advice, and other initiatives that aim to better meet workforce development needs by:
 - (a) increasing attraction and retention of skilled labour in the region
 - (b) increasing the participation of local people who are disadvantaged in the labour market
 - (c) increasing the qualifications and skills utilisation of existing local workers.

What follows

To address the research questions, the Workplace Research Centre conducted a stocktake of regional workforce planning and development activities in Australia and overseas. In consultation with the working party, the WRC undertook the following methods to collate data for the stocktake:

- an analysis of workforce plans and workforce planning and analysis documents submitted by the working party members
- a survey of federal, state and territory agencies involved in regional workforce planning and development activities
- a survey of sectoral stakeholders (including industry skills councils, industry training advisory boards (ITABs) and employer groups) involved in regional workforce planning and development activities
- a survey of regional networks, alliances and working groups established to conduct regional workforce planning and development activities
- follow-up telephone interviews with working party members and survey participants
- interviews and correspondence with experts involved in regional workforce planning and development overseas, including at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and in selected countries – the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Korea and Singapore.

A draft report was produced in December 2012 and feedback was gathered from members of a working party established by the Principal Committee. The draft best practice principles and draft best practice framework were tested at a workshop of workforce planning and development practitioners held in Adelaide during 2012 and sponsored by the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency. The draft best practice Principles and draft best practice Framework were subsequently endorsed by the WSDPC on 24 April 2013, NSOC on 17 May 2013 and SCOTese on 7 June 2013.

In the following section, the characteristics of regional workforce planning and development activities across Australia (with selected examples from overseas) are distilled and compared according to a schema of ten dimensions. The stocktake reveals that a variety of approaches to regional workforce planning and development has emerged in different jurisdictions, in response to the local economic conditions, available resources, institutional legacies and policy priorities. The section concludes with a stylised summary of each jurisdiction's approach.

Based on the stocktake schema, a set of ten best practice principles is developed. These principles are:

- Regional workforce plans should encompass a balance of activities.
- The division of states or territories into workforce planning and development regions should be organised around commonly understood areas of economic and workforce activity.

- Workforce planning and development regions should be intertwined with other regional structures.
- Regional workforce plans should set goals that are correlated with state/territory and national workforce goals.
- Regional workforce planning and development should be integrated with other regional planning and development activities.
- Regional workforce planning and development should be led by local stakeholders.
- Regional workforce planning and development should encompass a broad cross-section of stakeholders.
- Regional workforce planning networks and alliances should be resourced with data from a single contact point.
- Regional workforce planning should be informed by reliable and tailored data, including projections of future supply and demand.
- Regional workforce planning and development should be resourced adequately.

Next, the report introduces a best practice framework for regional workforce planning and development. The framework is comprised of nine stages for regional workforce planning and development alliances or networks to follow:

- Deduce a workforce development need.
- Identify a regional contribution.
- Probe stakeholder investment.
- Validate goals through analysis of data and modelling.
- Refine the goals with stakeholder input.
- Stocktake current and recent workforce planning and development activities.
- Identify solutions to goals not currently being addressed.
- Implement solutions.
- Evaluate the outcomes and review workforce development needs.

The framework also includes three tasks for central agencies for establishing and sustaining local capacity for workforce planning and development. For each task, the framework identifies:

- the prerequisites for being able to undertake the task
- who should lead the task
- the outputs when the task is completed successfully
- the circumstances which would prevent further regional workforce planning and development tasks from taking place.

Details on the methodology and consultation process conducted with stakeholders can be found in the appendices.

Stocktake of activities

Building a framework

In this section, we collate all the information from the stocktake according to a schema of ten dimensions, laid out in Table 1. The schema represents the distinguishing characteristics of regional workforce planning and development regimes, distilled from the survey responses, interviews and a review of international practices. A detailed description of each dimension, with examples drawn from current regional workforce planning and development initiatives, follows the table.

Table 1: Regional workforce planning and development schema

Dimension	Question(s)	Range
Geographic structure of workforce planning regions	Are all areas of the state or territory allocated to a region for the purposes of workforce planning or are regions defined in response to workforce development needs as they arise?	Exhaustive through to responsive
Alignment of workforce planning regions with other regional boundaries	Do the boundaries for regional workforce plans align with the boundaries used for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ABS statistical areas (and to what level) ▪ RDA boundaries ▪ operational zones used by TAFE institutes and other institutes ▪ regions as commonly understood by communities 	Intertwined through parallel to independent
Relationship to other local plans	Are regional workforce plans and workforce development plans developed in conjunction with other local plans (e.g. economic development plans, infrastructure plans)?	Isolated to integrated
Relationship to state and national workforce goals	Are the goals in regional workforce plans and workforce development plans independent of, or correlated with, state and national plans?	Standalone through correlated to nested
Information custodianship	Is there a single custodian of data (disaggregated at a regional level) that can be fed into regional plans, or are data located across numerous agencies?	Unified through to fragmented
Use of data	How extensive is the use of data in the development of plans, including use of modelling and projections	Basic to tailored
Emphasis of activities	Does the broad framework give particular emphasis to one of the three activities (attracting and retaining new workers, bringing disadvantaged groups into the labour market, increasing the qualifications and skills utilisation of the local workforce)?	Attracting and retaining Increasing participation Increasing skill levels Combination

Dimension	Question(s)	Range
Funding for initiatives	<p>Are funds and resources made available to regions to conduct workforce planning and development activities on the basis of fixed criteria, or is funding variable depending on the priority of the need and the merit of the initiatives?</p> <p>Note that funding rules may vary by activity. All regions may be funded to conduct workforce planning and prepare a workforce development plan, but may need to bid for funds to undertake initiatives.</p>	Fixed to competitive
Level of commitment expected from stakeholders	Are stakeholders encouraged or required to commit their own resources in order to participate in regional workforce planning and development activities?	Low to high
Organisation of stakeholders	<p>What sort of framework is in place for bringing together stakeholders, gathering their intelligence and generating their support?</p> <p>What is done to promote local champions?</p>	Disparate through cooperative to coordinated

Geographic Structure and alignment of workforce planning regions

This dimension relates to how regions are defined within a jurisdiction. Jurisdictional approaches may be:

- *exhaustive, where every part of the jurisdiction is covered by a workforce planning and development region*
- *comprehensive, where all parts of the jurisdiction that meet a particular criteria (such as areas that are non-metropolitan or which are experiencing high unemployment, or all major towns within the jurisdiction) are covered by a workforce planning and development region*
- *responsive, where regions are defined on an ad hoc basis in response to workforce development needs as they arise.*

In addition, workforce planning and development regions may be considered:

- *intertwined if they align with regional boundaries used for other regional development purposes and share resources or coordination mechanisms*
- *parallel if they align with regional boundaries used for other purposes but do not share any resources*
- *independent, if they have no relation to other regional boundaries.*

The structure of workforce planning regions is a threshold issue and one which is relatively easy to categorise. In one group are the smaller jurisdictions that do not conduct regional workforce planning (Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory). The ACT has a small population and geographic area, a relatively homogenous population, and is dominated economically by public administration. Tasmania and the Northern Territory are more dispersed geographically, with more diverse populations and labour forces. These jurisdictions report that their small populations make regional workforce planning more difficult if not impossible, because there are no survey data or projections to inform it. However, while Tasmania has no regional workforce planning framework, the state has conducted local workforce development initiatives. These may often be structured around a particular industry sector, although this is not always so. The Northern Territory Government has designated 20 major regional towns and through the Department of Regional Development and Indigenous Advancement is working with the

towns to develop infrastructure plans. Alongside this process, the Employment and Training Division of the Department of Business is responsible for workforce planning and development for the Northern Territory and has developed a jobs profile of each town.

Of all the jurisdictions, South Australia has adopted the most *exhaustive* and the most *intertwined* structure for its regional workforce planning. The entire state is divided into regions, and these are matched to the eight Regional Development Australia regions. (The Adelaide Metropolitan RDA is covered by four workforce plans: Metropolitan North, Metropolitan South, Metropolitan East and Metropolitan West.) These regions constitute more than just a set of common boundaries, with the relevant bodies in South Australia actively promoting integration of the different activities. Within the Department of Further Education, Employment Science and Technology (DFEEST), Regional Coordinators have been allocated to each region to develop and promote regional workforce development. There is strong collaboration between the Regional Coordinators and the work being undertaken by RDA committees and the personnel appointed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in priority regions.

Victoria has also promoted RDA regions as the basis for formulating regional workforce plans, but has adopted a staged approach. So far, plans have been prepared for the Hume region (centred on Wangaratta and Shepparton) and the Grampians region (centred on Ballarat and Horsham). Like Victoria, Western Australia has also concentrated on developing regional workforce plans in non-metropolitan areas. The Western Australian plans have been primarily developed around the existing structures of Regional Development Commissions (RDCs), which were established by the state-based groupings of local government authorities. As such, they are contiguous with local government boundaries. They largely coincide with RDA boundaries, with the area covered by Mid-West Gascoyne RDA having two separate RDCs.

New South Wales conducts workforce and training analysis using State Training Services (STS) zones and technical and further education (TAFE) institute catchment areas. All areas of the state are captured by this system. The boundaries used do not align exactly with one another, nor do they align with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) regions or RDA committee boundaries. There are other substantial difficulties with this approach, which are discussed below. While it would be preferable for workforce planning to align the operational boundaries of the TAFE catchment areas and the State Training Services area boundaries with those developed by the ABS, the operational boundaries are based on sound and relatively fixed factors, such as the presence of universities, TAFE institutes and other institutions. This problem in New South Wales is not restricted to the education sphere. Departments including Health and Police have developed their own operational regions, which do not align with each other or ABS regions.¹ In the future, under *Smart and Skilled* (NSW Department of Education and Communities 2011), New South Wales will be introducing measures to identify regional priorities. This will inform the qualifications on the Skills List. Some qualifications on the Skills List may only be there for a particular region in recognition that the particular qualification is a priority in that region but not in others.

At this point Queensland has not established a formal system for dividing the state into zones for the purposes of regional workforce development activities. The activities that have been undertaken in this state have been in response to emergent workforce issues, and so the regions have been defined on an ad hoc basis, according to the nature of the workforce development issues. For example, many of the projects have been associated with the increased demand for labour from the mining sector and the flow-on impacts for affected regional communities.

Within the Commonwealth jurisdiction, the Department of Innovation, Industry, Climate Change, Science Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCS RTE) has the primary responsibility for workforce development and planning. However, most of its activities are targeted at the national (such as through the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency), sectoral (through the industry skills councils) and enterprise (through services such as Skills Connect) level. The Priority Area Employment Initiative and the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (RESJ) Plan Initiative are two programs operated by DEEWR with a regional workforce planning and development focus.

¹ The introduction of a new geography standard by the ABS, the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), which takes into account commuting flows, may better align statistical and operational functions (Centre of Full Employment and Equity 2011: 60.)

Under the Priority Employment Area Initiative, 20 regions have been selected on the basis of around 70 labour market indicators of economic vulnerability, including unemployment rates, educational attainment and length of time on income support. Each priority area is resourced with a Local Employment Coordinator (LEC), who works with an advisory committee to determine priority goals and strategies, which are then set out in a Regional Employment Plan. It is important to note that these plans are effectively a work program for the individual Local Employment Coordinators, rather than an aspirational collective plan for the area, although they take into account other relevant plans. The Priority Employment Areas span metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas and comprise groups of local government areas (LGAs).

The federal government has also allocated \$20 million over two years for a Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool (FFP). Funding from the pool is specifically intended to support the activities of Local Employment Coordinators that align with the goals and strategies in their Regional Employment Plans (REPs). Funding cannot duplicate existing activities or projects but can supplement or replicate discrete projects.

The role of Local Employment Coordinators is to maximise government investment in employment, training and participation; promote the take-up of relevant education, training, infrastructure and regional measures at the local level in a way that achieves short- and medium-term responses to emerging unemployment pressures in the area; help with rapid response strategies for retrenched workers; facilitate government/community/business partnerships to generate training and job opportunities; contribute to the alignment and strengthening of efforts to support better employment, training and participation outcomes; and to work collaboratively with DEEWR to maximise outcomes and ensure strategic linkages are made.

The RESJ Plan Initiative has deployed 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators for the 46 RDA regions that cover non-metropolitan areas. These coordinators work with community stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia committees, to maximise the participation of regional communities in education, training and employment. The scope of the RESJ Coordinator role includes early childhood education and care; school education; vocational education and training and higher education; and workforce participation, including workforce planning. Strategies to address issues identified by the community in these areas are articulated in a RESJ Plan for each of the 46 regions. Where Local Employment Coordinators and Regional Jobs and Skills Coordinators align, they work together, with the former primarily focusing on labour market strategies and the latter primarily focusing on education and skills issues.

Other Australian Government departments are also engaged in regional workforce development activities related to their portfolio industries. The federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism is developing eight Tourism Employment Plans (TEPs), in areas that the *Australian Tourism Labour Force Report* (Deloitte Access Economics 2011) identified as experiencing difficulty with recruitment, retention and skill development. As with many of the other local plans already discussed, Tourism Employment Plans will primarily focus on linking tourism business with existing programs.

The federal Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is involved in regional workforce planning and development activities through the 15 Rural Research and Development Corporations. The corporations fund projects to promote innovation and productivity in Australia's agricultural industries.

A recurring difficulty across many states is how to include metropolitan areas, and this is explored further in the later section *Organisation of stakeholders and governance*.

Existing boundaries should guide and not dictate regional analysis

As indicated, one of the Victorian areas where a regional plan has already been completed is the Grampians. The report was for the Grampians RDA (with funding provided by Regional Development Victoria [RDV]), but in fact there are two regions within the boundaries: Central Highlands (centred on Ballarat) and Wimmera Southern Mallee (centred on Horsham). This was mutually acknowledged at the outset by the RDA and the research partner (Centre for Regional Innovation and Competitiveness at the University of Ballarat), with all parts of the workforce development report prepared by the Centre for Regional Innovation and Competitiveness reflecting this – from the data through to the recommendations.

The example of the Grampians RDA demonstrates that working within established regional boundaries is desirable, because of the easier access to data and the ability to draw on the resources of established bodies. However, regional workforce planning and development should be able to deviate from those boundaries when there are sound reasons for doing so.

Relationship to other plans

This dimension describes how the goals in regional workforce plans relate to national and state workforce plans, as well as other local regional development plans. In relation to national and state workforce plans, regional workforce plans may be:

- *nested, if regional goals are derived primarily with reference to state, territory or national goals*
- *correlated, if regional goals refer to state, territory or national goals but are primarily derived on the basis of regional needs*
- *standalone, if no reference is made to state, territory or national goals.*

In relation to other regional plans, regional workforce plans may be:

- *integrated, where they rely on goals set in other plans*
- *connected, where they make reference to goals set in other plans*
- *isolated, where they are developed without reference to other plans.*

Within Western Australia the Department of Training and Workforce Development is the lead State Government agency on workforce development matters and during 2010 prepared *Skilling WA: A workforce development plan for Western Australia* (WA Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2010), which identifies issues impacting on workforce development in Western Australia and recommends the required actions to address them.

A key part of the Skilling WA workforce planning framework is the development of regional workforce development plans. These plans outline key challenges to workforce development in each of the nine regions of the State (based on Regional Development Commission boundaries) and provide industry, government and community sector strategies at a local and State level to address them.

To generate local ownership of the development and implementation of the plans, whilst at the same time ensuring linkages to State Government planning processes, the Department of Training and Workforce Development in partnership with Regional Development Commissions has been establishing local regional workforce development alliances in each region.

Under the oversight of the local alliance, the Department of Training and Workforce Development contract manages the development of the regional workforce development plans through appropriate consultancies. The development of the plans involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis and strong local consultation with stakeholders. The plans are aligned in format to Skilling WA, and have linkages to other strategic Department plans, including *Training Together, Working Together*, which is a specific workforce development strategy for Aboriginal people (Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development, n.d.). The alliances also provide guidance and leadership in the implementation of the plans,

which can involve a multiplicity of government and non-government responses to the workforce development challenges of the region.

The Northern Territory employment strategy has the following targets:

- maintaining higher than national labour force participation rates
- increasing the skill level of the territory workforce
- increasing Indigenous participation in the labour force
- increasing the size of the territory workforce.

Current industry workforce strategies and future regional workforce strategies will all work towards achieving the targets. The regional workforce strategies will also capture or be included as part of economic strategies in the regions.

While few other regional workforce plans and regional workforce development plans appear to adopt their own specific targets in reference to those at the state and national levels, the state and national plans do provide a framework for setting priorities within and between regions. South Australia and New South Wales are two states that have developed state plans and both contain a set of targets relating to workforce development. *South Australia's Strategic Plan* (SA Department of the Premier and Cabinet 2011) includes the following targets:

- Increase employment by 2% each year from 2010 to 2016.
- Increase the proportion of older South Australians who are engaged in the workforce by ten percentage points by 2020.
- Increase by 10% the number of people with a disability employed in South Australia by 2020.
- Halve the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal unemployment rates by 2018.
- Increase the proportion of 15 to 24-year-olds engaged full-time in school, post-school education, training or employment (or combination thereof) to 85% by 2020.
- Increase the number of apprentice completions in trade occupations by 20% by 2020.

At the regional level, every region has a strategic plan developed by DFEEST, which provides the evidence base from which priorities and strategies have been identified to inform the development and resourcing of the participation and equity programs which contribute to achieving statewide targets. The development of the strategic plans involved over 1000 stakeholders across the state, who confirmed the findings of the data analysis undertaken centrally and used their local knowledge and experience to identify workforce priorities.

Similarly, the *NSW 2021 plan* (NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet 2011) aims to increase employment in the state by an average of 1.25% per year to 2020. Specific statewide objectives also include:

- Reduce the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people within a decade.
- Increase the proportion of young people in employment or learning (15–24 years).
- Increase the proportion of people over 55 participating in employment.
- Increase the proportion of women employed in non-traditional occupations in NSW.

The plan also includes an objective to increase the number of jobs in regional New South Wales by 40 000. Initiatives undertaken by State Training Services Regional Centres are oriented towards these statewide objectives. The plan also aims to increase the number of completions of certificate III and higher VET qualifications by students in rural and regional New South Wales.

Western Australia and New South Wales are both giving active consideration to whether they develop a regional skills list to sit within their existing State Priority Occupation List (WA) and planned skills list (NSW). There are significant technical limitations in using labour market forecasting modelling and data at the regional level in WA due to the relatively small labour markets in those regions. The Department of Training and Workforce Development is trialling the development of its own Regional Priority Occupational Lists which are based on local stakeholders input. The Northern Territory Department of Business produces the NT Occupation Shortage List. Occupations may be included in the list where there is evidence they are in shortage in particular regions of the Northern Territory.

While state plans provide an overarching framework, regional workforce plans and regional workforce

development plans can usefully build on (or provide depth to) plans developed by other agencies. For example, the Tasmanian state government's Economic Development Plan integrates the state's innovation, skills and infrastructure strategies. The Industry Skills Plan: Agriculture (Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and Skills Tasmania, 2011) takes all these plans into consideration. In Western Australia, the Department of Training and Workforce Development encourages local plans to include linkages to the Department of Regional Development and Lands "Supertowns" initiative. The regional workforce development plans are also being used to support submissions for funding from initiatives such as the National Workforce Development Fund.

There is evidence that RDA committees (and state Regional Development Corporations) play a very positive role in making connections between local skills and workforce development activities and other development objectives. Each RDA develops its own strategic plan, encompassing all the priorities for the region. For example, the Hunter RDA Plan identified six strategic areas:

- skills and workforce
- infrastructure
- built and natural environment
- innovation
- grow the economy
- education.

On a purely pragmatic level, the small size of RDA secretariats works against silos. The Hunter RDA only has six staff, so staff need to have an understanding of the detail of multiple areas.

In Western Australia, the Department of Training and Workforce Development provides a secretariat role for regional workforce development alliances. For example, in the Great Southern region of the State the Department worked closely with the Great Southern Development Commission to establish a regional alliance during 2011. The alliance is comprised of industry, community sector and Government representatives from the region.

During 2011 the Department provided funding to engage a consultant to develop the Great Southern workforce development plan 2013-2016, which was finalised and launched during March 2013. The Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan, which contains a range of priority actions which were identified by local stakeholders to address local workforce development challenges.

The plan aligns with the State Government's workforce development plan *Skilling WA – A workforce development plan for Western Australia* (Skilling WA), which provides a framework for government and industry's response to Western Australia's skill and workforce needs.

The plan has also been designed as an important reference point for all stakeholders as it identifies the challenges, agreed solutions and organisations that have a key stake in its implementation. For the Regional Development Council, as the peak advisory body to the Western Australian Government on regional development matters, the plan is used to identify workforce issues and solutions which require policy consideration across regions. This includes guidance on Royalties for Regions initiatives to support regional workforce needs.

For local government bodies the plan identifies workforce issues to be taken into account as part of local government decision making processes. The plan will be used by industry associations and employer peak bodies as a reference when working directly with employers to implement industry and enterprise solutions to workforce development challenges. The plan also captures the views and aspirations of the broader community and provides a useful reference when engaging on workforce development issues across the region.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development in conjunction with the alliances will facilitate the coordination of State Government responses outlined in the plan. This will include working with those agencies and training providers designated to take the lead on priority actions in the plan.

The alignment of DEEWR Regional Jobs, Education and Skills Coordinators in the RDA regions promotes

collaboration with the RDA committees. This also applies to relationships with Local Employment Coordinators, where they align. A large degree of cooperation exists between the Local Employment Coordinators and DEEWR Regional Jobs, Education and Skills Coordinators and RDA committees; for example, serving on each other's working groups and advisory committees.

Working with existing programs: the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans

Over the last 12 months, 46 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans have been developed. The coordinators work closely with the Regional Development Australia committees, with any overlapping Local Employment Coordinators and with other stakeholders to prevent duplication.

Each plan includes a table that summarises the other plans already in place for the region, the impact on the RESJ Plan, and how the RESJ Plan can build on the existing plans and activities.

For example, the Wide Bay-Burnett RESJ Plan (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2012), notes the following plans or strategies in place in the region:

- Regional Development Australia Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Roadmap
- Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2011
- Regional Development Australia Wide Bay Burnett Resource Sector Opportunities Study 2011
- Bundaberg Hervey Bay Priority Employment Area Regional Employment Plan
- Southern Wide Bay Burnett Priority Employment Area Regional Employment Plan
- Local government economic development strategies
- Queensland Regionalisation Strategy
- National Resource Sector Workforce Strategy.

Many regions are working to ensure that local plans dealing with regional workforce planning and development are aligned with one another. However, even where overlap is avoided through demarcation of goals, local stakeholders reported consultation and survey fatigue. In the course of the research for this report, many regions were identified as having multiple plans auspiced by the following authorities or networks:

- state government department with responsibility for education and training
- local Regional Development Australia committee or Regional Development Commission committee
- DEEWR Regional Employment Plan
- DEEWR Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans.

In Tasmania, a number of regional plans have developed as a direct result of state and national industry plans:

- A project in Aboriginal Health supported implementation of a national workforce strategy.
- In transport a state level workforce advisory group took over work that was previously undertaken as part of a national workforce strategy when funding for that initiative ceased.
- The Dairy Industry Skills Plan gave effect to the strategic directions proposed by state and national bodies (Dairy Tasmania and the National Centre for Dairy Education Australia [NCDEA]).
- The Hospitality Workforce Plan relates to and informs the workforce section of the state hospitality strategic plan.
- The early childhood education and care activity supports the implementation of the national changes in the sector.

International evidence also strongly endorses aligning local workforce plans with economic development policies (Froy & Giguère 2010: 30):

- In the United Kingdom, local workforce development initiatives have been embedded into urban regeneration policies (Fuller, Rizvi & Unwin 2013). Manchester City Council requires firms contracted for specific services to provide apprenticeship places for local 16 to 18-year-olds not already participating in employment, education or training. The cost of the apprentice is shared over the three-year period by the developer and the sub-contractor. Apprentices are encouraged during the apprenticeship to make contacts with sub-contractors to increase the chances of employment once the training is complete. However, the scheme was only introduced in 2010 and thus far only one apprentice has completed training under the scheme. A similar scheme has also been introduced in Southampton.
- In Western Melbourne, a plan has been developed to monitor local development applications to assess the likely impact on labour demand and to promote and train the local young people to fill the employment opportunities generated by the developments.
- The Mt Gambier Workforce Development project in South Australia is funding a workforce development coordinator to identify supply, job-ready applicants, training assistance and capacity to meet the demands created by a new Woolworths marketplace complex.
- The Central West RDA Committee in New South Wales is a regional certifying body (RCB) for employer nominations made under the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's (DIAC) Direct Entry Stream, specifically for the Regionally Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS). The RCB's role is to provide advice to DIAC on whether the visa requirements are met, including whether the employer has a genuine need for the position and cannot fill the vacancy with an Australian resident. In assessing the criteria, the Central West RDA Committee uses information from DIAC and DEEWR, Australian Job Search and input from local private employment agencies and business and industry representatives.

Integrating social enterprise with regional workforce development

In Western Sydney, the Local Employment Plan links in with a number of established social enterprises. Cana Communities manages a 15-acre old farm at Orchard Hill outside Penrith. The property is being redeveloped as a working farm (social enterprise), involving ex-drug users, ex-offenders, refugees and disengaged young people. In 2011, working with Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, they provided a Pathways to Primary Industries program for refugees (Cana Communities & Western Sydney Institute 2012).

Koori Job Ready (KJR) has helped to create over 1000 employment opportunities for Indigenous people in NSW, by supporting both the 'demand' and 'supply' sides of social procurement. KJR is based in the Redfern-Waterloo area but is now looking to gain access to the largest urban Indigenous community, in the Blacktown-Penrith area. Most large Sydney construction projects are based in the central business district, and the distances and lack of transport options can create a barrier. KJR has formed a partnership with Lend Lease to be a primary provider of Aboriginal staff for the Barrangaroo South project, with a target of 500 Indigenous workers over ten years. The pathway will involve Indigenous job seekers undertaking the Certificate I in Construction course (commenced in December 2012) to be run at Nirimba TAFE (part of the Western Sydney Institute), close to where many Indigenous families live. This is seen as a pathway that will enable job seekers to gain enough confidence to move into the Certificate II in Construction run by KJR at their inner Sydney base.

Soft Landings is another social enterprise (sponsored by Mission Australia) providing employment and training opportunities to people who have experienced barriers entering the open labour market (Soft Landings 2012). The project originated in the Illawarra and has now expanded into Western Sydney. The initial target was to employ ten people working with two trucks. Three years later, the enterprise employs 60 people, with two sites and 20 trucks. They have contracts with numerous councils to collect and strip down old mattresses and recycle their parts.

Approach to data

Data sources

Table 2 summarises the use of data sources, as reported by regional networks, sectoral stakeholders and agencies. In the responses to the survey, regional and sectoral groups reported that, when preparing regional workforce plans and regional workforce development plans, they relied for the most part on data from the ABS Census and Labour Force Surveys. Census data in particular are reportable at very fine levels and include information on many valuable characteristics (including labour force status, industry, occupation, level and field of qualifications, method of travel to work, as well as demographic characteristics such as sex, age and ethnic background). However, currency quickly becomes an issue, since the Census is only conducted every five years. The Northern Territory Department of Business has in previous years produced the Workforce NT reports, using data from various sources to develop regional profiles. These reports have not been completed since 2008 and relied heavily on data from the 2006 Census.

Table 2: Use of data sources, as reported by regional networks, sectoral stakeholders and agencies

Source	Regional	Sectoral	Agency
Data			
Census	Nearly all	Most	Nearly all
Labour Force Survey	Nearly all	Most	Most
Other ABS surveys	Most	Most	Most
DEEWR Higher Education collection	Some	Some	Some
DEEWR Vacancy report	Most	Some	Some
DEEWR Skill shortage list	Most	Most	Most
NCVER data			
National VET Collection	Some	Most	Some
Apprentices and Trainees Collection	Most	Most	Most
Student Outcomes Survey	Few	Some	Few
Survey of Employer Use and Views (SUEV)	Few	Most	Few
Skills Australia/AWPA Skilled Occupation List	Some	Nearly all	Few
State/territory government administrative data			
VET and Apprenticeships/Traineeships	Most	Most	Most
Other state/territory administrative data	Some	Some	Some
Local custom surveys	Some	Most	Few
Other data sources	Some	Most	Some
Projections			
Skills Australia/AWPA National forecasts	Most	Most	Few
Centre for Policy Studies, Monash University	Few	Few	Some
Access Economics Macroeconomic forecasts	Few	Some	Some
Other economic forecasts	Some	Some	Most

Note: Ranges are based on: > 75%: Nearly all; > 50%: Most; > 30%: Some > 0: Few.

Regional and sectoral groups also commonly made use of data from DEEWR and AWPA. Most also use the Skills Australia/AWPA Skilled Occupation List and the Skills Australia/AWPA national forecasts. Sectoral groups were more likely to make use of data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), whereas regional networks were more likely to make use of administrative data from the state and territory governments. Apart from the projections released by AWPA, most regional and sectoral groups made limited use of projections. This can be attributed to a number of factors:

- **Awareness:** not all regional networks may be aware of the projections produced. In particular, DEEWR commissioned the Centre for Policy Studies at Monash University to undertake modelling for employment forecasts for industry down to the level of statistical division or statistical sub-division.
- **Availability:** the availability of forecast data is growing but many plans were prepared before some of the more recent forecasts were released.
- **Alignment:** the region undertaking the workforce planning and development may be too small to make use of the predictions, or the boundaries may not align well with those used in the forecast. A summary of the different data sources and their lowest geographical level is included in Appendix B.
- **Capability:** many of the Regional Coordinators contacted as part of this project advised that they rely on the expertise of other parts of their agency where strong data analysis skills are required. There may be a reluctance to include projections if people preparing regional plans are not aware of how they were calculated and what assumptions were used to produce the projections.
- **Controversy:** the use of forecasts may be contentious among local stakeholders, particularly if they predict decline in some sectors. This was raised in interviews with some regional networks; while forecasts did prompt debate, they were still included.

DEEWR and state government agencies conducting regional workforce planning on behalf of local alliances and networks reported they were more comfortable commissioning regional-level forecasts of labour and skills demand. In South Australia, DFEEST commissions regional forecasts for skills needs up to three years in advance. In conjunction with Regional Development Australia and other South Australian Government agencies with an interest in economic and employment development, an approach is being adopted to identify, analyse and consult on each region's workforce capacity and capability, in order to determine and resource workforce development strategies.

This approach, to be applied across all non-metropolitan regions in the first instance, will be based upon the:

- Murraylands and Riverland Jobs Growth and Investment Forecast
- Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island and Barossa Regional Skills Development Project.

A number of respondents to the survey reported that survey data (such as from the ABS Labour Force Survey or the NCVER Student Outcomes Survey) did not have adequate samples. Administrative datasets do not share this limitation. In addition to administrative data from NCVER and state and territory education and training departments, survey respondents mentioned data on benefit claimants from Centrelink, higher education admissions data, visa approvals from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and data from occupational licensing authorities in an array of industries. For example, Tasracing uses licensing data to determine the demand for jockey numbers. Much of this data is publicly available and regularly updated and provides an underused source of accurate information at the regional level. Best practice could promote its further use. Table B1 in the Appendices provides a summary of some useful regional workforce planning and development data widely available.

Data custodianship

Data custodianship refers to the number of units a region must work with in order to access a range of current data on workforce demand and supply. It may be:

- *unified, where a single agency can supply information on employment, training and education or*
- *divided, where multiple agencies control data and no single unit has responsibility for coordinating and providing data (with analysis) to regional workforce planning and development alliances or networks.*

Data custodianship is a prominent victim of organisational silos. Many agencies with primary responsibility for workforce development have emerged from departments of training or departments of education. Even if there is a single source of information on education enrolments and completion across school, VET and higher education, this may not be mapped with the necessary information on demand for skills and labour, which historically resided in departments of employment. Both Western Australia (in the Department of Training and Workforce Development) and South Australia (in the Department of Further Education, Employment Science and Technology) have units that compile data looking at VET enrolments and which map that to current and future workforce supply and demand requirements.

One consequence of the skills reform program in New South Wales is that data on total VET activity and employment projections will be consolidated within State Training Services. At the moment, data are collected, clustered and analysed separately by TAFE institutes (using their institute catchment areas) and by State Training Services, according to its state training areas. These areas broadly align with one another; however, there are differences at the margins. Furthermore, neither STS's nor TAFE's regional classification system aligns precisely with ABS categories. Local TAFE institutes examine their own enrolment data and State Training Services handle the user choice funding (predominantly for apprenticeships but also other programs established in response to structural adjustment), with no agency having sole responsibility for the full range of workforce planning domains, notably, workforce participation and VET activity outside TAFE and enrolments covered by user choice funding. As part of the *Smart and Skilled* reforms, total VET activity and employment projections data will be used to inform the allocation of funding for training by registered training organisations (RTOs) delivering government-subsidised training. Like New South Wales, Queensland is currently reconsidering its workforce planning data requirements in light of the move to an entitlement model. Skills Queensland is currently concentrating on developing its modelling of demand-driven training and has no current plans to produce regional-level data-reporting.

The main provider of data at the national level is the Labour Market Research and Analysis Branch in DEEWR. This branch performs ongoing analysis of the ABS Labour Force Survey and other ABS products relating to employment and workforce development. DEEWR conducts regional surveys of employers' experiences with recruitment on a rolling basis. Since 2009, these have been usually aligned with the Priority Employment Areas. The branch also produces the Internet Vacancy Index (IVI), which now includes regional-level information on vacancies for occupations at the two-digit ANZSCO level. The branch maintains the Labour Market Information Portal (<http://www.deewr.gov.au/lmip/>), which collates labour market information from the ABS, DEEWR and Centrelink. The branch commissions and publishes annually projections on

employment growth. The most recent projections were produced by the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University. At the national level, these projections are at the four-digit level of occupations. Regional-level data are available by industry only. The branch supplies regional-level data to other branches and agencies within DEEWR, AWPAA and other federal departments as requested.

The OECD recommends that national (and by extension in this report, state and territory) policy-makers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that disaggregated data are made available to local decision-makers. Information should be available on as many dimensions of workforce supply and demand as possible (Froy & Giguère 2010: 25). Reliable data at the regional level are not just useful to local workforce planning and development specialists: information on the skill composition of a region's workforce, including the skill content of local occupations, the workforce's levels of academic attainment, and the level of innovation practised by the workforce can be used as indicators of a region's economic and civic health (Eberts, Ericcek & Kleinhenz 2006). The Eberts et al. study focused on the north-eastern Ohio regional economy in the United States and found the following factors were strongly related to employment levels, output, income per capita and productivity:

- skilled workforce
- urban assimilation
- racial inclusion
- age of local infrastructure
- income equality
- local amenities
- business dynamics
- urbanisation.

The research results strengthen the rationale for collecting more data on the skill composition of workforces at the regional level, as well as improving the key skill indicators (such as academic attainment and the skill content of local jobs).

Data collection

Where access to robust regional data does not exist, agencies do have the option of collecting custom data. For many reasons, it is difficult for the Northern Territory to access reliable data at the regional level. Some of these reasons include its small population size, geographic dispersion, and the high proportion of Indigenous people. When the NT Department of Business and DEEWR compiled jobs profiles for each of the 20 major regional towns in 2011, they collected their own data predominantly through a face-to-face census of businesses in each of the towns. Custom data collection requires, however, a significant investment of resources, time, expertise and goodwill from stakeholders.

In response to the limitations of existing survey data, many local networks and groups have conducted their own surveys of organisations. Typically, these surveys will be distributed to local businesses to assess current and future labour and skills needs. A common issue in regional areas is the high proportion of small businesses, including businesses that do not have any employees. The Barossa and Adelaide Hills Fleurieu Peninsula-Kangaroo Island areas are an example of this, and the Adelaide Hills-Barossa RDA has been targeting small businesses in its survey to incorporate the skills development needs of micro-businesses. Two-thirds of the businesses in the region are one-person or family owner-operators with no employees, and are thus outside the scope of many existing ABS surveys. Local custom surveys may also address specific issues (one example given was a survey of teacher accommodation in the region). Other local groups were concerned about whether a local survey would be valid and trustworthy. A toolkit of resources for regional groups could include a register of local surveys that could be refined over time.

Data analysis and synthesis

The extent to which regional workforce planning and development networks or alliances have the capacity to conduct or access data may range from:

- *basic, where reliance is on historical secondary data and there is little or no custom data collection or use of modelling, to*
- *tailored, where extensive use is made of custom data, a range of secondary data sources, and future workforce demand and supply projections.*

Having the capacity to conduct rigorous and meaningful data analysis is one of the top challenges for promoting widespread best practice in regional workforce planning. The best examples from across the country involved data specialists coming from government departments, with their access to administrative datasets as well as to commissioned macroeconomic forecasts, working alongside consultants, who were able to produce data profiles in formats that were readily understandable by end-users, using features such as graphs and maps. The increasing use of consultants in this area is an unplanned, unintended consequence of the current models of funding workforce development plans, but an effective way of sharing and developing capacity for meaningful data analysis. An exception here is the Local Employment Coordinators and RESJ Coordinators, who rely mainly on data provided by the Labour Market Data Branch of DEEWR.

Another feature that distinguished excellent workforce planning and workforce development planning was the ability to synthesise data on workforce supply, workforce demand, and workforce development. The Hume Workforce Development Plan, developed with the assistance of Workforce Planning Australia, was a particularly good example of this capability. Synthesising information on workforce demand, demographic change, and education and training throughput is essential if the workforce plan is to address the overall question of whether there is a sufficient supply of appropriately skilled and capable people within the region to address the current and future skill needs of industry and the local community. Combining these data to answer that question is not straightforward and involves complex logistical and statistical considerations. Usually, these will have different data sources (such as Census, survey or administrative datasets), with different levels of government and different agencies as custodians (including ABS, DEEWR, state government departments, individual universities and TAFE institutes). Populations and time periods will usually vary and there is the already-discussed question of differing geographical boundaries. Employees or consultants engaged at the local level will not normally have the time, budget or expertise to conduct this kind of activity. If it is done at the local level, it is often done poorly. It is difficult to replicate this kind of analysis at the regional level if it is not already being done at the national and state level. Therefore, it is critical that national and state agencies continue to develop and promote in-house data expertise.

The consultants referred to by respondents to the regional network survey as being heavily involved in working with local stakeholders to produce workforce plans and workforce development plans tended to either have expertise in regional development (as in the case of the data specialists REMPLAN or the University of Ballarat, Centre for Regional Innovation and Competiveness) or an established track record in the workforce planning and development field (such as Workforce Planning Australia). These consultants bring credibility and the experience of working directly with industry and community stakeholders in regional areas.

The role played by modelling specialists such as the Centre for Policy Studies at Monash University or Access Economics, who also produce macroeconomic forecasts, was more limited to the provision of data. These relationships were more transactional, frequently indirect (coordinated by state or national agencies for a collection of regions) and not as enduring.

Reviews of overseas practice (Froy & Giguère 2010: 59) identify that local data should be:

- owned or commissioned by a credible partnership of relevant regional actors
- reliable as the result of using advanced and robust analytical methods
- disaggregated to at least city council and district level
- informed by a regional long-term economic development strategic plan
- updated regularly
- provided in a form useful for guiding the decisions of all stakeholders.

The role of data consultants in building capacity

A number of respondents to the survey mentioned the positive role played by consultants and data packages in helping to develop their workforce plan. The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies contributed modelling that informs all of the regional workforce participation and equity plans in that state. The Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Alliance commissioned the University of Western Australia to prepare a report for the region, *Workforce Futures*. Many Western Australian, New South Wales and Victorian regional workforce plans have used data from REMPLAN. REMPLAN is an online software tool developed by Compelling Consulting, a spin-off of the Department of Economics at Latrobe University. REMPLAN uses data from the Census and other sources to produce default workforce profiles, covering major demographic characteristics such as industry and occupation, qualification levels, and place of employment.

Regional Development Victoria engaged Workforce Planning Australia to contribute data to the Hume Workforce Development Plan. Workforce Planning Australia worked with in-house data analysts and economists in the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to integrate the information on the existing workforce (drawn from ABS Census and survey data), the future workforce (using projections produced by the Centre for Policy Studies at Monash University) and the future local supply of labour, estimated using enrolment and completion data held by the department. The data profiles produced by Workforce Planning Australia were colourful, accessible and readily understood by stakeholders during consultations. Because they were so accessible, the consultations served as a validation exercise, while the synthesis of supply and demand data helped to pose tangible questions ripe for a response, such as *What can be done to increase the employment prospects of locally skilled people from non-English speaking backgrounds?* The data also helped to generate buy-in from local industry and businesses, because they were able to incorporate the data into their own workforce plans.

Range of activities

Three different types of regional workforce development activities are considered:

1. *attracting and retaining talent*
2. *integrating disadvantaged groups*
3. *upgrading the skills of the low-qualified.*

Networks or alliances with a strong focus on workforce development implementation and which are mainly responding to employer evidence of skills shortages will tend to focus on (3) and (1). Networks or alliances with a strong workforce planning dimension will tend to give more attention to (2).

These three components to developing balanced local skills strategies were identified by the OECD in its international review of this topic (Froy, Giguère & Hofer 2009).

Among the main tools cited by the OECD for attracting and retaining talent are investing in local quality of life and effective city planning. To integrate disadvantaged groups, the OECD recommends establishing outreach centres and alternative forms of learning (emphasising mentoring), as well as providing specific support for immigrants, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and Indigenous populations. Local initiatives to support upskilling those in employment include the development of career clusters, centres of excellence for particular sectors and support for businesses to provide customised training and career planning to their employees. A full list of actions cited by the OECD for each strategic objective is included in Appendix D.

Agencies with no established regional structure and/or which have limited funds available for workforce planning and development activities will tend to give priority to workforce development planning and workforce development initiatives, particularly those that respond to the needs of employers and existing workers. This is what can be observed in Queensland. Similarly, workforce development initiatives appear

more prominent in New South Wales, because planning activities are currently divided between State Training Services and TAFE institutes. Skills Tasmania works with industry on Industry Workforce Plans and Workforce Partnership Projects. For example, Skills Tasmania has worked with stakeholders to produce a plan for the agricultural sector (Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association & Skills Tasmania, 2011), with a balance across the activities and less of a distinction between workforce planning and workforce development planning. By contrast, South Australia has more of a balance across the three types of activities. In addition to workforce plans that are developed for each State Government Region (SGR), Regional Coordinators and Skills for All Regional Networks in each region are a critical part of an integrated regional planning and delivery mechanism that includes RDA and DEEWR staff in priority regions. Most regions in Western Australia are well advanced through the workforce planning activities and have a current focus on workforce development planning.

Both current programs operated by DEEWR – the Priority Employment Area Initiative and the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan Initiative – have an element of workforce development planning activities. Both Regional Employment Plans and Regional Education Skills and Jobs Plans draw on data already available through DEEWR to support workforce planning and development. The plans are designed to maximise the benefit of existing workforce development initiatives and concentrate on improving collaboration among local stakeholders. Their emphasis could therefore be described as taking place at a level further removed from workforce development planning: what could be termed ‘workforce development coordination’. Notwithstanding this, there is a place for workforce development activities in the Priority Employment Area Initiative through the Flexible Funding Pool. Likewise, the Tourism Employment Plans are designed to direct employers and industries to existing workforce development programs.

The emphasis of activities is also a natural consequence of policy life cycles. Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees were only established in 2010 (although they replaced an early structure), so many of the workforce development activities being sponsored by those committees are still characterised as workforce plans and workforce development plans. RDA committees that were quick to produce workforce development plans, such as Hume and the Grampians in Victoria, have begun to move on to implementation stages. In Western Australia, where the Regional Development Commission structure has been longer established, local regional groups have made more progress with implementation, subject to the resources that they have available. Priority Employment Areas were established in 2009 with a remit to implement jobs programs quickly in response to the Global Financial Crisis, so there is a longer track record of achievements through this initiative.

A common feature across many of the regional workforce planning and development activities reviewed as part of this stocktake is the focus on workforce participation and social inclusion. This aspect distinguishes workforce planning and development at the regional level from other levels, particularly the industry and enterprise level. For example, a key focus of the Mid-West Workforce Development Plan in Western Australia will be to increase the employment participation of older people, youth, Indigenous people, people with disabilities and women. Achieving this requires a broader group of stakeholders, drawn from sectors that include education, employment services, housing, disability and mental health.

However, it is also important to emphasise that many of the regional networks that responded perceived that their role is and should be primarily be centred on workforce development planning and workforce development implementation. This partly reflects a misunderstanding of what workforce planning involves, but it is also influenced by regions feeling they lack the capability and resources to meet the workforce planning requirement on their own.

Skills Tasmania indicated that between 2002 and 2008, it produced Training Demand Profiles (TDPs), which combined elements of workforce planning with industry consultation; however, the agency has moved to a new model of Skills and Workforce plans to improve strategic engagement with industry. While TDPs did rely on labour market and training data, they did not lead to actions and strategies that informed future workforce needs. Some local regional workforce development groups responding to the survey also reported a reluctance to engage in costly and time-consuming data analysis and collection when there were few resources to support the activities which would flow from the data.

DFEEST Regional Coordinators carry plans into local practice

A strategic plan for increasing workforce participation is developed for each State Government Region in South Australia. Priorities identified by industry, government and community stakeholders determine the nature of projects, which are scoped, planned and implemented in response to the SA Government's goals and objectives.

Skills for All in Regions (formerly South Australia Works) is supported on the ground through a Regional Coordinator. The coordinator's role is to facilitate participation, training and employment activities that assist in building economic development. There are ten coordinators across the state who work closely with employers and industry at the local level to achieve participation and productivity targets.

Skills for All in Regions seeks to reach, engage and support people who face barriers to learning, training and work, through flexible and responsive initiatives tailored to the specific needs of individuals, communities, regions, industries and employers.

Skills for All in Regions delivers:

- *Locally tailored participation projects:* providing pathways into learning, training and work for people who have significant barriers to participation, by working through stakeholder networks to integrate a range of supports to provide the client group with access to training and employment.
- *Career development services:* assisting people with barriers to employment by providing career advice and guidance, career planning, and job search support through qualified career development practitioners.

Funding for initiatives

Funding for initiatives may be either:

- *fixed, where each region is allocated a determined sum to plan and undertake initiatives or*
- *targeted, where each region is usually funded to undertake workforce planning and workforce development planning, but must bid for additional funds to undertake workforce development initiatives.*

Commitment expected from stakeholders may be:

- *high, where a co-investment is required as a condition of funding support or*
- *low, where a co-investment is not required.*

The state and territory governments have adopted a variety of approaches for allocating funds to regional workforce planning and development activities. South Australia on the one hand works with stakeholders in every region in the state to produce strategic plans that identify workforce needs and support workforce development initiatives. Funding is allocated to regions according to a formula based primarily on the characteristics of the population, with a loading for regions outside the metropolitan area. South Australia is currently working with Regional Development Australia boards to implement a process for anticipating industry demand for future skills to support longer-term regional workforce development planning and the resourcing of strategies to meet workforce needs. In New South Wales, each State Training Services region has access to a pool of funding that can be used to purchase training in response to local needs. However, a portion of user choice funding is also retained centrally so that it can be allocated to any regional need that may arise because of structural adjustment or infrastructure projects. In addition, any funding that is not spent is returned to the central pool and is also available for re-allocation to regions that may have an identified higher need. Skills Queensland has funding available to sponsor regional and industry workforce development activities. These funds are allocated to projects in response to identified needs. Industry sectors are the focus of Skills Tasmania's workforce development activities, and funds are allocated to industry groups to develop Industry Workforce Plans and Workforce Partnership Projects. The Northern Territory will begin funding regional workforce development plans/strategies from 2013, and these funds

will be allocated according to the level of interest displayed by regions in conducting projects. In Northern Territory each region has access to a pool of funding that can be used to purchase training in response to local needs. In Western Australia, RDCs may bid for funding to conduct workforce development projects as part of the Royalties for Regions program. In Victoria, the presence of committed funding differs for each RDA committee. Regional workforce development initiatives in Hume have committed funding. Initiatives in other regions do not have committed funding as yet, but are expected to have it eventually.

Regional Development Victoria's (RDV) regional workforce planning and development initiatives are funded from the regional growth fund. While funding generally occurs on a needs basis, through the fund RDV runs the Putting Locals First Program, which includes, among other things, grants for local initiatives to increase business and employment opportunities. The program does not require a co-contribution, but applicants are required to demonstrate how the program will be sustainable once program funding ends. In addition, the Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap is a coordinated, long-term plan for future industry and employment growth in the Latrobe Valley.

Rapid response to structural adjustment in NSW

In New South Wales, State Training Services works with the NSW Government and other agencies as part of rapid response teams to provide a whole-of-government response to large-scale retrenchments. As part of these teams, which offer a range of government and community services, State Training Services coordinates access to training. Examples of responses in regions areas are provided below.

North Coast and Mid-North Coast and New England

- Hillgrove gold mine in Armidale in 2009 (100 affected jobs): the rapid response team assessed training issues to enable people to complete their qualifications, or to undertake other skill sets or qualifications. Skill sets were funded to enable workers to transfer to coal mining.
- Automotive spare parts company: the rapid response team undertook a skills analysis, assisted people to complete the qualifications they were undertaking and established links to Job Services Australia (JSA) providers and employers. Some workers obtained meat processing qualifications for work in abattoirs, while others completed some engineering skill sets, aged care or children's services qualifications.

Illawarra and South-East NSW

- Retrenchments in the Southern Highlands and Goulburn in engineering; in a clothing and textiles firm that moved production offshore, in call centres that closed and retrenchments in Seawind Catamarans (2010): STS worked with government departments and JSA, organised training courses and skill sets, around 85% now working.

Western NSW and Riverina

- Young abattoir closed in 2010 (350 affected jobs). The rapid response team set up a one-stop shop in Wagga and recruited a local training officer to work with the community. Workshops were organised for the affected workers and the region planned a VET response, which included locating employment opportunities, in conjunction with Industry and Investment NSW and JSA providers.
- Training was also organised for retrenched workers from SunRice in Leeton 2009.

This process meets the four key findings of Osterman's (1988: 103) United States evaluation of best practice in how to respond to labour market restructuring:

- early notification of layoff or closings
- on-site worker assistance services
- counselling and placement assistance as important as training
- cooperative efforts between stakeholders.

As part of the Priority Employment Area Initiative, funding is available through the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool to support the activities of the Local Employment Coordinator. Funding cannot duplicate existing activities or projects but can supplement or replicate activities or projects. As part of the RESJ Plan Initiative, the coordinators have access to a modest amount of funding (\$1 326 000 over three years to June 2014) to facilitate the effective engagement with the local community in the development and implementation of the plans. The roll-out of the Tourism Employment Plans has been staged, with areas of greatest need (as identified in the Tourism Labour Force Report) being given priority.

Reserving at least a portion of the funding to enable its allocation to regions according to competitive criteria builds in an incentive for regions to test industry and stakeholder commitment to a project before it proceeds. Requiring a matched commitment from local groups can be a further test of local interest (although agencies should be careful not to set the contribution threshold too high, as small businesses in particular may be highly sensitive).

Although there is a strong case to be made for targeted funding for workforce development initiatives, all regional alliances and networks should be resourced adequately to conduct workforce planning, workforce development planning and capacity-building among stakeholders. The cost of not having an automatic stream of resources to support activities may be delay and a loss of confidence/enthusiasm among stakeholders. As one respondent to the survey commented:

It is onerous on an organisation, already very busy, to allocate time to provide the executive support. Dedicated, paid executive support would provide assistance to the proponents responsible for [following up] action items and therefore increase the possibility of actions being achieved in a timely manner.

Organisation of stakeholders and Governance

This dimension relates to the resources allocated to bringing stakeholders together to conduct regional workforce planning and development. Networks or alliances may adopt either a cooperative or coordinated approach:

- *Under a coordinated approach, networks or alliances may have set criteria for membership (or allocated positions for stakeholders from different industry sectors, local government, education and training providers, and employment services organisations), as well as funding for a coordinator to provide executive support to the alliance.*
- *Under a cooperative model, the onus is placed on stakeholders to organise themselves, often using pre-existing networks such as chambers of commerce or industry associations.*

An evaluation of local skills initiatives in the United States records a similar governance structure: large partnerships that engage multiple partners (drawn from industry, education and economic development, as well as employment and community services bodies) and which serve multiple goals (existing workers, local people currently outside the labour force, school students and businesses). However, while ‘messy and complex and creating a myriad of organisational challenges’, the evaluation endorses this broad structure because a broad base:

- widens the potential funding opportunities
- keeps business and industry involved, ensuring currency of objectives
- creates space for ‘policy entrepreneurs’ to emerge (Hamilton 2012: 27).

Agencies typically try to set the parameters for effectively organising stakeholders and involving them in regional workforce planning and development activities. For example, RDA committees must comprise federal, state and local elected representatives as well as committee members drawn from a cross-section of the local community, including employers and those from universities and other institutions.

However, formal frameworks for consulting with stakeholders are a necessary but not sufficient condition for positive outcomes, as the responses from regional networks made clear. The establishment of working parties and other ad hoc groups was a common method for drawing in additional local stakeholders, such as training providers, employment services providers, or Indigenous groups, whose support and involvement may be required for initiatives to succeed.

In a number of responses, it was made clear that organising stakeholders is much more difficult in metropolitan areas than non-metropolitan areas. There are many sound reasons for this. Regional boundaries in metropolitan areas are both less distinct and more porous. Regional areas are readily defined around a particular provincial city, town or group of towns. There will also often be obvious geographical and economic delimiters. Metropolitan areas are less distinct, in that different people and organisations will have varying definitions of the region in relation to local landmarks, institutions and transport paths. Metropolitan regions are also more porous, in that people will often travel out of (and into) the region in order to participate in employment, education and training. It is suggested that the issue of how to conduct regional workforce planning and development in metropolitan settings is given further consideration. In the meantime, most jurisdictions will continue to concentrate on sponsoring regional workforce planning and development initiatives in non-metropolitan areas.

Local coordinators frequently reported that involving businesses in regional workforce planning and development activities is challenging. Many businesses do not invest time into workforce planning and even well-developed and user-friendly tools may not have an active take-up. Activities that produce a tangible outcome, such as ten skilled participants graduating from a pre-employment course, will have more appeal among businesses. However, this does not address the issue of how to build greater awareness among businesses of their own role in workforce planning and development.

A consistent approach across successful projects is that significant time and resources are devoted to attracting all local players currently participating in workforce development activities to the workforce planning and workforce development planning process. This stage was commonly described as an environmental scan. A number of local coordinators reported being overwhelmed with the number of initiatives already in place. One consultant described amassing a database of over 200 documents. While exhausting, this process was commonly seen as generating goodwill and in some cases led to reduced duplication. Newer entrants to the space, such as those working through RDAs, often saw their role as acting as a clearinghouse or potential funder of existing activities rather than as initiators. One recommendation from a local coordinator was to include local industry and involve them in the selection process (such as interviewing candidates for a pre-employment or other training program) wherever possible. This approach also encourages employer commitment and increases the likelihood of jobs at the conclusion of a project, making the participants more committed.

Achieving stakeholder participation that is both wide and deep requires considerable time and networking expertise. Both the Priority Employment Area Initiative and the Tourism Employment Plans initiative build a requirement to establish and maintain a committee with appropriate stakeholder input into their contract agreements with Local Employment Coordinators and TEP contractors.

Balancing breadth of stakeholder network with extent of commitment

The coordinator of the Hume RDA Workforce Development Plan relayed her experience in establishing the network:

When I arrived on the ground I was immensely frustrated at the number of projects. But no one was learning from anybody else's mistakes. I put everybody in a room that I thought was doing anything to do with workforce planning or development. [I told them] 'Look we don't have any money but you are all funded. We need to roll our sleeves up'.

The working group included three levels of government and 12 local government areas. There was input at the state government level from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Department of Regional Development and the Department of Health, which had its own local workforce planning capacity but saw the sense in linking up. The group also includes 11 industry groups and representatives from TAFE institutes and the Local Learning Education Networks (LLENs). Ultimately there were around 40 people around the table.

Getting the right people on board at the right time mattered. Because they had the time and resources to devote to the project, industry representatives were initially drawn from industry and employer groups, not directly from employers. Local employers were brought in once profiles had been prepared and they were better able to see how the project could benefit them.

Summary

Table 2 provides a summary of the current approaches to regional workforce planning and development adopted by the various jurisdictions. For every jurisdiction, the dimensions have been allocated based on an interpretation of the material gathered during the stocktake. Jurisdictions were allocated to dimensions inductively, and individual dimensions may be subject to interpretation. The aim of the table is to demonstrate the broad range of current regional workforce planning and development activities across Australia, rather than provide an assessment of any particular jurisdiction.

Table 2a: Summary of regional workforce planning and development framework by jurisdiction, state and territory

Dimension	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT
Geographic structure of workforce planning regions	Exhaustive	Comprehensive	Responsive	Comprehensive	Exhaustive	NA	Comprehensive
Alignment of workforce planning regions with other regional boundaries	Independent	Parallel	Independent	Intertwined	Intertwined	NA	NA
Information custodianship	Divided	Unified	Under development	Unified	Unified	Undeveloped	Undeveloped
Use of data	Some tailored	Tailored	Some tailored	Tailored	Tailored	Basic	Some custom
Relationship to other local plans	Connected	Connected	Connected	Integrated	Connected/ Integrated	NA	Connected
Relationship to state and national workforce plans	Correlated	Standalone	Standalone	Nested	Nested	NA	NA
Emphasis of activities	Increasing participation Existing workers	Attract and retain Increasing participation	Attract and retain Existing workers	Attract and retain Increasing participation Existing workers	Attract and retain Increasing participation	Existing workers	Attract and retain Existing workers Increasing participation
Funding for initiatives	Some targeted	Some targeted	Targeted	Some targeted	Fixed	Targeted	Targeted
Commitment expected from of stakeholders	Medium	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Medium
Organisation of stakeholders	Cooperative	Coordinated	Cooperative	Coordinated	Coordinated	Cooperative	Cooperative

Notes: ACT does not conduct regional workforce development activities and has not been included in this table.

Table 2b: Summary of regional workforce planning and development framework by jurisdiction, Australian Government

Dimension	DEEWR – Priority employment areas	DEEWR – Regional Education, Skills and Jobs	Regional Development Australia	Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (Tourism)	AWPA & Industry skills councils
Geographic structure of workforce planning regions	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Exhaustive	Comprehensive	Responsive
Alignment of workforce planning regions with other regional boundaries	Parallel	Intertwined	Intertwined	Parallel	Various
Information custodianship	Unified	Unified	NA	NA	Divided
Use of data	Mostly basic	Mostly basic	Mostly basic	Some tailored	Some tailored
Relationship to other local plans	Connected	Integrated	Integrated	Connected	Isolated
Relationship to state and national workforce plans	Nested	Nested	Correlated	Correlated	Correlated
Emphasis of activities	Increasing participation	Increasing participation Existing workers	Attract and retain Increasing participation Existing workers	Existing workers Attract and retain	Existing workers
Funding for initiatives	Some targeted	Fixed	Fixed	Targeted	Targeted
Expectations of stakeholders	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Organisation of stakeholders	Coordinated	Coordinated	Coordinated	Coordinated	Cooperative

Notes:

Best Practice Principles

Alignment to the stocktake findings

Ten best practice principles have been developed, based on the stocktake of regional workforce planning and development activities in Australia and overseas. In this section, the principles are aligned with examples drawn from the stocktake.

Purpose:

1. **Regional workforce plans should encompass a balance of activities.** Regional workforce plans should include strategies to:
 - attract and retain new sources of skilled labour
 - increase the labour market participation of disadvantaged people within the region
 - improve the qualifications and skills utilisation of the region's current workforce.

Achieving these three elements involves regions undertaking workforce planning, workforce development planning, and the implementation of workforce development activities.

Example from the stocktake:

- *The Make it Work initiative in New South Wales developed strategies to increase the attractiveness of working in agriculture, improve retention of existing workers and develop disadvantaged job seekers and local school students as a potential source of labour.*

Structure:

2. **The division of states or territories into workforce planning and development regions should be organised around commonly understood areas of economic and workforce activity.** Although the regional structure need not be exhaustive, local workforce planning and development should be supported in all regions that meet the lead agency's mission. Metropolitan areas should not be ignored as sites for regional workforce planning and development.

Examples from the stocktake:

- *South Australia has divided the entire state into regions for the purposes of regional workforce planning, including metropolitan areas. This has been supported with resources to support each region.*
- *The Priority Employment Areas targeted by DEEWR cover non-metropolitan and metropolitan areas and their selection was informed by analysis of over 70 labour market indicators .*

3. **Workforce planning and development regions should be intertwined with other regional structures.** Local government areas and Regional Development Australia regions are the most active and embedded regional structures in most states and territories.

Examples from the stocktake:

- *South Australia and Victoria both use RDA boundaries as their main organising unit for regional workforce planning, as do Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators. The boundaries of the Western Australian Regional Development Commissions almost entirely align with RDA boundaries.*

Alignment with other plans

4. **Regional workforce plans should set goals that are correlated with state/territory and national workforce goals.** Regional workforce goals should support state/territory and national goals but be determined primarily by local workforce needs

Examples from the stocktake:

- *The Western Australian and South Australian regional workforce plans (among others) explicitly link to statewide workforce development targets.*

5. **Regional workforce planning and development should be integrated with other regional planning and development activities.** Regional workforce plans should support and take account of regional economic development, social inclusion, education and planning policies. Policies as well as plans can be integrated, such as through the use of social enterprises in local procurement and tying employment and training outcomes to local development processes (Social Procurement Action Group 2012).

Example from the stocktake:

- *The Western Sydney/Blue Mountains Local Employment Plan supports a number of local social enterprise schemes.*

Stakeholder involvement

6. **Regional workforce planning and development should be led by local stakeholders.** This requires a high level of commitment from stakeholders. Central workforce planning and development agencies have a responsibility to develop stakeholders' awareness of workforce planning and development as well as their capacity to participate in these processes where it is not already present.

Example from the stocktake:

- *Skills Tasmania, Skills Queensland and the federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism have all invested in capacity-building, so that local networks have the awareness and skills to lead their own regional workforce planning and development activities.*

7. **Regional workforce planning and development should encompass a broad cross-section of stakeholders,** including representatives from multiple industry sectors, education and training, local government and employment services, and representatives from local disadvantaged populations. To sustain this requires the championing of local coordinators.

Example from the stocktake:

- *The Hume Workforce Development Plan project relied on the capacity of a local champion to draw together representatives from a cross-section of different industry sectors, education and training providers and other stakeholders.*

Data

8. **Regional workforce planning networks and alliances should be resourced with data from a single contact point.** Regional workforce networks and alliances should have access to data that spans workforce demand, workforce supply and projections for future local population and workforce needs.

Example from the stocktake:

- *Both Western Australia (in the Department of Training and Workforce Development) and South Australia (in the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology) have units that compile data examining VET enrolments and which map the data to current and future workforce supply and demand requirements.*

9. **Regional workforce planning should be informed by reliable and tailored data, including projections of future supply and demand.** Where reliable quantitative data are not available at the regional level, data at the state or territory level should be used alongside local intelligence. Regional workforce planning networks and alliances should be supported and resourced to conduct their own data collection, where this would assist decision-making.

Example from the stocktake:

- *The Victorian workforce plans in the Grampians and in Hume included tailored data, drawn from a number of sources, to map current and future supply and demand.*

Resourcing

10. **Regional workforce planning and development should be resourced adequately.** Ongoing resources should be available to support planning and network coordination activities. The implementation of regional workforce development activities should be funded primarily through existing programs but support should be available on a targeted basis to provide mentoring, program coordination and evaluation.

Examples from the stocktake:

- *New South Wales State Training Services is able to provide tailored funding in response to labour market adjustment.*
- *The Flexible Funding Pool for the Local Employment Coordinators plays a very useful role in providing support for coordinating and mentoring.*

Best Practice Framework

Testing and building capability around key processes

About the Framework

This framework specifies the stages necessary to achieve best practice workforce planning and development. Identified at each stage is:

- which agency, organisation or individual should lead the stage
- the preconditions for being able to commence the stage
- the stage's completion, signalling that the next stage of workforce planning and development can begin
- the conditions under which regional workforce planning and development should be suspended.

A strong message from the central agencies and local workforce planning and development stakeholders who participated in the research for this report is that local groups must be encouraged and nurtured to take leadership of regional workforce planning and development activities.

Therefore, this framework has been divided into two parts. The first part concentrates on how central workforce planning and development agencies should initiate and sustain local workforce planning and development alliances and networks, build workforce planning and development capacity in regions, and provide resources and support on a sustainable basis. Proceeding with regional workforce planning and development activities where there is insufficient local capacity is unlikely to be successful and may be counter-productive – through the erosion of goodwill and the disappointment of unmet expectations. For example, all the successful regional initiatives and those which had been carried through to implementation reviewed as part of this project were characterised by pre-existing, active local networks of industry and businesses. Local industry networks emerge over time as a result of geographic, economic and social considerations.

The second part of the framework is more detailed and outlines the stages through which local workforce planning and development alliances and networks should work. The framework contains nine stages:

- Deduce a workforce development need.
- Identify a regional contribution.
- Probe stakeholder investment.
- Validate goals through analysis of data and modelling.
- Refine the goals with stakeholder input.
- Stocktake all current and recent workforce planning and development activities.
- Identify solutions to goals not currently being addressed.
- Implement solutions.
- Evaluate initiatives and review workforce needs

These nine tasks can be broadly accommodated by the three categories **of workforce planning, workforce development planning** and **workforce development implementation**. However, the nine specific stages are also intended to reinforce the importance of capacity-building, as well as the iterative nature of forming goals, testing the interest of stakeholders, using data to validate goals and, finally, referring back stakeholders to refine the goals. The guidelines also aimed to draw out the largely implicit tasks of establishing a workforce development need (it is during this task that some regions are prioritised for workforce development activities and others are not) and identifying whether regional solutions are appropriate to the suspected or identified need.

In the guidelines we have also highlighted who should lead each task. Responses from regional groups and sectoral stakeholders frequently indicated that, while they could understand workforce planning, workforce planning development and workforce planning implementation as three distinct theoretical domains, the practice of regional workforce planning and development was more complicated. Regional groups also often saw their role or remit as focused only on workforce development planning and workforce development

implementation. Many regional groups and stakeholder bodies saw their contribution to workforce planning and development as more limited – whether through a lack of funding, a lack of data capability or a lack of awareness in the function. Some regional groups expressed frustration that their contribution was even more constrained, with resource limitations preventing them from implementing initiatives they had identified during the workforce development planning task. The importance of robust data analysis and modelling is affirmed by its inclusion in the model, in which leadership of the data analysis and modelling task is assigned to the central agencies and consultants. Since local regional workforce planning and development organisations often lack this capability, they should concentrate on the demanding task of engaging with stakeholders and generating commitment.

In other situations, it may be possible for agencies to invest in capacity in order to address a failure or shortcoming over the medium or long term. For example, validating workforce planning goals requires not only data and modelling at the regional level but also the human capability to draw together workforce demand, supply and development data from different sources and to present it in a way that promotes meaningful input from stakeholders. Jurisdictions in the midst of policy reform and reorganisation, such as Queensland and New South Wales, will require time to establish (or re-establish) that capability within new agencies before they can produce comprehensive and robust data for regional workforce planning.

We now detail each task. The guidelines are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: National regional workforce planning and development framework



The catalyst role of central agencies

During consultations for this report, both the central agencies and local alliances stressed that best practice regional workforce planning and development should be driven by the regions themselves. However, not all regions possess the preconditions enabling them to embark upon regional workforce planning and development work. More often than not, central workforce planning and development agencies need to adopt the role of catalyst, by facilitating the resources and capacity to allow regional workforce planning and development to occur on a sustainable basis. Best practice workforce planning and development requires three contributions from central agencies:

- selecting regions of interest
- establishing and developing local capacity to conduct workforce planning and development
- maintaining and reviewing appropriate resource levels.

Central workforce planning and development agencies will be guided by the work of other agencies

(particularly those leading regional economic development), indicators of labour market and economic change, and the resources available in the regions of interest.

Capacity-building in local communities is a vexed issue, as Froy and Giguère (2010: 61) acknowledged:

A 'chicken and egg' situation appears to exist in relation to capacities at the local level. National governments fear that local capacities are low and are reluctant to offer new responsibility and hence new resources. However, without gaining responsibility and a degree of control over policy implementation, local actors often have little opportunity to build their competences.

During the consultations for this report, stakeholders at all levels gave considerable emphasis to developing local capacity for conducting workforce planning and development. Examples from the surveys and interviews include:

- Many skills councils are conducting workforce development workshops throughout non-metropolitan Australia, to develop awareness among business and to encourage them to participate in the National Workforce Development Fund.
- Skills Tasmania has been supporting a community of practice of workforce planning practitioners from industry associations and leading employers.
- Capacity-building strategies have been built into the local Tourism Employment Plans being sponsored by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism. Under the TEP model for regional workforce planning and development, the capacity-building phase extends for the longest period (from six months to two to three years after the plan has been developed), and occurs after tourism businesses have been linked with government programs to address short-term pressures (six months) and industry-led solutions are developed to address medium-term skills pressures (six to 12 months).
- Skills Queensland has provided some funding to the Health and Community Services Workforce Council to develop capacity in organisations in the Surat Basin. The project involves running workshops and mentoring and coaching to improve awareness and practice of workforce development.
- Skills Connect, an online resource established by the federal Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, provides a consolidated range of materials, case studies and advice on workforce development for businesses.

In its approach to regional workforce planning and development, the Australian Workforce Productivity Agency (through its predecessor, Service Skills Australia) has identified that 'regional readiness' is a critical determinant of whether a region is prepared to move forward to address workforce planning and development issues (Ratio 2011). Tests of regional readiness may include:

- an expressed desire to engage with outside bodies like industry skills councils
- a real and urgent problem and a collective desire to solve it
- activities initiated by the region, such as the formation of a group, strategy, or committee.

Initiatives to develop local capacity to identify and implement workforce development solutions undertaken by OECD members include:

- in Hungary, the implementation of decentralised labour market programs through regional labour centres
- in Ireland, an increase the resources available to local employment services
- in Poland, more discretion to the local office of the public employment service to develop programs to assist vulnerable groups into the labour market (Froy & Giguère 2010: 11–12).

The same OECD review recognised the significant contribution of the Local Employment Coordinators to capacity-building in Australia (Froy & Giguère 2010: 11).

Areas where local capacity needs to be strengthened include analytical skills (for interpreting data), leadership skills (bringing people together), and partnership skills – 'understanding and reconciling the objectives of actors from different organisational backgrounds' (Froy & Giguère 2010: 61).

Deduce workforce development need

The purpose of this task is to establish an initial hypothesis on workforce development, which can then be tested and refined. This task is led by the agency with primary responsibility for workforce planning and development in the jurisdiction. The problem may be identified through parallel workforce planning and development regimes (at the national, state and occupational or industry levels); feedback from local stakeholders through existing mechanisms (such as environmental scans); referrals from other agencies; or input from political leaders.

This task may appear self-evident but the function served by this task becomes most obvious where the resources available for workforce development are limited. An implicit or explicit ranking of problems may even be necessary to prioritise more urgent or more worrying workforce development problems. All of the regional case studies presented in this report began with an implicit acknowledgement of a problem: whether it is expansion in the resources sector creating skill shortages in other sectors; difficulties attracting and retaining skilled labour to regional areas where agriculture and associated industries are in decline; or the under-participation of equity groups in the workforce. A more systematic example of how to assist the prioritisation of issues in the regions occurred with the selection of the Priority Employment Areas. The selected regions were identified through an analysis of 70 labour market indicators, including unemployment, labour force participation rate, claim rates for Newstart and other Centrelink benefits and school and post-school attainment rates.

Long-term economic change can provide the stimulus for undertaking regional workforce planning, even in the context of limited resources and a lack of existing networks to argue the case for change. The resources boom has prompted a substantial amount of regional workforce planning activity, particularly in Queensland and Western Australia, despite neither state having an established tradition of workforce planning and development. Because of the scale of the activity, the workforce planning has spread well beyond just the resources workforce. The work conducted by the Community Services and Health Workforce Council (2011) on the Surat Basin is an example of this.

Where no resources are available for new workforce development initiatives, it may not be worthwhile proceeding beyond this task. Additional funding in particular drives the ability to deviate from what is currently happening – whether that involves a change to existing initiatives, or funding to develop workforce planning and workforce development planning capacity. In the absence of new funding or changes to funding models, resources will coalesce around existing initiatives.

Make it work: Responding to the impact of mining on local agricultural workforces

The industry skills council, AgriFood, has been involved in regional workforce development in north-west NSW through an initiative known as Make it Work. This is a cross-industry collaborative model with major industry stakeholders from the mining and agricultural sectors working together to develop an effective labour force development and retention strategy.

The local agricultural industry was able to clearly identify its workforce development need: how to respond to the increasing demand for labour from the mining sector. By defining the workforce development problem in this way, the local agricultural industry could develop a strategy that would attract the involvement of the mining sector (rather than view them solely as competitors) and work with training providers to devise a course that would meet skills needs across both sectors. Make it Work followed best practice in many other respects. The project mapped local skills demand across commodity sectors (including seasonal variation in demand); they developed a regional workforce development strategy; and they designed and implemented cross-industry training programs. However, the key starting point was the definition of the problem: how to respond to the demand for labour in the mining sector in a way that would draw in the mining sector's involvement.

An evaluation by ACIL Tasman found:

- an improvement in the productivity of the Narrabri labour force by potentially as much as 3.2% per year (labour productivity only)
- a 33% reduction in net migration of workers in the target labour market (labour productivity plus reduced outward migration).

The model is now being rolled out in four other regional locations across Australia under the AgriFood National Regional Initiatives banner.

Identify a regional contribution

The purpose of this task is to establish whether, based on the working definition of the problem, there is a role for regional solutions. This task assumes that the problem is well understood in the region and, ideally, already has some sort of organisational or network infrastructure in place. In this task, central workforce planning and development agencies begin to draw in existing regional structures (such as RDA committees, Regional Development Commissions, or local governments) to the process. Central workforce planning and development agencies also apply their expertise to confirm that the workforce development problem is not limited to a single enterprise, occupation or industry, or is likely to involve action beyond the workforce development system, such as improvements to housing, infrastructure, or access to services such as child care and education.

If it does appear that the problem can be addressed by initiatives at the enterprise or industry level, it would be worthwhile focusing only on those industries or enterprises to avoid drawing on the limited resources of stakeholders who do not have a clear interest in resolving the problem. Many industry skills councils (ISCs; including AgriFood, Auto Skills Australia, Government Skills Australia and Manufacturing Skills Australia) and industry groups that responded to the survey indicated that their current focus was on working with individual businesses across their region to develop workforce development plans, either as part of a standalone exercise or in support of applications to the National Workforce Development Fund. In the course of developing these plans, commonalities may become apparent. In this case, the issue may subsequently reappear within the framework – either in the stocktake of current initiatives or if the problem is redefined after further analyses.

Early intervention: industry working with schools on Year 7 literacy and numeracy

The RESJ Coordinator in Tasmania identified that local young people applying for apprenticeships lacked the necessary literacy and numeracy skills. The problem went beyond one industry, with the solution also requiring input from education stakeholders as well. A meeting was conducted between education, literacy and industry stakeholders, at which it was identified that Year 7 curriculum contains the literacy/numeracy requirements for apprentices. It was therefore determined that if young people in Year 7 understood the link between their curriculum and what apprentices and industry workers undertake in the workplace, they would be more motivated to focus on achieving their curriculum requirements. Industry representatives were identified to work with students and demonstrate the work they undertake where this curriculum is used. The industry representatives were given training in relating to 12 to 13-year-olds. The timing was negotiated with the schools. A successful pilot project was conducted in 2012 with a view to expanding in 2013.

Other examples of successful programs involving schools are:

- The ME Program, which runs in the Hunter and is supported by Hunter RDA, is designed to create a path for high school students to experience and explore career opportunities in manufacturing. Local industry provides input into a tailored school program for students in Years 9–12.
- Regional Doorways2Construction is a VET in Schools program for Indigenous students run by the Construction Industry Training Board at Murray Bridge High School and other schools in regional South Australia.
- In Maryland in the United States, each county has set up a cluster advisory board for industry representatives to create interest in their industry among secondary school students and to create pathways from school to colleges, universities, apprenticeships and directly into the workplace (Hamilton 2012: 21). Schools are strongly encouraged to develop their career and vocational programs within the cluster framework,

Probe stakeholder involvement

The purpose of this task is to probe stakeholder investment in the problem. At this point, leadership moves from the central agency to a resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development. There are a variety of approaches to achieving this. Agencies may choose to capitalise on their existing capability and place coordinators into regions. This is the approach adopted in South Australia and in the State Training Services network in New South Wales. Alternatively, central agencies may partner with other agencies or regional bodies (such as RDCs in Western Australia or Regional Development Victoria/RDA committees in Victoria) to embed the workforce development expertise in a regional development framework. A third approach that suits jurisdictions with no established regional workforce planning and development infrastructure is to fund an existing organisation to employ additional staff capacity and take on the local coordination role. For example, the Surat Basin Health and Community Services Workforce Initiative involved funding for RHealth, a service provider in the region well connected to other organisations, to employ a part-time staff member to coordinate local activities. The work of the local staff member complemented the workforce development expertise provided by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council. Whatever the approach, the objective of this task is to confirm that local stakeholders are engaged with the issue and willing to participate in planning activities. It is important that this task does not generate expectations among stakeholders about possible outcomes. Stakeholders should have clear and realistic expectations about the available resources.

Local goodwill is the intangible factor that marks successful workforce development plans and initiatives.

Networks of employers, industry groups, training organisations, schools and community groups take time to develop, and they rely on trust. Ensuring that a combination of industry and community representatives is involved is crucial. Developing networks is difficult in areas without a distinct regional identity, such as those in metropolitan areas, or areas that are rapidly growing with new populations, such as some coastal provincial cities and mining towns. If there are no resources available to develop local networks in places where none exist, it may be better to pursue an alternative workforce development approach. Even where jurisdictions have committed significant resources to conducting workforce planning across all regions, this ranking of stakeholder readiness is a useful task.

Work on the nine regional workforce development plans in Western Australia were sequenced (according to discussions with key stakeholders such as the Regional Development Commissions). One of the important criteria in deciding the sequencing of the plans was the state of readiness of the region's stakeholders for the planning process.

Evaluation of local skills initiatives in the US confirms that employer engagement is vital, and care should be taken to involve the most appropriate nominees from businesses and industry, those who can provide first-hand advice on the required skill needs and the current gaps (Hamilton 2012: 24).

Validate goals with data

The purpose of this task is to translate the workforce development problem into goals and to validate them through an analysis of data and modelling. The availability of data and data capability are both necessary to undertake regional workforce planning successfully. Generally, data are available for regions at an appropriate unit of analysis but currently there are gaps, especially in more sparsely populated areas. There is also scope to develop best practice guidelines relating to custom data collection for regional workforce planning. More work could be done to increase awareness of the available data and modelling. This report has highlighted the positive role being performed by consultants, working with data specialists in relevant government departments, to increase and share data capability across regions. Leadership of this task moves to organisations, departmental units or consultants with data capability and expertise in workforce planning.

Data analyses should not commence without a set of hypotheses or research questions designed to test the existence of the problem and its determinants. These questions should go beyond 'what are the fastest growing industries and occupations in the region', to examine future growth, matching supply of new skills to likely demand, and using modelling and projections to develop a range of plausible scenarios. At the completion of this task, there will be a set of specific goals that relate to labour supply and demand and workforce development indicators. During this task, regional goals can also be correlated with goals from state and national workforce planning exercises. Where the capacity is well developed, it may be possible to perform some of this work in parallel.

The insights from data analyses should be disseminated widely. Even where regional workforce development priorities may not exist, the data analysis could be gainfully used by stakeholders participating in workforce planning development activities at other levels. For example, AgriFood ISC noted that more sophisticated National Workforce Development Fund applications from businesses and consortia include some data on the labour or skill shortage they want to address. To develop their own industry strategies, AgriFood relies on plans developed by RESJ Coordinators, RDA regional road maps, state industry training advisory body (ITAB) plans and reports published by regional groups that focus on business and regional development.

The power of good data: an example from Northern California

Humboldt County is located in northern California, close to the Oregon border. The Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board was aware of a perception that there were few employment opportunities in their region. They undertook analysis that showed that there were in fact over 500 niche manufacturing jobs across the five counties that make up the region. Using the data, the board convened sessions with different local industries (such as manufacturing, cheese-making, brewing and viticulture) to learn more about the skills needs of local businesses. The consultation process revealed a set of common underlying skills, which were then mapped to the different occupations.

The analysis was so powerfully presented that the chancellor of the local community college initiated a review of the college's courses to reorient them towards the skills needs of the local economy (Hamilton 2012: 16).

Refine the goals with stakeholder input

The purpose of this task is to refine the workforce development goals with stakeholder input and assistance. The step relies on a network of engaged stakeholders with a good understanding of what is happening in their region as well as the resources to support consultation mechanisms such as working groups and forums. If stakeholders are able to relate the outcomes of the data analysis to their own experience, then the step also serves as a useful validation of the data. During this task, it is also possible to align the goals with objectives in other local plans (such as RDA or RDC plans and other economic development activities).

This task ends with stakeholders endorsing the goals and taking ownership of the progress and attainment of the goals. There is little point continuing with a regional workforce planning and development approach if the goals do not align with local stakeholders' interests. However, this is unlikely if stakeholder investment in the problem has already been established.

In this stage, it is important to identify the most appropriate representatives for providing input from business. In the Maryland (US) cluster initiatives, where school-to-work programs for particular industries were being developed, stakeholder feedback indicated that the employers providing input should not be managing directors but middle managers and frontline staff who knew the jobs well and the skills required (Hamilton 2012: 21). However, this needs to be balanced with an awareness that some employers may lack the time to participate in collective initiatives, particularly in regional areas, where the incidence of small businesses is higher or where there are industries with a high proportion of sole traders

Stocktake current initiatives

The purpose of this task is to conduct a thorough stocktake of all workforce planning and development initiatives currently taking place in the region, even if these are not occurring in a regional workforce planning and development framework. This work should again be led by a resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development. However, support from central agencies to quickly identify local components of national and statewide activities is essential to completing this task efficiently. There is flexibility about when this task should be completed in relation to the other tasks: it can be performed at any point after local stakeholders have been identified and can operate in parallel with other processes, such as data analyses.

This task is complete when there is a consolidated list of current regional workforce development initiatives aligned with regional workforce development goals. Ideally, the exercise would also produce a list of lessons drawn from previous workforce development initiatives, to inform any future regional workforce development initiatives. Regional networks or alliances do not need to identify and implement their own solutions if goals are being efficiently met through current initiatives, although if resources are available,

they may wish to maintain local infrastructure to monitor progress of the existing initiatives.

Identify solutions

The purpose of this task is to identify regionally based solutions to goals that are not already being addressed through current initiatives. The task presupposes a set of agreed goals, clarity on available resources and commitment from stakeholders to assist with planning and implementation. Leadership of this task should rest with a local individual or an organisation with an excellent knowledge of the workforce development framework and brokering skills. The output of this task is a consolidated list of current and planned initiatives aligned with regional workforce development goals, along with strategies for achieving support for new initiatives and for monitoring progress. The strategies should detail possible funding sources and the resources that local stakeholders are willing to commit to the actions. The regional workforce planning and development framework is of no use past this point, without the resources or stakeholder commitment for additional workforce development activities.

However, funding for initiatives is not always available. In the Surat Basin, for example, the Health and Community Services Workforce Initiative was unsuccessful in its application for funding to support data collection on the current local workforce. Fortunately, the South-West Darling Downs Medicare Local has adopted the Workforce Initiative plan as its own workforce development plan and has been able to allocate some resources to deliver on some of the initiatives.

Looking beyond the borders: the Queensland Workforce Skilling Strategy (QWSS)

The coal seam gas (CSG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) sectors are a growing and valuable source of economic activity in Queensland. In 2009, Energy Skills Queensland released a workforce planning report, which predicted that even a moderate growth scenario for the industry would involve an additional 4000 jobs by 2020 (Energy Skills Queensland 2009: 5).

Energy Skills Queensland recognised that the industry would need to work with regions outside the CSG/LNG activity zone to develop and meet their skilled labour requirements. With support from the Queensland Government and DEEWR, Energy Skills Queensland has now advanced to the stage of implementing workforce development initiatives in Gladstone, Southern Wide Bay-Burnett; Bundaberg; Fraser Coast; and Ipswich-Logan. The Queensland Workforce Skilling Strategy is targeted at job seekers from regions with levels of CSG/LNG activity (such as Gladstone) and areas that, while not close to CSG/LNG activity, have relatively high levels of unemployment (for example, Ipswich-Logan). The QWSS provides job seekers with a range of skills to enhance their attractiveness to the resources sector. This may involve accredited training or training in other job skills. Participants from Ipswich and Logan were provided with units from the Certificate II in Drilling. In Gladstone, a trial was run to give program participants their C-class driver's licence. In its first year, the QWSS placed 207 participants into work throughout Queensland.

Implement solutions

The purpose of this task is to implement workforce development initiatives in partnership with local workplaces, training providers and other organisations. The initiatives stem from an agreed set of actions, which are supported by resources and assume existing local workforce development infrastructure and capability. Longer-term initiatives may be necessary where this is not already present. In a stable economic and social environment, the presence of existing workforce development infrastructure can sustain a 'business as usual' attitude, where even workforce development planning and the evaluation of existing initiatives are not high priorities for decision makers. While this may have been sustainable for some regions in the past, especially metropolitan areas, vocational education and training (VET) reforms have the

potential to create widespread disruption to workforce development infrastructure.

Leadership of this task rests with local organisations and institutions with experience in workforce development. Local coordinators and central workforce planning and development agencies may play a supporting role by monitoring progress and assisting with evaluation. Activities associated with this task result in workforce development needs being met, and may run for a fixed duration or be ongoing. The regional plan should clearly identify which stakeholders are to take responsibility for actions.

Where VET is identified as part of the solution, training places usually become available through demand-driven or user choice arrangements or through the equity programs of the various jurisdictions. However, a crucial element of the best practice regional workforce development initiatives reviewed as part of this project was funding support to engage or retain coordinators and/or mentors to sustain the various projects and maintain a bridge between program participants and employers. For example, experienced facilitators were acknowledged as essential to the Western Downs pilot:

A key factor in the success of the Western Downs Regional [skills formation strategy] was the skill of local facilitators ... The facilitators were carefully selected for their local knowledge, relationship building and leadership skills, and received in-service training. They were very clear about their role, facilitating action and leading the network through conversations rather than implementing activities themselves.

The facilitators used a set stage process to build the expectations and capacity of local people and organisations in order to sustain momentum when funding ceased. They developed collaborative community networks which worked towards specifically agreed goals and which met regularly in formal and informal settings.

(Eddington & Toner 2012: 21)

International best practice reviews have also recognised that to implement solutions, local entrepreneurial leaders need to be identified and resourced (Froy & Giguère 2010: 61). This is something that the Local Employment Coordinator model does very well, with the Flexible Funding Pool providing support for additional coordination and mentoring only after potential initiatives have been assessed as viable. Examples of recent projects with good outcomes that were only possible with support from the Flexible Funding Pool include:

- The Young at Heart program, sponsored through the Illawarra Local Employment Coordinator. The program provides job seekers with credit towards a Certificate III in Aged Care. So far over 40 young people have found employment through the program. Training funding is provided by the NSW Government, while the Flexible Funding Pool provides support for a mentor position.
- The Braking the Cycle program, sponsored through the Logan-Ipswich LEC. This program links disadvantaged job seekers with volunteer driving supervisors, to assist them to gain their driver's licence. The Flexible Funding Pool provides support for a paid position for coordinating and training volunteers. In its first stage, the program contributed to 13 employment outcomes.
- 'Get a job' days in Western Sydney, which helped to link over 1000 at-risk school leavers with employers and group training organisations. The program also provides guidance in job interviews. Support from the Flexible Funding Pool went toward a coordinator to organise the events and liaise with employers and group training organisations.

Regional organisations are also aware of what they are missing when they lack the support to provide these coordinator and mentoring roles, as the comment provided by Aged and Community Services Tasmania highlights:

We could do so much more with a bit of support. We can't even get any funding to employ a Coordinator of our Graduate Nurse Transition to Work program despite it delivering 30 new nurses to our sector annually – unfortunately as our Graduates are spread across the state in separate facilities this can be a costly program that we are struggling to sustain.

A plan for action allocates responsibility: the Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Plan 2013–16

A comprehensive regional workforce development plan may have many recommended priority actions. The Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Action Plan (Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Alliance & Department of Training and Workforce Development 2012) identifies seven priority issues for the region:

- skilled labour
- regional perceptions
- housing
- health
- education
- additional sub-regional themes
- governance and management.

Each priority issue has at least one recommended priority action, with a single lead agency responsible for each action. Lead agencies nominated in the plan include the WA Departments of Health and Education (through their local representatives on the alliance), local governments, regional chambers of commerce and local industry groups. The Department of Training and Workforce Development is responsible for supporting the Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Alliance with sufficient resources to monitor and review the progress of the plan.

Evaluate

Best practice should always involve some element of evaluation. Yet the survey elicited few examples of best practice evaluation, although this may be attributable to the fact that many of the initiatives included in the survey responses were still being implemented. The distinctive and ambitious goals of many regional workforce development strategies also make evaluation difficult, as does the lack of accepted historical benchmarks:

Changing practice at workplace, sectoral and regional level is extremely difficult. While the skill ecosystem pilots have generated much to reflect on, examples of deep-seated, ongoing change are difficult to find. This is not just a function of policy in this area being at a relatively early stage of development. It is also a function of the difficulty of the task. (Buchanan et al. 2010: 36)

Evaluation of local skills initiatives in Australia has not been widely undertaken due to a lack of data and limitations in the available data. However, the following is a list of possible data sources with the capacity to inform evaluation:

- change in the level of unfilled vacancies
- increase in the proportion of the workforce receiving training
- change in rates of labour turnover
- job satisfaction (although this is particularly hard to capture through regional surveys, which often target employers)
- change in the proportion of firms innovating (Eddington & Toner 2012: 34)

Evaluation will become easier as data capacity and capability across regional alliances improve. Using data to inform evaluation will also help in determining whether the initial workforce needs have been resolved and whether new workforce needs have emerged, thus helping to re-initiate the cycle. Once regional networks and alliances become self-sustaining, they will be able to exercise more leadership over the initial phases of identifying workforce needs, verifying a regional contribution, and testing stakeholder investment with central agencies.

Table 3: Elements of best practice for regional workforce planning and development

TASK	ASSUMES ...	WHO LEADS	PROCEED FROM HERE WHEN ...	EXIT FRAMEWORK HERE IF...
SELECT REGIONS OF INTEREST	Commitment to regional-level workforce planning and development	Central workforce development (WPD) and regional development agencies	Regions have been identified and there are sufficient resources to establish local capacity	
ESTABLISH LOCAL CAPACITY	A commonly understood definition of the region	Central WPD agencies, working with existing regional structures (RDAs, RDCs, local government)	A local network or alliance has been established with governance and support structures in place. Local stakeholders can identify and understand workforce planning and development issues	
MAINTAIN AND REVIEW RESOURCING	A region with an established workforce development structure	Central WPD agencies and regional development agencies	There are sustainable arrangements to host the coordination of a network (not initiatives)	
DEDUCE A WORKFORCE NEED	National, statewide or local workforce intelligence	Local alliance with resourcing from existing regional structures and central WPD agencies	A prima facie regional workforce development need is identified	There are insufficient resources to sustain regional workforce planning and development activities
IDENTIFY A REGIONAL CONTRIBUTION	A workforce development need exists in the region	Local alliance with resourcing from existing regional structures and central WPD agencies	Workforce development needs centred on a region and extend beyond one industry sector and/or which require action beyond the workforce development system. For example, housing, infrastructure, or access to services such as child care and education	The need would be better met through a vocational, industry, or enterprise approach
PROBE STAKEHOLDER INVESTMENT	All local stakeholders are identified. Resources to engage with stakeholders	Resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development	Stakeholders are engaged and willing to engage in planning activities. Stakeholders have clear and realistic expectations about available resources	Stakeholder investment in the problem is low and cannot be developed
VALIDATE GOALS THROUGH ANALYSIS OF DATA AND MODELLING	Available data and modelling at the regional level and advanced data capability	Organisations, departmental units or consultants with data capability and expertise in workforce planning	Specific workforce supply, demand and development goals, which are supported by rigorous data and analysis. Place goals within context of state and national goals	Data analysis does not support goals or indicate regional dimension

TASK	ASSUMES ...	WHO LEADS	PROCEED FROM HERE WHEN ...	EXIT FRAMEWORK HERE IF...
REFINE THE GOALS WITH STAKEHOLDER INPUT	Engaged stakeholders Valid goals	Resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development	Stakeholders endorse the goals and take ownership of their progress and attainment. Regional goals are correlated with state, national and industry goals	Goals do not align with stakeholder interest or local plans already in operation
STOCKTAKE CURRENT AND RECENT WPD ACTIVITIES		Resourced local individual or organisation with good networks and some experience with workforce planning and development.	A consolidated list of current initiatives aligned with regional workforce development goals, and a list of lessons from previous workforce development initiatives	Goals are being efficiently met through current initiatives
IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO GOALS NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED	Agreed goals, clarity on available resources and stakeholder commitment	Resourced local individual with excellent knowledge of workforce development framework and brokering skills	A consolidated list of current and planned initiatives aligned with regional workforce development goals, and strategies for achieving support for new initiatives and monitoring progress	There are not the resources or stakeholder commitment for additional workforce development activities
IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS	Agreed set of actions supported by resources. Existing local workforce development infrastructure	Local organisations and institutions with experience in workforce development	Planned initiatives are completed	
EVALUATE AND REVIEW WORKFORCE NEEDS	Regional workforce development initiatives have been implemented	Local WPD alliance, with input from central WPD agencies	A reviewed set of regional workforce needs have been identified.	

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Appendix A: Methodology

Three surveys were prepared and sent out to various categories of participants:

- state or Commonwealth agencies with oversight of regional workforce planning and development
- bodies directly involved in workforce planning and development at the regional level
- stakeholders who contribute to regional workforce planning and development, and/or who may develop their own regional plans or initiatives relating to a particular workforce segment.

Working party members were invited to nominate participants. A copy of the survey was sent by email, with participants given two weeks to respond. Participants were also invited to contact the researchers for an in-depth interview, if there were additional matters or circumstances they wanted to raise.

International evidence was drawn from a previous review conducted by the WRC, work recently conducted by John Buchanan in Korea and from contact with experts from Norway, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Table A1: List of organisations invited to participate by survey or interview

Jur.	Survey Type	Organisation	Response
ACT	Agency	Australian Capital Territory	
Cth	Agency	AWPA	Int
Cth	Agency	DIISRTE	Int
Cth	Agency	DAFF	
Cth	Agency	DEEWR	Int (x 3)
Cth	Agency	Dept Regional Australia, Local Gov, Arts & Sport	Int
Cth	Agency	DEEWR	Int
Cth	Agency	Resources, Energy & Tourism	Surv
Cth	Regional	Illawarra PEA	Int
Cth	Regional	Ipswich-Logan PEA	Int
Cth	Regional	North-Western Melbourne PEA	
Cth	Regional	South-West Sydney-Canterbury Bankstown PEA	Int
Cth	Regional	Western Sydney-Blue Mountains PEA	Int
Cth	Sectoral	AgriFood Skills Australia	Surv
Cth	Sectoral	Auto Skills Australia	Surv
Cth	Sectoral	Community Services and Health ISC	Surv
Cth	Sectoral	Construction and Property Services ISC	
Cth	Sectoral	EE Oz Training Standards	
Cth	Sectoral	Forest works ISC	
Cth	Sectoral	Government Skills Australia	Surv
Cth	Sectoral	Innovation and Business Skills Australia	Surv
Cth	Sectoral	Manufacturing Skills Australia	Surv
Cth	Sectoral	Service Skills Australia	Int
Cth	Sectoral	Skills DMC	
Cth	Sectoral	Transport and Logistics ISC	
NSW	Agency	Skills Reform, State Training Services	Int
NSW	Agency	TAFE Strategy, TAFE NSW	Int
NSW	Agency	Training Services, Department of Education and Communities	
NSW	Regional	Hunter and Central Coast, State Training Services	
NSW	Regional	New England, State Training Services	Int

Jur.	Survey Type	Organisation	Response
NSW	Regional	Western NSW, State Training Services	
NSW	Regional	Regional Development Australia – Central West	Surv
NSW	Regional	Regional Development Australia – Hunter	Int
NSW	Regional	Regional Development Australia – Illawarra	
NSW	Sectoral	AgriFood NSW ITAB	Int
NSW	Sectoral	North Coast TAFE	P
NSW	Sectoral	Illawarra Institute, TAFE	
NSW	Sectoral	ForestWorks	
NSW	Sectoral	Local Government and Shires Association of NSW	Surv
NSW	Sectoral	Manufacturing Skills Australia	
NSW	Sectoral	NSW Community Services and Health ITAB	
NSW	Sectoral	NSW Construction and Select Property Services ITAB	
NSW	Sectoral	NSW Utilities and Electrotechnology ITAB	
NSW	Sectoral	SkillsDMC	
NSW	Sectoral	Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council	
NT	Agency	NT Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator DEEWR	
NT	Agency	Regional Development and Indigenous Advancement, Dept of Regional Services	
NT	Agency	Regional Development, Dept of Regional Services	
NT	Agency	State Team Leader, DIISRTE	
NT	Agency	Employment Strategy and Research, Employment and Training, NT Dept of Business	Surv
NT	Regional	Chamber of Commerce NT	
NT	Sectoral	Chamber NT and Ross Engineering	
NT	Sectoral	Chamber of Commerce NT	
NT	Sectoral	Human Services Training Advisory Council	
NT	Sectoral	Local Governments Association of the NT	
NT	Sectoral	Major Industries Training Advisory Council	Surv
NT	Sectoral	NT Cultural, Recreation and Tourism Training Advisory Council	
NT	Sectoral	Primary Industries Training Advisory Council	
NT	Sectoral	Services Industries Training Advisory Council	
NT	Sectoral	Transport, engineering, Automotive Training Advisory Council	
NT	Sectoral	Verve Group NT	
Qld	Agency	General Manager, Skills Queensland	
Qld	Agency	Director, Policy Research and Innovation, Skills Queensland	Int
Qld	Regional	Energy Skills Qld	
Qld	Regional	Health and Community Services Workforce Council	Int
SA	Agency	South Australia	Surv
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island	
SA	Regional	Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island RDA	Surv
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Barossa	
SA	Regional	Barossa RDA	
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Far North	Surv
SA	Regional	Far North RDA	
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Limestone Coast	Surv
SA	Regional	Limestone Coast RDA	
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Murraylands and Riverland	
SA	Regional	Murraylands and Riverland RDA	Surv
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula	Surv
SA	Regional	Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula RDA	

Jur.	Survey Type	Organisation	Response
SA	Regional	DFEEST Coordinator – Yorke and Mid-North	Surv
SA	Regional	Yorke and Mid-North RDA	
SA	Sectoral	Business Services Industry Skills Board SA Inc	
SA	Sectoral	Construction Industry Training Board	
SA	Sectoral	Food, Tourism and Hospitality Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc	
SA	Sectoral	Manufacturing Industry Skills Advisory Council SA Inc	
SA	Sectoral	Primary Industries Skills Council SA Inc	
SA	Sectoral	SA Centre for Economic Studies	Surv
SA	Sectoral	SA Health and Community Services Skills Board Inc	
SA	Sectoral	Service Skills SA	
SA	Sectoral	Transport and Distribution Training SA Inc	
SA	Sectoral	Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre, University of Adelaide	
SWG	Sectoral	National Employment Services Association	Surv
TAS	Agency	DEEWR – Tasmania Education Skills Jobs Coordinator	Surv
Tas.	Agency	Skills Tasmania	
Tas.	Regional	Cradle Coast Authority	
Tas.	Sectoral	Civil Contractors Association	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	Early Childhood Australia	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Council of Social Services	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council	
Tas.	Sectoral	Aged and Community Services Tasmania	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council of Tasmania	
Tas.	Sectoral	Dairy Tasmania	
Tas.	Sectoral	Local Government Association of Tasmania	
Tas.	Sectoral	Master Builders Association of Tasmania Inc	
Tas.	Sectoral	Master Plumbers Association of Tasmania	
Tas.	Sectoral	Mental Health Council Tasmania	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	National Disability Services Tasmania	
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Advisory Board	
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA)	
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Freight Logistics council	
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Hospitality Association	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasmanian Small Business Council	
Tas.	Sectoral	Tasracing	Surv
Tas.	Sectoral	Unions Tasmania	
Tas.	Sectoral	Wine Tasmania	
Vic.	Agency	Higher Education and Skills Group, Dept of Education and Early Childhood Development	Int
Vic.	Regional	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Hume)	Int
Vic.	Regional	University of Ballarat Centre for Regional Innovation & Competitiveness	Int
Vic.	Sectoral	Workforce Planning Australia	Surv
WA	Agency	Department of Commerce (Labour Relations section)	
WA	Agency	Department of Training and Workforce Development	Surv
WA	Agency	Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA	Surv
WA	Regional	Gascoyne Development Commission	Surv
WA	Regional	Goldfields Esperance Development Commission	Surv
WA	Regional	Great Southern Development Commission	
WA	Regional	Kimberley Development Commission	
WA	Regional	Midwest Development Commission	Surv

Jur.	Survey Type	Organisation	Response
WA	Regional	Peel Development Commission	Surv
WA	Regional	Pilbara Development Commission	Surv
WA	Regional	South-West Development Commission	
WA	Regional	Wheatbelt Development Commission	
WA	Sectoral	Community Services, Health and Education Training Council Inc	
WA	Sectoral	Construction Training Council	Surv
WA	Sectoral	Electrical, Utilities and Public Administration Training Council Inc	
WA	Sectoral	Engineering And Automotive Training Council Inc	
WA	Sectoral	Financial, Administrative and Professional Services Training Council Incorporated	
WA	Sectoral	Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council (WA) Inc	Surv
WA	Sectoral	Futurenow – Creative and Leisure Industries Training Council Inc	
WA	Sectoral	Logistics Training Council Inc.	
WA	Sectoral	Resources Industry Training Council	
WA	Sectoral	Retail And Personal Services Training Council Inc.	Surv
WA	Sectoral	WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Int

International correspondence received from:

- Jonathan Barr, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Professor David Finegold, Senior Vice President for Lifelong Learning and Strategic Growth, Rutgers University (US)
- Professor Ewart Keep, Centre for Skills, Knowledge and Performance, Cardiff University (UK)
- Jonathan Payne, de Montfort University (Norway)
- Anna Hagen Tønder, Research coordinator, FAFO (Institute for Labour and Social Research) (Norway)
- Professor Lorna Unwin, Institute of Education, University of London
- Dr Gary Willmott, Visiting Fellow, Institute of Adult Learning (Singapore).

Appendix B: Data and modelling available for regional workforce planning and workforce development planning

Table B1: Data and modelling sources available for regional workforce planning, including level of detail available

Source	Main data items of use to regional workforce planning	Description	Frequency	Lowest geographic level available	Lowest detail of occupational and industry data available
4.1 Census	Labour force status Occupation Industry of employment Level of highest qualification Field of qualification Many other demographic characteristics	Taken from the Australian Census of Population and Housing	Every five years. Last Census August 2011	Statistical area 1 (200–800 persons)	ANZSCO six-digit level (by request) ANZSIC three-digit level
ABS Labour Force Survey detailed quarterly	Labour force status Occupation Industry Hours of work (PT/FT) Sex	The BAS Labour Force Survey samples approximately 29 000 households across Australia and covers about 0.33% of the population	Quarterly (Usually averaged annually)	Labour force region	ANZSCO one-digit ANZSIC (class level)
DEEWR Small area labour markets	Labour force Unemployment Unemployment rate	Information taken from the Labour Force Survey	Quarterly	Statistical local area (SLA)	-
Job Services Australia data	Job seekers (15+) Average job seeker age Average job seeker Duration of registration Working-age population (15–64)	Information taken from the Employment Services Area (ESA) administrative data and updated on the Labour Market Information Portal website	Quarterly	ESA region. There are between five and 15 (approx) ESA regions in every Labour Market region, http://foi.deewr.gov.au/node/6904	

Centrelink data	Benefit payment type	Information taken from the Centrelink administrative data and updated on the Labour Market Information Portal website	Quarterly	Employment Services Area region	
DEEWR Survey of recruitment conditions	Occupation Industry Vacancy rate/turnover rate Recruitment experience Mode of recruitment	DEEWR conducts this survey in house using a CATI methodology.	At present, approximately once every two years for Priority Employment Areas	Generally PEA regions	
DEEWR Internet vacancy index	Occupation	The DEEWR Vacancy Report contains the Internet Vacancy Index. IVI covers all occupations, across all skill levels and is based on a count of online vacancies newly lodged on SEEK, My Career, CareerOne and Australian JobSearch. Vacancies are coded by DEEWR to around 350 occupations	Monthly	38 best-fit regions across the eight states and territories	ANZSCO two-digit
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	Arrival and visa type Occupation Country of origin English proficiency Qualifications	Administrative dataset	Annually	Statistical Region	ANZSCO six-digit
NCVER National VET Collection	Students – enrolments, current, completion Field of study Intended occupation	The purpose of the VET Provider Collection is to provide data on publicly funded training programs delivered by government-funded and privately operated training providers	Annually	SLA	ANZSCO six-digit ASCED four-digit

NCVER Apprentices and Trainee Collection	Apprentice – occupation, industry Employer – type, size	The purpose of the Apprentice and Trainee Collection is to provide data on all persons employed under a training contract and includes both apprentices and trainees	Quarterly	SLA	ANZSCO six-digit ANZSIC three-digit
NCVER Student Outcomes Survey	Field of VET study Level of VET study Labour market outcomes, including employment status, income and occupation Relevance of training to job	An annual survey of VET graduates and module completers	Annual, with alternating large and small surveys	State	ANZSCO six-digit ANZSIC three-digit
NCVER Survey of Employer Use and Views (SUEV)	Industry Use of accredited training	This survey collects information about employers' use and views of the VET system and the various ways employers use the VET system to meet their skill needs. Information collected is designed to measure the awareness, engagement and satisfaction of employers with the VET system	Biennial	State	ANZSIC one-digit

Skills Australia/AWPA National forecasts	Industry Occupation Level of highest qualification	The AWPA commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to undertake economic modelling to draw out the skills implications of a range of scenarios. The modelling examines both the demand for post-school qualifications (demand by industry) and the supply of new post-school qualifications (completions by domestic students and those provided through net migration). The modelling is conducted at both the national level and for each state/territory	From 2012 onward	State	ANZSCO four-digit ANZSIC three-digit
Centre for Policy Studies, Monash University (Available on DEEWR website)	Industry	Commissioned by DEEWR and produced by the Centre of Policy studies using the MONASH model	Annually	Statistical region	ANZSIC (class level)

Appendix C: Summary of programs and approach by jurisdiction

This summary has been prepared based on agency survey responses, with additional material included as required.

New South Wales

In NSW, State Training Services oversees workforce planning and development by subsidising students' vocational education and training in priority skills areas. Prompted by the NSW Government's new State Plan and the Commonwealth's National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, which made funding dependent upon the introduction of an entitlement to VET in all jurisdictions, the agency has been considering options for reforming the VET system, releasing a discussion paper, *Smart and Skilled*, in September 2011. After a period of community and industry consultation, State Training Services developed policy options for skills reform and engaged NATSEM (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, University of Canberra) to construct a micro-simulation model to identify the impact of different policy options on student demand for VET and the impact on the agency's budget. Following discussions with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the NSW Treasury, the Minister announced the *Smart and Skilled* reforms in October 2012, whose aims across the state's VET system are:

- entitlement for entry-level training up to and including certificate III
- support for higher-level qualifications
- informed choice with improved quality measures
- recognition of the role and function of TAFENSW as the public provider
- greater support for regions
- greater support for equity groups
- better information for consumers.

Regional structure

Regions are defined in two different ways: analytically and operationally.

For the purposes of workforce analysis and planning, regions are predominantly defined according to the ABS Statistical Area Level 4 regions for New South Wales. This is because the SA4 level regions are used across a vast range of statistical publications (including labour force data publications), which are frequently updated.

Operationally, regions are defined according to the nine service areas of the State Training Services centres. There are six regional and three metropolitan centres. These are:

- Central and Northern Sydney Region
- Southern Sydney and South-West Sydney Region
- Western Sydney and Blue Mountains Region
- Hunter and Central Coast Region
- Illawarra and South-East NSW Region
- Western NSW Region
- New England Region
- North Coast and Mid-North Coast Region
- Riverina Region.

Data

New South Wales makes use of a wide variety of data drawn from the ABS, NCVER, its own apprentice and trainee administrative system, and modelling and projections developed by AWPA and specialist forecasters.

Data sources of particular use are:

- NCVER National VET collection
- ABS Labour Force Survey
- ABS Survey of Education and Work
- DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets.

It was noted that even in large jurisdictions, there can be difficulties accessing some data at the regional level. For example, NSW has problems with the Student Outcomes Survey because of the small size of the survey.

Victoria

Regional workforce planning and development activities in Victoria are supported through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Higher Education and Skills Group (formerly Skills Victoria) and Regional Development Victoria, which has provided funding for Regional Development Australia committees in Hume and the Grampians respectively to undertake workforce planning exercises. DEECD has provided additional support, particularly through the funding for coordinators and access to data specialists.

RDA committees are likely to have the major role in future regional workforce planning and development in Victoria. Regional Development Victoria, a statutory body, provides chairs for each of the five regional RDA committees in Victoria. The Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI) and the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) 'co-host' the committees. DEECD, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) also have roles in workforce planning and development. Of these Victorian agencies, RDV and DSDBI have the greatest focus on regional workforce planning and development. DPCD focuses on regional development more broadly. DEECD is focused on training outcomes and skills development in the regions. The exact separation of duties with respect to regional workforce planning and development is a work in progress in Victoria.

The presence of committed funding differs for each RDA committee. Regional workforce development initiatives in Hume have committed funding. Initiatives in other regions do not have committed funding as yet, but are expected to have it eventually.

RDV's regional workforce planning and development initiatives are funded from the regional growth fund. While funding generally occurs on a needs basis, through the fund RDV runs the Putting Locals First Program, which includes, among other things, grants for local initiatives to increase business and employment opportunities. In addition, the Latrobe Valley Industry and Employment Roadmap is a coordinated, long-term plan for future industry and employment growth in the Latrobe Valley.

DEECD has committed funding for training in regional areas, including through the Victorian Training Guarantee and the Workers in Transition program.

Regional structure

Regional workforce planning and development activities are being supported through the non-metropolitan RDA committees. Regional workforce plans have already been produced for:

- Hume
- the Grampians.

Regional Development Australia and the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation have commissioned similar plans for the remaining non-metropolitan regions in Victoria:

- Loddon Mallee
- Barwon South-West
- Gippsland.

All plans are due for completion by mid-2014.

Data

The primary data responsibility of the Higher Education and Skills Group in the Department of Education and Early Childhood is monitoring the performance of Victoria's VET system. It produces regional breakdowns of enrolment and completions by industry area as part of its regular reporting. The group also commissions employment projections for occupations at the regional level from Monash University's Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS). The Department of State Development, Business and Industry is currently developing its in-house labour market analysis and forecasting capacity and this may result in a further source of historical labour market data being available for regional-level analyses. For the Hume and Grampians plans, additional analyses of ABS Census data and skill supply data was provided by data consultants.

Queensland

Skills Queensland, a statutory authority with its own board, was established in late 2010. Its objective is to provide a skilled workforce that meets the current and future needs of industry and the community. Current workforce development initiatives overseen by Skills Queensland and with some regional dimension are:

- *Strategic Investment Fund*: the fund is directed towards key enterprises, industry sectors and regional supply chains. Investments focus on emerging skills needs and areas of VET market failure and are geared around co-investment.
- *Workforce Development Program*: projects can have an industry and/or regional focus. Regional projects under this initiative include:
 - Far North Queensland Industry Workforce Development
 - Manufacturing and Engineering – Wide Bay
 - Whitsunday Industrial Skills Development.

The program includes the regional skills formation strategies (SFSs). Regional SFSs are designed to build regional and community capacity. They are targeted to regions experiencing high economic growth and industrial realignment, such as the Western Downs area, and are linked into other regional development strategies (Eddington & Toner 2012: 13). The Western Downs SFS was established in 2005 when the demand for skilled labour from the emerging coal seam gas and liquid gas industry first became apparent. The strategy was overseen by the Western Downs Regional Group of Councils (Eddington & Toner 2012: 19) and promoted an expansion of local training places and support for businesses to better manage apprentice and employee skills development, as well as more collaboration between training providers and businesses in relation to sharing facilities and apprentices (Eddington & Toner 2012: 20). Skills formation strategies include five higher order key result areas:

- collaboration
- industry ownership and responsibility for the workforce
- stakeholder capability
- sustainability
- innovation in education and training (Eddington & Toner 2012: 25).

Regional structure

Queensland does not currently have a systematic approach to setting boundaries for regional workforce planning and development. Where plans have been developed, as in the Surat Basin, these have tended to be defined by local government areas.

Data

Queensland makes use of available ABS and other administrative data. There has also been some use of macro-economic modelling to better understand the impact of major industrial growth on regional communities.

Western Australia

Within Western Australia the Department of Training and Workforce Development is the lead State Government agency on workforce development matters and during 2010 prepared *Skilling WA: A Workforce Development Plan for Western Australia*, which identifies issues impacting on workforce development in Western Australia and recommends the required actions to address them.

A key part of the Skilling WA workforce planning framework is the development of Regional Workforce Development Plans. These plans outline key challenges to workforce development in each of the nine regions of the State (based on Regional Development Commission boundaries) and provide industry, government and community sector strategies at a local and State level to address them.

To generate local ownership of the development and implementation of the plans, whilst at the same time ensuring linkages to State Government planning processes including Skilling WA, discussions have been held with all Regional Development Commissions inviting them to be involved in facilitating the establishment of Regional Workforce Development Alliances in their region.

Under the oversight of the Regional Alliance, the Department of Training and Workforce Development contract manages the development of Regional Workforce Development Plans through appropriate consultancies. The development of the regional plans involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis and strong local consultation with stakeholders. The plans are aligned in format to Skilling WA – which includes Training Together, Working Together, the specific workforce development strategy for aboriginal people (Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development, n.d.). The Regional Workforce Development Alliances are also responsible for coordinating the multiplicity of government and non-government efforts relating to the implementation of the Regional Workforce Development Plans, the recommended priority actions contained within them.

For example the *Goldfields-Esperance workforce development plan 2013–2016*, *Wheatbelt workforce development plan 2013-2016* and *Great Southern workforce development plan 2013-2016* were recently completed and launched. Plans are currently being completed for the South West, Pilbara and Kimberley regions of the State.

Regional structure

Regions are defined by the WA Government and are aligned to WA Development Commission boundaries. There are nine regions outside the metropolitan area. The nine regions, based on groupings of local government areas, are:

- Gascoyne
- Goldfields-Esperance
- Great Southern
- Kimberley
- Mid-West
- Peel
- Pilbara
- South-West
- Wheatbelt.

The objectives of the Regional Development Commissions are to:

- maximise job creation and improve career opportunities in the region
- develop and broaden the economic base of the region
- identify infrastructure services needed to promote economic and social development within the region
- provide information and advice to promote business development within the region
- seek to ensure that the general standard of government services and access to those services in the region is comparable with that which applies in the metropolitan area
- generally take steps to encourage, promote, facilitate and monitor the economic development in the region.

The boundaries of the Regional Development Commissions largely coincide with Regional Development Australia committees, with the exception that the Gascoyne and Mid-West Development Corporations are covered by a single RDA committee.

Data

The Department of Training and Workforce Development makes use of available ABS Census, labour force and other survey data, survey and administrative data released by DEEWR, the National VET and Apprentice and Trainee Collections released by NCVER, and its own administrative collections. The department also uses Access Economics' macroeconomic forecasts. The department reports that there are significant technical limitations in using labour market forecasting modelling and data at the regional level in WA due to the relatively small labour markets in those regions and consequently is trialling the development of its own Regional Priority Occupational Lists, which are based on local stakeholder input (a bottom-up approach).

South Australia

Workforce development in the South Australian context is shaped by Skills for All, a package of integrated reforms, in which VET is being transitioned to a demand-driven system responsive to individual and industry needs. These reforms are aligned with national policy priorities for VET, tertiary education, employment and labour market policy.

Skills for All aims to:

- raise the skills levels of South Australians
- increase the number of South Australians with post-school qualifications
- increase employment participation.

Skills for All responds to industry demand for labour and skills in order to drive growth and innovation. Individuals are supported to gain access to and succeed in training so they have the skills needed by industry, in line with their career and employment goals. Optimum Skills for All outcomes are dependent on individuals, industry and employers having quality information on current and future workforce development needs to support a demand-driven training system.

Through the Skills in the Workplace program, the urgent skill demands of South Australian industries and enterprises are addressed through identifying and designating eligible skill sets and qualifications to raise the skills levels of existing workers. (See <<http://www.skills.sa.gov.au/for-employers-business/funding-for-training/skills-in-the-workplace>> for more information.)

While not specifically targeted to regions, regional employers are able to access the program. To access the program, enterprises must have undertaken workforce planning. The Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology website contains a range of tools and information to assist this. (See <<http://www.skills.sa.gov.au/for-employers-business/planning-your-workforce>>.)

The Workforce Development Fund supports priority industry sector projects that address skills and workforce challenges impacting on the economic growth of South Australian industry. WDF promotes the benefits of workforce planning, leading to increased productivity and sustainable business practices across organisations, industry sectors and regions.

Seven WDF projects are currently in progress. Three of these have a regional focus:

- *Workforce Development Strategy for the Barossa, Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island*: this project will undertake detailed research across two RDA regions to devise workforce development plans for these regions that link industry skills and activity with the education and training sectors, the aim being to address industry's current, projected and potential skills and workforce needs.
- *Kangaroo Island Workforce Development Project*: this project will produce a report detailing the workforce development demands of Kangaroo Island.
- *Mount Gambier Workforce Development*: this project is funding a workforce development coordinator to identify and supply job-ready applicants, training assistance and capacity to meet the demands created by a new Woolworths marketplace complex.

Four projects have an industry sector focus:

- Art and Cultural Sector Workforce Development Project
- Workforce Development Advisor for Early Childhood Sector
- South Australian Transport Workforce Development
- SA Automotive Industry.

Regional structure

South Australia has adopted uniform State Government Regions to provide consistency across geographical boundaries for the delivery and monitoring of state government services and programs. This approach helps to bring organisations from different sectors (public, private, labour and education) and each level of government together to understand local economic and social conditions and to plan and coordinate regional initiatives.

SGRs are based on the ABS local government areas and statistical local areas (SLAs) and largely align with Regional Development Australia boundaries. The 12 regions were implemented in 2009 and comprise four regions in the Adelaide metropolitan area, three regions in the greater Adelaide area and five country regions:

- Eastern Adelaide
- Northern Adelaide
- Southern Adelaide
- Western Adelaide
- Adelaide Hills
- Barossa, Light and Lower North
- Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
- Eyre and Western
- Far North
- Limestone Coast
- Murray and Mallee
- Yorke and Mid-North.

Data

Capacity for workforce data analyses rests within DFEEST. DFEEST has also engaged the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies and the Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre (WISeR – formerly the Australian Institute for Social Research) at the University of Adelaide to provide data analysis and modelling.

Data are used for evidence-based program development and resource allocation and includes:

- responding to the effects of structural adjustment
- strategic planning to determine and respond to regional workforce development priorities
- ascertaining the need for funded training and the allocation of resources
- providing labour market information to stakeholder networks
- tailoring activity to respond to the South Australian Government's strategic plan workforce development priorities
- providing career development relevant for local labour markets
- determining trainee and apprentice activity in the different regions.

A limitation of the current data as observed by South Australia is that data sources cannot always be combined, due to potential overlap or due to timing differences.

Tasmania

Skills Tasmania supports workforce development activities through two programs:

- industry workforce plans
- workforce partnership projects

Industry workforce plans are based around industries rather than regions and have been developed for dairy, racing, aged care, transport and logistics, and early childhood education and care, as well as agriculture and for the small and micro-business sector. Plans are close to being finalised from the community services specialist sectors and hospitality. A variety of partnership projects, which focus on workforce development initiatives, have either been completed or are in progress, and include collaboration with small businesses.

The Tasmanian Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts (DEDTA) also manages an employer of choice program, which includes an annual award, an employer workshop program and a better workplace kit. This initiative mainly focuses on attracting, engaging and retaining workers and flexible and family-friendly workplaces.

Regional structure

Skills Tasmania has not adopted a regional structure. There is only one RDA committee for Tasmania. For other DEEWR purposes, specific economic regions are identified (e.g. north-west and northern Tasmania is serviced by a DEEWR Local Employment Coordinator).

In some circumstances the Tasmanian Government adopts a broad three-region approach to Tasmania; for example, DEDTA is releasing three Regional Economic Development Plans.

Data

To date workforce development has not involved significant modelling of labour and workforce trends. Skills Tasmania has used Monash University forecasts in the past; however, cost was an issue and reliability was compromised by sample size.

In 2013 Skills Tasmania intends to undertake a research project to produce a Tasmanian Workforce Plan (or at least a framework for it). This will involve desktop analyses and integration of:

- industry workforce and skills plans undertaken, facilitated or funded by Skills Tasmania
- other published workforce analyses
- macroeconomic data on the Tasmanian economy and labour force
- analysis of Census data and other ABS data on occupations and industry and educational attainment.

Northern Territory

The Employment and Training Division of the Department of Business is responsible for workforce planning and development in the Northern Territory. The division oversees VET allocations and programs, investigates the employment needs of the Northern Territory and develops strategies and policy to increase employment opportunities for the NT. This includes increasing sustainable Indigenous employment as well as national and international employment promotion and attraction activities. Over the past five years, the department has focused on increasing understanding of the importance of workforce planning and development in the community through small business programs, workshops, forums and working with specific industry groups.

In August 2012 the department released its Employment Strategy 2012–15, which prioritises growing the territory workforce and capability and increasing the responsiveness of the training system, supporting sector-specific workforce strategies to increase Indigenous workforce participation, and supporting business and industry to

improve productivity. The Northern Territory Government has also partnered with individual industry sectors to develop workforce strategies, including for:

- transport and logistics
- oil and gas (post construction)
- construction
- early childhood
- manufacturing.

The government is also partnering with community services, tourism and the VET workforce to develop and implement evidenced-based workforce development strategies.

Through the NT Employment Strategy 2012–15, the government has made a commitment to work with regions to develop regional workforce strategies that recognise the differing needs of the Northern Territory regions. These are due to commence in 2013.

Regional structure

Regional-level initiatives are focused on identified remote towns, which are the basis of a whole-of-government approach to economic and social development. For each of these towns the department undertook a census of all businesses operating in the town to get an understanding of the existing employment opportunities. The outcome of the census has been the development of job profiles, which are now used by different organisations to link training with opportunities in the town. Workforce development planning guides are currently being developed for use in the towns in order to achieve a consistent approach to workforce planning and development.

The major remote towns are:

- Maningrida
- Gunbalanya
- Gapuwiyak
- Ramingining
- Wadeye
- Milingimbi
- Yuendumu
- Hermannsburg
- Borroloola
- Ngukurr
- Yirrkala
- Papunya
- Galiwin'ku
- Numbulwar
- Lajamanu
- Elliott
- Nguiu
- Angurugu/Umbakumba
- Daguragu/Kalkarindji
- Ali Curung.

Data

For the Northern Territory, the majority of data sources are not statistically acceptable for use at the territory level, which makes it even more difficult at a regional level. In any case a majority of the major data sources are not available at a regional level. Even where there are no data at a regional level, there are issues and concerns for the territory; that is, with the use of Census data due to under-counts. All of the data sources mentioned above are generally used by the department at the territory level.

The department also develops the NT Occupation Shortage List; this reflects shortages in the regions, where they can be identified. The list has not been updated since 2011 and the Department of Business is currently working through a new process.

Australian Capital Territory

As a small jurisdiction, the Australian Capital Territory does not undertake regional workforce planning and development activities.

Commonwealth agencies

Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE)

DIICCSRTE operates and funds a number of programs that may assist enterprises in regions throughout Australia to participate in workforce planning and development on an individual or coordinated basis. Australian Government Skills Connect is an integrated approach designed to help link eligible Australian enterprises with a range of skills and workforce development programs and funding. It is an employer's gateway to information and support that will connect them with Australian Government funding that meets their unique business or industry training and workforce development needs. The initiative links a national network of advisers and coordinators who in turn link enterprises to support programs and funding support. Proposals addressing whole-of-workforce needs can be dealt with in an integrated and streamlined fashion.

Australian Government Skills Connect makes it possible for eligible businesses to apply for funding from the following programs: National Workforce Development Fund; Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program; Accelerated Australian Apprenticeships initiative; Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program; and Investing in Experience – Skills Recognition and Training.

Through Australian Government Skills Connect, industry will have access to a broad range of assistance, irrespective of whether they are in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote areas. The network of people with expertise specific to a particular industry or region includes: 11 industry skills councils and Auto Skills Australia; Enterprise Connect Business Advisers; Education and Training Advisers; Local Employment Coordinators; Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators.

Industry skills councils are independent companies funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE) to:

- engage with industry to identify and develop the units of competency, qualifications and assessment requirements which together make up training packages
- develop and continuously improve nationally agreed training standards (training packages) and training materials
- engage in workforce development activities
- provide advice on industry training and skills development needs to government, the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, industry and enterprises, including through the production of an annual environmental scan.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Within the Commonwealth jurisdiction, the Priority Areas Employment Initiative and the RESJ Plans Initiative are the two programs operated by DEEWR with a strong regional workforce planning and development initiative.

The Priority Employment Areas Initiative places Local Employment Coordinators into 20 areas selected on the basis of around 70 labour market indicators of economic disadvantage. The primary role of Local Employment Coordinators is to drive local responses to local labour market issues. As part of the Priority Employment Area Initiative, the Australian Government allocated \$20 million over two years (July 2011 – June 2013) for a Local

Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool. Funding from the pool is specifically designed to support the activities of Local Employment Coordinators that align with the goals and strategies in their Regional Employment Plans.

The RESJ Plans Initiative has deployed 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators in regional (non-metropolitan) Australia to work with community stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that maximise education, skills and jobs outcomes in regional areas. The RESJ Coordinators work in 46 Regional Development Australia regions in non-metropolitan Australia.

Regional structure

The 20 Priority Employment Areas identified under the PEA Initiative span metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas and comprise groups of local government areas. The areas are:

New South Wales

- Canterbury-Bankstown and South Western Sydney
- Central Coast-Hunter
- Illawarra
- Mid-North Coast
- Richmond-Tweed and Clarence Valley
- Sydney West and Blue Mountains

Victoria

- Ballarat-Bendigo
- North-Eastern Victoria
- North-Western Melbourne
- South-Eastern Melbourne

Queensland

- Bundaberg-Hervey Bay
- Caboolture-Sunshine Coast
- Cairns
- Ipswich-Logan
- Southern Wide Bay-Burnett
- Townsville

Western Australia

- South-West Perth

South Australia

- Northern and Western Adelaide
- Port Augusta-Whyalla-Port Pirie

Tasmania

- North-West/Northern Tasmania

The 46 RDA regions the RESJ covers are:

New South Wales

- Central Coast
- Central West
- Far South Coast
- Far West
- Hunter

- Illawarra
- Mid-North Coast
- Murray
- Northern Inland
- Northern Rivers
- Orana
- Riverina
- Southern Inland

Queensland

- Darling Downs and South-West
- Far North Queensland and Torres Strait
- Fitzroy and Central West
- Gold Coast
- Ipswich and West Moreton
- Logan and Redlands
- Mackay/Whitsunday
- Moreton Bay
- Sunshine Coast
- Townsville and North-West
- Wide Bay-Burnett

South Australia

- Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
- Barossa
- Far North
- Limestone Coast
- Murraylands and Riverland
- Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula
- Yorke and Mid-North

Victoria

- Barwon South-West
- Gippsland
- Grampians
- Hume
- Loddon-Mallee

Western Australia

- Goldfields-Esperance
- Great Southern
- Kimberley
- Mid-West Gascoyne
- Peel
- Pilbara
- South-West
- Wheatbelt

Northern Territory

- Northern Territory

Tasmania

- Tasmania

Where there is overlap of the geographical boundaries between the Priority Employment Areas and the RDA regions' cover by a RESJ Coordinator, LECs and RESJ Coordinators collaborate to maximise outcomes in a complementary way.

Data

For their local plans, the LECs and RESJ Coordinators draw on a range of data that incorporates ABS Census and labour force data. Plans may also refer to modelling projections and other published data where it exists.

Appendix D: Overseas evidence of regional approaches

OECD review of local skills strategies

In its review of local skills strategies (Froy, Giguère & Hofer 2009), the OECD outlined three main strategic objectives (attracting and retaining talent, integrating disadvantaged groups, and upskilling those in employment). Table D1 shows the range of actions supporting each strategic objective (Froy & Giguère 2010: 23).

The following table is taken from Froy and Giguère (2010: 23).

Table D1: Objectives and actions within balanced skills strategies

Strategic objective	Action
Attracting talent	Invest in local quality of life, architecture, cultural development and effective city planning
	Promote cosmopolitanism and diversity
	Develop universities and training institutions. Encourage university graduates to stay in the area (careers advice etc.) and develop postgraduate courses
	Market localities, regions, local sectors, and clusters to attract new labour
	Provide incentives for returning migrants e.g. recognition of overseas qualifications, grants to set up new businesses
Integrating disadvantaged groups	Set up outreach, training centres/IT kiosks, market education and training opportunities for hard-to-reach audiences, improve early years provision
	Establish alternative forms of learning e.g. practice firms, work experience, mentoring, culture, sport and music schemes
	Set up support mechanisms to improve retention during training courses, apprenticeships, and employment
	Provide career advice and develop better linkages between basic skills courses and higher-level training
	Provide specific support for immigrants, ethnic minorities, Aboriginal populations (e.g. anti-discrimination, recognition of qualifications, skills audits, language training)
	Provide basic adult skills training (e.g. literacy and numeracy)
Upskilling those in employment	Customise training for local employers
	Develop career clusters and career ladders
	Establish business-run training centres, encourage major industries to provide training on their premises, which is open to other firms, including small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs)
	Set up centres of excellence for particular sectors
	Encourage businesses to provide career planning and mentoring for new starts
	Set up partnerships to share innovation and promote technology transfer and management training on different aspects of work organisation

United States

The United States has a strong culture of decentralised decision-making and policy in relation to education, employment, and skills development and there is no consistent national approach to regional workforce planning and development. However, the US does have a strong tradition of initiatives at State and local levels, which can compensate for this. Around 650 Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) created at state and county level have been leading workforce planning and development locally since 1998. The boards are chaired by business owners, with a majority of the seats held by local businesses and other representation given over to labour unions and local educational institutions (Froy & Giguère 2010: 33).

The Texas Workforce Commission oversees 28 regionally based Workforce Development Boards. The boards are promoting a Regional Cluster initiative, targeting industries such as advanced technology and manufacturing, aerospace and defence, biotechnology and life sciences, information and computer technology, petroleum refining and chemical products, and energy (Buchanan et al. 2010: 28).

A regional skills approach that predates WIBs was adopted in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas in the early 1990s. The strategy has been developed around a 'rapid response manufacturing centre' and involves working with local schools, colleges and businesses to provide the required skills. Over time, a new community college, focused on technical skills, was opened with the involvement of business, and One Stop centres to provide intensive assistance to local businesses and job seekers were established. As a result of the coordinated action, 'the region has attracted 500 employers and nearly 100 000 jobs' (Froy & Giguère 2010: 34).

A number of cities in the United States have sponsored initiatives to better deploy displaced and disadvantaged labour and to nurture better skills eco-systems, although they are more focused on the former than the latter. Some examples identified by Buchanan et al. (2010: 49–52) are:

- In New York City, Job First assists unemployed young adults into work by building relationships between public and private sector organisations and employers.
- In Seattle, the Seattle Jobs Initiative assists low-income earners into meaningful employment through a step-by-step process, involving assistance with housing, child care and transport, as well as training through local community organisations and training providers.
- In Boston, Boston Skill Works helps low-wage earners find family-friendly jobs and assist businesses to find and retain skilled workers. The initiative has a particular focus on developing career ladders, including transitions to higher education, while supporting career advancement through connections to training providers and employers.
- In Baltimore, the Empower Baltimore Management Corporation developed a customised training program for area hospitals to support 'disadvantaged empowerment zone' residents. It is focused on four areas: job creation, community capacity, quality of life and workforce development.

United Kingdom

The policy areas of education, skills and employment are the responsibility of the devolved governments, meaning that there are in fact four different countries and systems of regional workforce planning and development in place in the United Kingdom. The only body that spans all of them is the United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). However, in the past few years, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have integrated their labour market intelligence framework with the UKCES, leading to more consistency of data across the four countries, although agencies in the four governments are responsible for producing analysis at the national and regional levels.

The issue of labour market data is one of the few workforce development areas of policy where there has been divergence, although on most other dimensions (qualifications, course design, funding regimes, higher education and schools policies), divergence is increasing quite rapidly, as the United Kingdom Government is currently implementing changes that will move England further away from the qualification framework in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Until 2010, regional development agencies (RDAs) existed, which like RDA committees in Australia had the skills as part of their remit in workforce development also extending to skills strategy and the commissioning of training provision. RDAs have been replaced by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The United Kingdom Government encourages LEPs to focus on private sector involvement in transport, housing and planning, although they also allow LEPs to work with local businesses to increase job opportunities. Public funding for adult skills provision, previously routed through regional development agencies, is now directed through the Skills Funding Agency to its network of approved and quality-assured colleges and training organisations (United Kingdom Government 2010: 18). Local authorities are important partners in the Local Enterprise Partnerships, and authorities with high levels of unemployment are likely to give greater emphasis to the involvement of LEPs in workforce development priorities. One example is Greater Manchester, which has used its planning powers to require development projects to engage local young people currently not involved in education, employment or training to be taken on as apprentices (Fuller, Rizvi & Unwin 2013).

The short lifespan of regional arrangements supporting workforce planning and development is common to many other institutional forms in vocational education and training and skills policy in the United Kingdom; consequently, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the regional development agencies on workforce planning and development.

Norway

In common with Australia, Norway's regions outside metropolitan areas have witnessed uneven growth. Remote areas in the north have experienced significant levels of out-migration, while places where traditional activities were undertaken have been supplemented by new initiatives, such as renewable energy, tourism or public sector investment (Lindqvist 2010: 56), Norway's conscious strategy of economic diversification and regional growth promotion has been fostered through active negotiations between employers, unions and governments, in formal partnerships. For example, there has been significant devolution to the regional level in education policy (including apprenticeships). In this way, there has been better than average national utilisation of regional and industry sector intelligence.

Under a policy called Enterprise Development 2000 instituted in the 1990s, the concept of modules was used to connect researchers in universities and colleges with clusters of local businesses. Education is usually a component of these initiatives. For example, at a regional level it is possible for groups of companies to approach local higher education providers to coordinate the development of a new master's level program. One such example is provided by the Norwegian Centres of Expertise, which supports 20 regional interfirm arrangements. Another is the Oslo Cancer Cluster, initiated by medically oriented start-up companies with advanced cancer medicine capability. This arrangement incorporates training from Oslo University, and explicitly links research and development, education and recruitment in the one venture. Hence, rather than the national government planning for workforce development per se, they are the enabler of local approaches to planning for workforce development.

However, under the successor program to Enterprise Development 2000, Value Creation 2010, more attention is paid to regional economic development and there is less specific attention paid to regional workforce development (Payne 2012, pers. comm.).

The Barcelona Principles

In 2008 the OECD conducted a review of local agency responses to the Global Financial Crisis, subsequently producing a set of best practice principles – 'The Barcelona Principles' (Clark 2009). Although the workforce development issue involved responding to high structural unemployment rather than the complex mix of skill and labour shortages combined with pockets of social exclusion and labour under-utilisation (typical of the Australian economy), many of the principles are still relevant to the Australian context and are largely consistent with the Best Practice Principles and Framework produced in this report.

The Barcelona Principles:

1. Provide proactive and collaborative leadership at the local level: 'Don't over-react, but respond with purpose'.
2. Make the case for continued public investment and public services and the taxes and other sources of investment required: 'Make the case for investment'.
3. In the long term, build economic strategies which align with long-term drivers and identify future sources of jobs, enterprise, and innovation: 'Robust long-term economic planning'.
4. In the short-term, focus on retaining productive people, business, income, jobs, and investment projects: 'Purposeful short-term action is needed'.
5. Build the tools and approaches to attract and retain investment over the long term: 'Investment attraction and readiness'.
6. Build genuine long-term relationships with the private sector, trade unions and other key partners: 'Relationships matter and need increased attention'.
7. Take steps to ensure the sustainability and productivity of public works, infrastructure, and major development/events: 'Effective public works and major investments'.
8. Local leaders should act purposefully to support their citizens in the face of increased hardship: 'Stay close to the people'.
9. Local economies have benefited and should continue to benefit from being open and attractive to international populations and the world: 'Stay open to the world'.
10. Communicate and align with national and other, higher tiers, of government: 'Build national-local alliances' (Clark 2009).

Appendix E: Surveys

Regional Workforce Planning and Development: Survey for agencies

The purpose of this survey, conducted on behalf of the Workforce Development, Supply and Demand Principal Committee, is to capture your agency's involvement in regional workforce planning and development activities. The results of the survey will inform the development of draft *Regional Workforce Development Planning Best Practice Principles* and a draft *Regional Workforce Development Planning Best Practice Framework*.

What we mean by *workforce planning and development*:

The plans, policies and actions that are put in place to attract workers, retain workers and provide them with learning and skilling opportunities in order to meet the identified needs of employers.

We are interested in a range of workforce planning and development activities:

- analysing the workforce need (workforce planning),
- determining how to meet that need through attracting already skilled and capable workers, training new workers, and developing the skills and capabilities of existing workers (workforce development planning), and
- mobilising resources to realise that plan through training and skills development activities (workforce development implementation)

What we mean by *region*:

A defined geographic area that is usually smaller than a state or territory. However, for the purposes of this survey, Tasmania and the ACT are considered single regions.

1. Preliminaries

1.1 Agency	
1.2 Contact Name	
1.3 Contact Email	
1.4 Contact Number	

2. Overall approach to regional workforce planning and development

2.1 Please briefly outline how your agency's role in workforce planning and development and its overall approach to identifying workforce planning and development issues and implementing solutions.

2.2 Is your agency involved in workforce planning and development activities (either planning and/or implementation) at the regional level?

Y / N

2.3 How are regions defined?

2.4 Are regional workforce planning and development activities in place for all regions in your state/territory?

Or for all regions in Australia if you are answering on behalf of a national agency or organisation.

Y / N

2.5 If not, how are regions selected/prioritised for workforce planning and development activities?

2.6 One approach to understanding workforce planning and development is to look at three intersecting activities:

Regional Workforce Planning Includes the identification of: a) a region's current workforce capability and capacity; and b) the forecast workforce capability and capacity required to meet the future needs of the region. <i>For example, modelling projections of demand for tradespersons and other occupations in the Pilbara</i>	Regional Workforce Development Planning Includes determining the workforce development policies and strategies required to address the workforce capability and capacity gap identified by the workforce planning process. <i>For example, a plan to increase the incentives for apprentices in regional areas.</i>	Regional Workforce Development Implementation Includes delivery models and evaluating the impact of the workforce development activities. <i>For example, a regional partnership between local employers and TAFE to provide Certificate IV qualifications to existing workers.</i>
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How well does this describe your agency's approach to regional workforce planning and development?

2.7 What are the components of best practice regional workforce planning and development within your agency?

If you can, please consider in your answer the type of activities conducted and the sequence of activities

3. Collaboration and integration

3.1 Which other government agencies, organisations, and stakeholder groups is your agency collaborating with in relation to regional workforce planning and development activities?

Examples: Employer/Business groups (e.g. Chamber of commerce), Unions, Large businesses, Small businesses, TAFE, Group training organisations, Secondary schools, Other training providers, Employment service providers, Local government, Regional Development Australia committees

3.2 Please provide details of any consultation or decision-making bodies established to oversee all or some of the activities conducted as part of regional workforce planning and development.

3.3 How do the regional workforce planning and development activities integrate with other workforce planning and development activities at the state/territory and national levels?

3.4 How are regional workforce planning and development activities integrated with other regional planning activities, such as regional economic development or regional planning?

3.5 How are regional workforce planning and development activities integrated with statewide, whole of government plans?

4. Data & Modelling

4.1 When considering regional workforce planning and development issues, what data and data modelling do you make use of?

Data source	Used	Data source	Used
Australian Bureau of Statistics:		Skills Australia/AWPA Skilled Occupation List	Y / N
Census	Y / N	State/territory government administrative data	Y / N
Labour Force Survey	Y / N	Data on VET & Apprenticeships/Traineeships	Y / N
Other ABS surveys	Y / N	Other state/territory administrative data	Y / N
DEEWR Higher Education collection	Y / N	Local custom surveys	Y / N
DEEWR Vacancy Report	Y / N		
DEEWR Skill shortage list	Y / N	Forecasts and projections	
National Centre for Vocational Education Research		Skills Australia/AWPA National forecasts	Y / N
National VET collection	Y / N	Ctr for Policy Studies, Monash University	Y / N
Apprentices and trainees collection	Y / N	Access Economics Macroeconomic forecasts	Y / N
Student Outcomes Survey	Y / N	Other economic forecasts	Y / N
Survey of Employer Use and Views (SUEV)	Y / N		
Other data sources (provide details at right)	Y / N		

4.2 What are the main reasons you do or do not make use of the data sources and data modelling listed above for the purposes of regional workforce planning and development? What data sources have been particularly useful?

4.3 What data or information does your agency provide and to what other agencies, sectoral bodies (such as Industry Training Boards) or regional networks/alliances/taskforces to assist them with regional workforce planning and development?

5. Evaluation

5.1 Has your agency conducted any evaluations or reviews of regional workforce planning and development activities?

Y / N

5.2 What have been the main lessons from previous and current attempts to conduct workforce planning and development activities? *If appropriate, please comment separately on workforce planning, workforce development planning, and workforce development implementation activities*

5.3 Can you provide details of any innovative regional workforce planning and development activities that your agency has conducted and their outcomes? *We would also appreciate any documentation that you could attach.*

6. Further comments

6.1 We would welcome any further comments you may like to make on best practice in regional workforce planning and development.

**Regional Workforce Planning and Development:
Survey for regional networks/coordinators/ RDA committees**

The purpose of this survey, conducted on behalf of the Workforce Development, Supply and Demand Principal Committee, is to capture your agency’s involvement in regional workforce planning and development activities.

The results of the survey will inform the development of draft *Regional Workforce Development Planning Best Practice Principles* and a draft *Regional Workforce Development Planning Best Practice Framework*.

What we mean by workforce planning and development:

The plans, policies and actions that are put in place to attract workers, retain workers and provide them with learning and skilling opportunities in order to meet the identified needs of employers.

We are interested in a range of workforce planning and development activities:

- analysing the workforce need (workforce planning),
- determining how to meet that need through attracting already skilled and capable workers, training new workers, and developing the skills and capabilities of existing workers (workforce development planning), and
- mobilising resources to realise that plan through training and skills development activities (workforce development implementation)

What we mean by region:

A defined geographic area that is usually smaller than a state or territory. However, for the purposes of this survey, Tasmania and the ACT are considered single regions.

7. Preliminaries

1.1 Regional network/alliance/taskforce	
1.2 Contact Name	
1.3 Contact Email	
1.4 Contact Number	

8. Involvement in regional workforce planning and development

8.1 Please describe the regional workforce planning network, alliance or taskforce that you are involved with. Please include a statement of when it was established, its geographic scope and its objective.

8.2 How did the network come to be formed?

8.3 What resources have been provided to the network/alliance/taskforce? Who provided the resources?

8.4 One approach to understanding workforce planning and development is to look at three intersecting activities:

<p>Regional Workforce Planning Includes the identification of: a) a region’s current workforce capability and capacity; and b) the forecast workforce capability and capacity required to meet the future needs of the region.</p> <p><i>For example, modelling projections of demand for tradespersons and other occupations in the Pilbara</i></p>	<p>Regional Workforce Development Planning Includes determining the workforce development policies and strategies required to address the workforce capability and capacity gap identified by the workforce planning process.</p> <p><i>For example, a plan to increase the incentives for apprentices in regional areas.</i></p>	<p>Regional Workforce Development Implementation Includes delivery models and evaluating the impact of the workforce development activities.</p> <p><i>For example, a regional partnership between local employers and TAFE to provide Certificate IV qualifications to existing workers.</i></p>
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How well does this describe your network/alliance’s approach to regional workforce planning and development?

8.5 What are the components of best practice regional workforce planning and development within your network/alliance?

If you can, please consider in your answer the type of activities conducted and the sequence of activities

9. Collaboration and integration

9.1 Which other government agencies, organisations, and stakeholder groups are involved in the alliance or network?

Examples: Employer/Business groups (e.g. Chamber of commerce), Unions, Large businesses, Small businesses, TAFE, Group training organisations, Secondary schools, Other training providers, Employment service providers, Local government

9.2 How do the regional workforce planning and development activities in your region integrate with other regional planning activities, such as regional economic development or regional planning?

10. Data & Modelling

10.1 When considering regional workforce planning and development issues, what data and data modelling do you make use of?

Data source	Used	Data source	Used
Australian Bureau of Statistics:		Skills Australia/AWPA Skilled Occupation List	Y / N
Census	Y / N	State/territory government administrative data	Y / N
Labour Force Survey	Y / N	Data on VET & Apprenticeships/Traineeships	Y / N
Other ABS surveys	Y / N	Other state/territory administrative data	Y / N
DEEWR Higher Education collection	Y / N	Local custom surveys	Y / N
DEEWR Vacancy REport	Y / N		
DEEWR Skill shortage list	Y / N	Forecasts and projections	
National Centre for Vocational Education Research		Skills Australia/AWPA National forecasts	Y / N
National VET collection	Y / N	Ctr for Policy Studies, Monash University	Y / N
Apprentices and trainees collection	Y / N	Access Economics Macroeconomic forecasts	Y / N
Student Outcomes Survey	Y / N	Other economic forecasts	Y / N
Survey of Employer Use and Views (SUEV)	Y / N		
Other data sources (provide details at right)	Y / N		

10.2 What are the main reasons you do or do not make use of the data sources and data modelling listed above for the purposes of regional workforce planning and development? What data sources have been particularly useful?

11. Evaluation

11.1 What have been the main lessons from previous and current attempts to conduct workforce planning and development in your region?

If appropriate, please comment separately on workforce planning, workforce development planning, and workforce development implementation activities

11.2 Can you provide details of any outcomes from workforce planning and development activities that have occurred in your regions?

We would also appreciate any documentation that you could attach.

12. Further comments

12.1 We would welcome any further comments you may like to make on best practice in regional workforce planning and development.

Regional Workforce Planning and Development: Survey for sector stakeholders

The purpose of this survey, conducted on behalf of the Workforce Development, Supply and Demand Principal Committee, is to capture your agency's involvement in regional workforce planning and development activities. The results of the survey will inform the development of draft *Regional Workforce Development Planning Best Practice Principles* and a draft *Regional Workforce Development Planning Best Practice Framework*.

What we mean by *workforce planning and development*:

The plans, policies and actions that are put in place to attract workers, retain workers and provide them with learning and skilling opportunities in order to meet the identified needs of employers.

We are interested in a range of workforce planning and development activities:

- analysing the workforce need (workforce planning),
- determining how to meet that need through attracting already skilled and capable workers, training new workers, and developing the skills and capabilities of existing workers (workforce development planning), and
- mobilising resources to realise that plan through training and skills development activities (workforce development implementation)

What we mean by *region*:

A defined geographic area that is usually smaller than a state or territory. However, for the purposes of this survey, Tasmania and the ACT are considered single regions.

13. Preliminaries

1.1 Organisation	
1.2 Contact Name	
1.3 Contact Email	
1.4 Contact Number	

14. Involvement in regional workforce planning and development

14.1 Is your organisation involved in leading workforce planning and development activities (either planning and/or implementation) at the regional level?

14.2 Is your organisation involved in contributing to regional workforce planning and development activities (either planning and/or implementation) conducted by other organisations or agencies?

14.3 Please briefly describe your organisation's involvement in regional workforce planning and development.

Address the region(s) covered, the scope and time period of the plan(s), and what agency has principal leadership of the plan(s)

14.4 One approach to understanding workforce planning and development is to look at three intersecting activities:

Regional Workforce Planning

Includes the identification of:

- a region's current workforce capability and capacity; and
- the forecast workforce capability and capacity required to meet the future needs of the region.

For example, modelling projections of demand for tradespersons and other occupations in the Pilbara

Regional Workforce Development Planning

Includes determining the workforce development policies and strategies required to address the workforce capability and capacity gap identified by the workforce planning process.

For example, a plan to increase the incentives for apprentices in regional areas.

Regional Workforce Development Implementation

Includes delivery models and evaluating the impact of the workforce development activities.

For example, a regional partnership between local employers and TAFE to provide Certificate IV qualifications to existing workers.

How well does this describe your organisation’s approach to regional workforce planning and development?

14.5 What are the components of best practice regional workforce planning and development within your organisation?

If you can, please consider in your answer the type of activities conducted and the sequence of activities

15. Data & Modelling

15.1 When considering regional workforce planning and development issues, what data and data modelling does your organisation make use of?

Data source	Used	Data source	Used
Australian Bureau of Statistics:		Skills Australia/AWPA Skilled Occupation List	Y / N
Census	Y / N	State/territory government administrative data	Y / N
Labour Force Survey	Y / N	Data on VET & Apprenticeships/Traineeships	Y / N
Other ABS surveys	Y / N	Other state/territory administrative data	Y / N
DEEWR Higher Education collection	Y / N	Local custom surveys	Y / N
DEEWR Vacancy Report	Y / N		
DEEWR Skill shortage list	Y / N	Forecasts and projections	
National Centre for Vocational Education Research		Skills Australia/AWPA National forecasts	Y / N
National VET collection	Y / N	Ctr for Policy Studies, Monash University	Y / N
Apprentices and trainees collection	Y / N	Access Economics Macroeconomic forecasts	Y / N
Student Outcomes Survey	Y / N	Other economic forecasts	Y / N
Survey of Employer Use and Views (SUEV)	Y / N		
Other data sources (provide details at right)	Y / N		

15.2 What are the main reasons your organisation does or does not make use of the data sources and data modelling listed above for the purposes of regional workforce planning and development? What data sources have been particularly useful?

16. Evaluation

16.1 Can you provide details of any innovative regional workforce planning and development activities that your organisation has been involved with and their outcomes? *We would also appreciate any documentation that you could attach.*

17. Further comments

17.1 We would welcome any further comments you may like to make on best practice in regional workforce planning and development.

MORE INFORMATION

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