



Australian Government

REGIONAL EDUCATION, SKILLS AND JOBS PLAN

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – GREAT SOUTHERN

2012 – 2014

JULY 2013



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Details in this report are correct at time of drafting.

This report can be found at the [Regional Education, Skills and Jobs](http://www.deewr.gov.au/resj) webpage (www.deewr.gov.au/resj) or the [My Region](http://www.myregion.gov.au) website (www.myregion.gov.au).

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The document must be attributed as the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan 2012-14 – Great Southern.

Disclaimer about data used in this plan

Data used in the development of this plan comes from a variety of sources and was correct at time of drafting. This document should not be used as a data source as data referred to may have been updated or reformulated since the publication of the plan. Refer to primary sources for confirmation of data.

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REGIONAL EDUCATION, SKILLS AND JOBS PLANS

The Australian Government announced the *Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans* initiative in the 2011–12 Budget, as part of the *Building Australia's Future Workforce* package. The initiative addresses four key areas of the Australian Government's productivity and social inclusion agendas: early childhood education and care; Year 12 attainment; participation in vocational and higher education; and local job opportunities.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has deployed 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (RESJ) Coordinators to work with local stakeholders to develop Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans for the 46 Regional Development Australia (RDA) areas that cover non-metropolitan Australia.

The plans present locally identified opportunities and challenges and outline local strategies to improve education, skills and jobs outcomes in regional Australia.

For more information, including the contact details of your local RESJ Coordinator, please refer to [the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs webpage at www.deewr.gov.au/resj](http://www.deewr.gov.au/resj).

Strategies

Each plan reflects community priorities and includes goals and local strategies to achieve the community's objectives, based on four key themes: early childhood education and care; school education; tertiary education and training; and jobs, skills and workforce development.

The plans build on the range of services and programs already offered by DEEWR and the strategies draw on the programs of other government agencies and the opportunities arising from major local projects.

Community engagement

The plans were developed by RESJ Coordinators with close community engagement and include views from young people, parents, employers, educators, service providers, peak bodies, community leaders, government organisations and agencies, and other interested individuals and organisations. The plans draw strongly upon existing strategic plans in each region, including the local RDA regional plan.

DEEWR acknowledges the traditional owners of the Great Southern RDA region and their elders past and present recognising their continuing connection to country. This plan strives to build and harness mutually respectful relationships and reflect community priorities in education, skills and jobs development for the region.

Implementation

The RESJ Coordinator, on behalf of DEEWR, will oversee the implementation of the strategies and promote and coordinate linkages between the government agencies, providers and stakeholders involved in this plan's implementation.

Progress towards achieving the goals within each plan will be closely monitored, while stakeholders will be kept informed through participation in plan strategies.

This edition incorporates strategies that respond to changes in local circumstances identified through continuing community input or changing government priorities in regional Australia as well as access to new data. The plans continue to be living and responsive documents that will be revisited throughout their implementation to June 2014.

MAP OF GREAT SOUTHERN



Source: Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Southern region is located at the southern coastline of Western Australia, centred on the City of Albany. It shares its boundaries with the South-West, Wheatbelt and Goldfields-Esperance regions.

The region comprises 11 Local Government Areas including the City of Albany, Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup, Shire of Cranbrook, Shire of Denmark, Shire of Gnowangerup, Shire of Jerramungup, Shire of Katanning, Shire of Kent, Shire of Kojonup, Shire of Plantagenet and the Shire of Woodanilling.

The Great Southern region has traditionally relied heavily on agriculture, farming and fishing industries to drive the local economy and jobs. The flow-on impacts from these industries are felt in the manufacturing and retail industries across the region.

The population of the region is relatively stable with low levels of growth. The age profile of the population of the Great Southern region reflects the lifestyle of its residents. It is characterised by two large age groups, 0–20 years and 40 years and older. The number of those aged between 20 and 40 years is lower as they tend to leave the region to pursue education and job opportunities elsewhere.

The unemployment rate across most of the region has decreased since December 2011, partly attributed to the increased employment opportunities in Fletcher International WA (an abattoir) located close to the City of Albany. Katanning is the only region in the Great Southern that has not experienced a decrease in the unemployment rate; it remained on 8.6 per cent as at November 2012. Increasing diversity within the local economy will create more job opportunities for these job seekers. There are also a number of Indigenous job seekers in smaller towns across the region requiring additional assistance to access training and employment.

A comprehensive environmental scan and community consultation have been carried out to identify the key education, skills and jobs challenges identified for the region. The challenges include:

- below-average early childhood Australian Early Development Index results for language and cognitive skills, and physical health and wellbeing
- Year 12 achievement and completion are below regional and national averages
- young people are at risk of disengaging from education, training and employment services

The key goals of the Great Southern Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (RESJ) Plan are to:

- improve and/or increase access to quality child care and early childhood education services
- improve rates of Year 12 achievement and completion
- increase the engagement of young people in training and tertiary education pathways, through to employment
- improve access to information on job opportunities and connect employers with skilled job seekers
- increase the participation of disadvantaged job seekers in training and employment.

The Australian Government is a major stakeholder in education, skills and jobs in regional Australia with significant investments in early childhood, schools, training, higher education and employment services connecting employers with job seekers in regional labour markets.

Through the Council of Australian Governments, collaborative arrangements between the Australian and Western Australian Governments are formed to pursue common interests and goals, including efforts to lift productivity and social inclusion. These activities are developed and implemented through a framework of National Partnership Agreements.

Closing the Gap is a commitment by all Australian Governments to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians, in particular providing a better future for Indigenous children.

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Great Southern has a committee with a broad plan including education, skills and employment opportunities. This RESJ Plan complements the existing goals and strategies in the RDA plan.

In Western Australia, the state government has Regional Development Commissions operating in each region. The Great Southern Development Commission develops strategies for the region, informing the Western Australian Government's investment planning and project development, including those undertaken through the Royalties for Regions fund. The Royalties for Regions fund returns the equivalent of 25 per cent of the State's mining and onshore petroleum royalties to the State's regional areas each year as an additional investment in projects, infrastructure and community services.

During the implementation of this plan, DEEWR, through the RESJ Coordinator, is working with the state and local governments, as well as non-government stakeholders in the community. In particular, DEEWR is:

- working in conjunction with RDA Great Southern to achieve the economic and social priorities noted in the Great Southern RDA Regional Plan 2010–2020
- working in collaboration with existing working groups, steering committees and other parties in the Great Southern region who are identifying and addressing local issues that impact on education, skills and jobs
- enhancing existing efforts by providers delivering services in the Great Southern to improve education, skills and jobs outcomes in the local community.

It is hoped that through strong and productive partnerships, the broader community will realise more opportunities and maximise the benefits of living, learning and working in the Great Southern region.

Some outcomes achieved by the RESJ Coordinator working with local stakeholders include:

- Labour market information sessions were held in June and December 2012. The forums were well attended with over 50 people at each forum. A wide representation of stakeholders attended including employment service providers, employers, state and commonwealth government departments and training providers. Verbal and documented feedback from attendees indicated that the information presented was used to help them write strategic plans and tender applications. There is a heightened awareness among information session participants of current labour market trends in the Great Southern region.
- As a result of information sessions arranged by the RESJ Coordinator and Job Services Australia providers, 15 local job seekers have gained employment at Fletchers International WA. The RESJ Coordinator continues to engage with Fletchers International WA with the view to further employment outcomes.

- Following the success of a forum on Workforce Planning and the National Workforce Development Fund held in December 2012, a number of employers are now working with the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council with a view to securing funds that will help them to recruit, retain and up-skill workers.
- In June 2012, over 80 students and parents attended a forum at the Albany Entertainment Centre to raise awareness of pathways to work through apprenticeships and traineeships. Feedback from people who attended this forum indicated that the information they received helped them to make informed decisions about vocational pathways. The RESJ Coordinator was an active member of the working group that organised and ran the forum.
- Seventy-nine Indigenous jobseekers gained employment following implementation of the, Southern Aboriginal Corporation Indigenous Employment Program. The program included the provision of Industry specific and accredited training for 49 jobseekers to prepare them for work and the provision of ongoing support and mentoring for the newly placed workers. So far, approximately 75 per cent of those placed in work through this program are still working. The program is the result of a long-term, successful collaboration between the RESJ Coordinator and the Southern Aboriginal Corporation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

This section sets out the characteristics of the region identified through a comprehensive environmental scan and local consultations. The information detailed in this section is not exhaustive of the characteristics of the region, but provides an overview and insight to some of the challenges facing the region.

To guide the RESJ Coordinator's identification of issues and engagement with the community, various data sets have supported the development of this plan. Data used in the development of this plan was sourced from DEEWR, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and other relevant sources. Data referred to may have been reformulated and was correct at time of drafting. Different data sets are refreshed at different intervals, for example, unemployment rates are updated monthly for national and state/territory figures and quarterly for regions.

Population

Figures from the 2011 Census indicate that the Great Southern region of Western Australia has a resident population of approximately 57,000 people. This represents an increase of over 2 per cent since 2006. Western Australia experienced a 14.2 per cent increase and Australia a 7.8 per cent increase over this period.

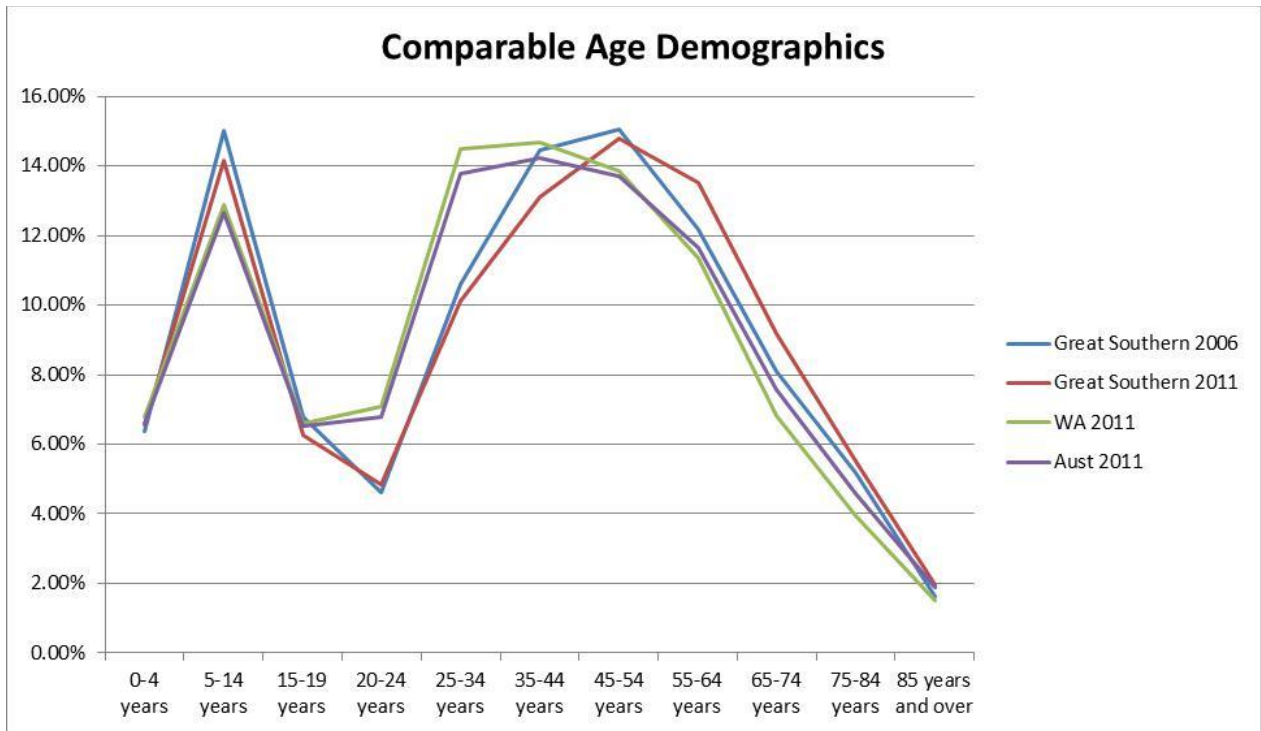
The majority of people living in the Great Southern region (60%) live in the City of Albany. Other major regional population centres include Denmark, Katanning, Mount Barker and Kojonup.

According to the ABS Estimated Resident Population based on 2011 Census data, the population of the Great Southern RDA region is relatively stable at, or below, 1 per cent annual growth over the decade to 2011. Some inland towns experienced minor population decline over this period.

According to the Western Australian Department of Regional Development and Lands, the population of the Great Southern region is relatively stable, with an average annual growth rate of about 1.2 per cent over the decade to June 2009.

According to the 2011 Census, the median age in the Great Southern region is 41 years compared to a state median age of 36 years and Australia's median age of 37 years. The median age of the Indigenous population of the region is 21 years.

Figure 1: Comparable Age Demographics



Source ABS, 2011 Census.

The age profile for the population of the region indicates that there is a tendency for local people to leave the Great Southern region while in their early twenties and for people to settle in the region while in their forties and onwards. This creates challenges and opportunities within the local labour market which will be explored further, especially in regard to groups such as youth, Indigenous people and migrants. As shown by the above graph, since 2006 there has been an increase in the percentage of people in the over 45 population, this increase represents around 2700 people.

Indigenous population

According to the Western Australian Department of Regional Development and Lands, about 3.8 per cent of the resident population of the Great Southern are identified as being Indigenous people, with the majority living in the major regional centres.

The 2011 Census and the Great Southern Development Commission regional profile show that almost half of all Indigenous residents are aged 0–20 years.

Early childhood education and care

Australian Early Development Index

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measures young children's development across five domains: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; school-based language; and cognitive skills, and general knowledge. 2009 AEDI data indicated that at a national level, 23.6 per cent of children were vulnerable on one or more domain and 11.8 per cent were vulnerable on two or more domains. The AEDI found in the Great Southern RDA region, the communities of Jerramungup, Albany and Denmark had the lowest proportions of vulnerable children for the region, less than the national rates on both measures. However, the AEDI communities of Katanning and Cranbrook had the highest proportions of vulnerable children—more than the national averages on both measures.

The overall regional AEDI results for physical health and well-being, and language and cognitive skills showed larger proportions of young children in the region are developmentally vulnerable, compared to the results for Australia as a whole.

DEEWR will continue to work closely with RDA Great Southern, the Western Australian Department for Communities, local School, Business Community Partnership Broker providers and the local Early Years Network to create better connections between child care providers and other local stakeholders, and to discuss and develop new strategies to improve early childhood development outcomes.

Child care services

Currently there are about 540 long day care places available in the Great Southern region. About 65 per cent are located in Albany. The remaining places are spread fairly evenly across the region.

Early childhood workforce development

As part of the National Reform Agenda for Early Childhood, the Australian Government has committed to achieving universal access to early childhood education for all children in the year before school. Under the National Quality Framework, early childhood education providers must comply with new requirements such as mandatory employee qualifications and higher educator-to-child ratios. These requirements are to be phased in between 2012 and 2020.

The Australian Government is supporting this process through its Recognition of Prior Learning initiative to improve the quality and uptake of Recognition of Prior Learning assessments for early childhood professionals. The Great Southern Institute of Technology is on the panel of assessors to deliver the initiative at 30 locations across the Great Southern region until June 2013.

School education

School attendance

Looking at the attendance rates for schools across the region provided on the My School website, it appears that more than two-thirds of secondary schools achieve over 90 per cent attendance. Notably, over 90 per cent of the primary schools achieve over 90 per cent attendance.

Information provided by the Western Australia Department of Education on its Western Australia Schools Online website shows that the attendance rates for most government schools in the region are slightly above the average attendance rate for all government schools in Western Australia, which was 87.5 per cent in 2011.

Year 12 attainment

The 2011 Census data indicates that the percentage of people that have completed Year 12 aged 25-34 years in Albany (39.2%) achieved significantly below both the Western Australian (49.1%) and Australian (49.2%) averages. This is also the case for the Southern Western Australia employment service area which includes the Great Southern region as a whole.

The Western Australia Tertiary Institutions Service Centre data for the Great Southern region indicates 48.8 per cent of Year 12 students achieved an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank in 2011, compared to 54.3 per cent of students in 2010, suggesting a lower proportion of Great Southern students are seeking admission to university courses. This is significantly lower than the overall result for Western Australia where 59.2 per cent of Year 12 students achieved both Secondary Education and a Tertiary Entrance Rank.

Western Australian Government education sector

Approximately 7500 students are enrolled in 35 Western Australian Government schools in the Great Southern region. Nine government secondary schools are located across the region, two of which are located in Albany. Albany Senior High School is the largest in the region with nearly 1000 students.

Data from the My School website posted by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority demonstrates that Western Australian Government schools in the Great Southern have significantly larger numbers of Indigenous students enrolled than those in the non-government. Government schools with higher proportions of Indigenous students attending include –

- Tambellup Primary School (43%)
- Katanning Primary School (33%)
- Gnowangerup District High School (21%)
- Spencer Park Primary (18%)
- North Albany Senior High School (17%)
- Mount Lockyer Primary School and Katanning Senior High School (15%).

All other schools report fewer than 10 per cent Indigenous enrolment.

Non-government education sector

There are around 800 students enrolled across four Catholic Education schools in the Great Southern region (primary and secondary schools). In addition there are five independent schools (combined primary and secondary schools, and secondary schools) in the region that collectively have around 1900 student enrolments.

Smarter Schools National Partnership Agreement on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities

The National Partnership Agreement on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities aims to transform the way schooling takes place in participating schools and addresses the complex challenges facing students in disadvantaged communities. This is a joint initiative between the Australian Government, the Western Australian Department of Education, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia.

The only participating primary school in the Great Southern region is Katanning Primary School. Katanning Primary School has received funding to explore innovative measures to improve learning outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Central to these activities are partnerships with parents, other schools and businesses.

Smarter Schools National Partnership Agreement on Improving Literacy and Numeracy

The Australian Government is providing \$243.9 million for a new National Partnership on Improving Literacy and Numeracy (ILNNP) to support participating schools during the 2013 school year. The ILNNP aims to improve the outcomes of students, including students from disadvantaged backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, who are falling behind in literacy and numeracy. It will sustain the momentum of the initial Literacy Numeracy National Partnership (which concluded in December 2012) and support states and territories to expand the implementation of proven effective literacy and numeracy strategies in schools where under-performance persists.

Participating schools are being finalised with state/territory and non-government education authorities.

The new National Partnership will also support the ongoing expansion of the Teach Learn Share Evidence Base, which is becoming a valuable online repository, providing a national platform for educators to share their effective approaches to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning.

Trade Training Centres

The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program allows secondary students to access vocational education and training, providing a broader range of options for them and enhanced pathways into vocational careers.

In Round One of the program, \$1.5 million was allocated to establish a Trade Training Centre site at Mount Barker Community College to address skills shortages in the agrifood industry.

Round Two allocated funding to the Western Australian College of Agriculture (with Denmark High School) in Denmark and St Joseph's College (with Australian Christian College Southlands) in Albany. The Western Australian College of Agriculture received \$3.0 million in funding to refurbish the workshops and deliver training in construction and engineering skills. St Joseph's College received \$2.7 million and will focus on construction and engineering and furnishing skills.

North Albany Senior High School was awarded \$3.5 million in Round Three to build a facility to provide training in the community services, health support services and aged care sector. The building is almost complete and is expected to be handed over in mid-2013.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) commenced in Australian schools in 2008. Every year, all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are assessed on the same days using national tests in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

The 2011 NAPLAN results in the Great Southern showed a number of schools under performed against both similar schools and all schools nationally. Of particular concern were the Year 3 results of the primary schools in the Plantagenet, Cranbrook and Katanning regions. North Albany Senior High also has concerns as it was below average against similar high schools in four of the five areas assessed as well as being substantially below all schools in four of the five areas assessed.

Tertiary education and training

Post school qualifications

According to the 2011 Census, the proportion of people with post school qualifications in the Great Southern RDA region has steadily been increasing since 2001, from 29.5 per cent of the population in 2001 increasing to 38.4 per cent in 2011. By comparison, in 2011 the proportion of the population (aged 15 years and over) with a post school qualification in Western Australia was 44.6 per cent and 44.4 per cent respectively.

The 2011 Census data show that there is a considerably lower proportion of people over the age of 15 in the Great Southern region who have a bachelor degree or higher when compared to Western Australia and Australia. In the Great Southern region, at the time of the 2011 Census, 41.1 per cent of the population had a certificate level qualification, higher than Western Australia as a whole (34.3%). 17.7 per cent of the population had a bachelor degree compared to 22.9 per cent for Western Australia. This may be explained by the labour market feeding the resource sector's high demand for tradespeople and people such as mobile plant operators who do not require higher education qualifications. Relatively high wages on offer in Western Australia within the resource sector can often create disincentives to undertake university courses.

Higher education options in the region

The University of Western Australia and Curtin University both have a regional presence in Albany. The University of Western Australia Strategic Plan 2011-2015 contains a number of strategies to increase access, expand the number of courses available and enhance student support at the Albany campus. Curtin University also offers a range of courses and has developed strong linkages to the Great Southern Institute of Technology.

Participation in vocational education and training

The largest registered training organisation is the Great Southern Institute of Technology which has four campuses that operate in the main regional centres of Albany, Denmark, Mount Barker and Katanning. It also has service agreements with community resource centres at Kojonup, Gnowangerup, Walpole, Tambellup and Wellstead. The telecentre network that is spread across most of the small towns also provides support to students. The Great Southern Institute of Technology feeds into higher education (through an academic foundation year), by supporting students completion of diploma courses and transition into university-level qualifications.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Australian Apprenticeship Centres operate as a one-stop shop for those seeking to hire Australian apprentices or wanting to take up an Australian apprenticeship as a career path.

Three Australian Apprenticeship Centres operate in the Great Southern region:

- the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Company
- CCI Apprenticeship Solutions
- MEGT commenced servicing the region in late 2012.

Jobs, skills and workforce development

Employment service area

The Great Southern RDA region is part of the Southern (WA) employment service area (ESA), which also covers the South West region and parts of the Peel and Wheatbelt regions. The population of the Great Southern RDA region equates to approximately 25 per cent of the Southern (WA) ESA.

Unemployment and participation

In December 2012, the Great Southern RDA region had an unemployment rate of 4.8 per cent. This is higher than the average rate for Western Australia (4.0 per cent) and lower than Australia (5.4%).

Table 1: Unemployment rates for Local Government Areas in the Great Southern region

Local Government Area	Unemployment rate (%) December 2011	Unemployment rate (%) December 2012	% change in over 12 months period
Albany (central)	5.4	4.9	-0.5
Albany (balance)	5.1	4.7	-0.4
Denmark	5.0	4.7	-0.3
Plantagenet	6.5	5.8	-0.7
Katanning	8.6	8.6	0.0
Kojonup	2.9	2.6	-0.3
Gnowangerup	5.2	4.8	-0.4

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

Table 1 shows that the Shire of Katanning has the highest unemployment rate (8.6%) in the Great Southern region. This information also shows that Albany, which has the largest labour force in the region, has unemployment increasing to above the state and national levels and the Shire of Plantagenet, adjacent to Albany, also has increasing unemployment.

Registered job seekers

There are three Job Services Australia providers operating in the Southern (WA) ESA which cover the Great Southern region. Complementary and specialist employment services in the region are also provided by Indigenous Employment Program and Disability Employment Service providers.

There are about 1900 registered job seekers in the Great Southern RDA region.

Within the entire Southern (WA) ESA, the average job seeker is 36 years old and the average unemployment duration is 23 months.

Less than half of all registered job seekers in the Great Southern region are assessed by either Centrelink or their Job Service Australia provider as being disadvantaged and having multiple barriers to employment. While a large group of job seekers require training and support to go into employment, this also shows that there are many local job seekers in the region who are job ready but unable to access job opportunities.

Many job seekers possess trade or university-level qualifications however, over half of all job seekers have not completed Year 12. In terms of disadvantaged groups, nearly 20 per cent of job seekers in the region are Indigenous people. Over one third of the most disadvantaged cohort of registered job seekers are ex-offenders with over half of these also being Indigenous facing multiple barriers to employment.

Over half of all job seekers in the Great Southern region live in the Albany area. Katanning has the next highest share of job seekers (10%). The remainder of the job seekers are distributed across smaller towns including Mount Barker, Broomehill, Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kendenup and Gnowangerup. Over one-third of these job seekers are Indigenous people. Engaging these job seekers in more meaningful activities is required to lift their participation in the workforce.

Major employers in the Great Southern region

According to the 2011 ABS Census, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector is the largest industry sector employing people in the region. The retail sector is also a major employer. The government services sector (i.e. health, education, public administration and safety) also employs a high proportion of local workers.

Census results show a decline in employment in the local agriculture industry between 2011 and 2006. This was driven by factors such as smaller farms being purchased by larger operations, declining sheep prices and marginal rain in many areas. The high Australian dollar has also been a factor since 2006.

Table 2 shows the major employers in the region.

Table 2: Major employers in the Great Southern region

Employer	No. of employees
WA Country Health Service – Great Southern	1296
WA Department of Education	976
Fletcher International WA, Narrikup abattoir	430
Great Southern Institute of Technology	325
City of Albany	320
West Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative International – Katanning abattoir	300
WA Department of Corrective Services (including Albany prison)	226

Source: *Great Southern Employment Development Committee, 2009, and Regional Development Australia Great Southern.*

Grange Resources Southdown Project is a proposed magnetite mine located 90 kilometres east of Albany. The company has just completed a definitive feasibility study, released on 1 May 2012, to determine the economic viability and environmental impacts of the project. Grange announced that the project was robust, practicable and financially attractive. It is anticipated to produce up to 6.6 million tonnes per annum for over 20 years. The final investment decision is expected to be made at the end of 2012.

The export of magnetite will triple the trade of the Albany Port to over 13 million tonnes per annum. The project will see over \$250 million spent at the Port for dredging, a new berth and associated infrastructure. This project will potentially create 600 new jobs.

Demand for labour and skills

Large numbers of local people are employed as managers, in technical and trades jobs and as labourers. This is expected given the extent of employment in agriculture. Overall, there appears to be a fairly even distribution of employment across all occupation groups in the region, similar to the situation for the whole of Western Australia. Table 3 shows the types of jobs in that local people are employed.

Table 3: Types of jobs in which local people are employed

Occupation	No. of persons employed
Managers	5053
Technicians and trades workers	3678
Labourers	3283
Professionals	3512
Clerical and administrative workers	2709
Machinery operators	1661
Community and personal service workers	2494
Sales workers	2149

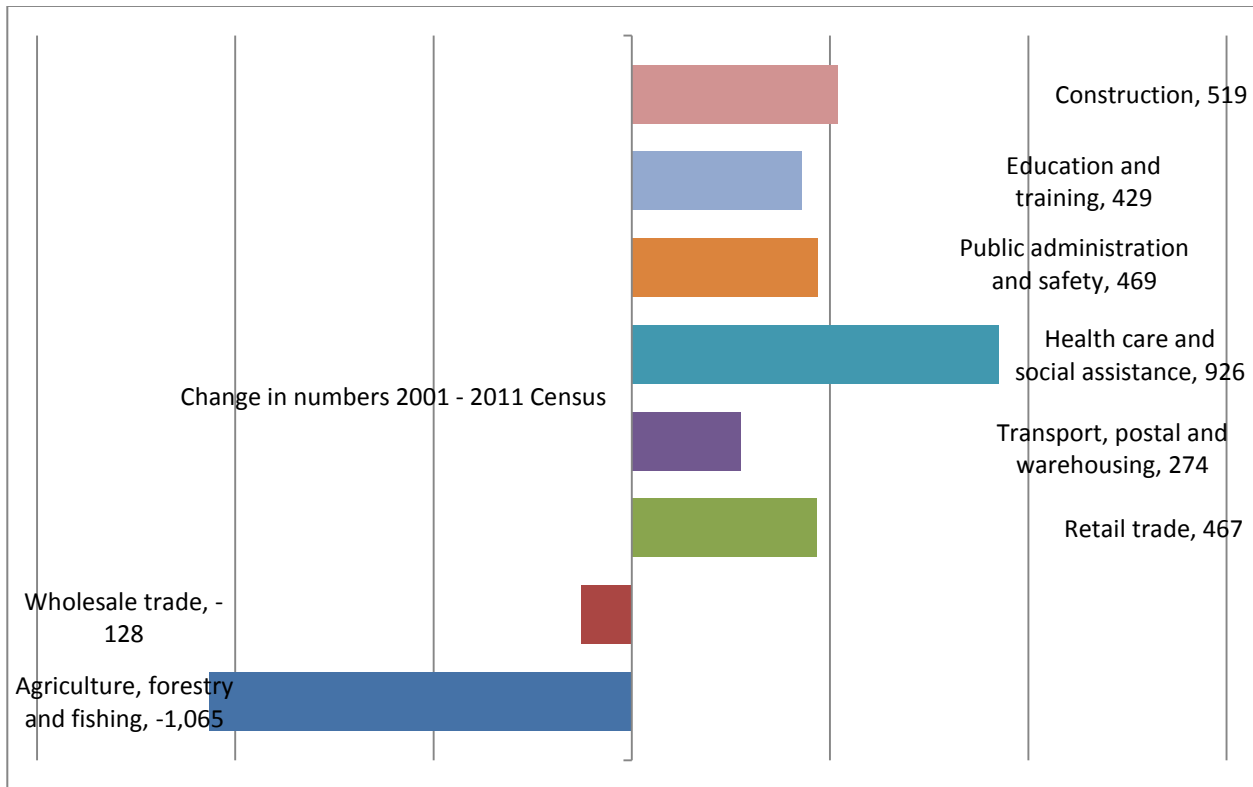
Source: ABS, 2011 Census.

In June 2011, DEEWR undertook a survey in the Southern (WA) ESA to obtain information about employers' recruitment experiences. This survey involved telephone surveys with 398 employers in the ESA.

A high proportion (77%) of employers recruited in the 12 months preceding the survey, with over half of these employers recruiting to increase their staff levels. About two-thirds of employers in the Southern (WA) ESA reported difficulty recruiting and 8.7 per cent of vacancies remained unfilled.

As shown in Figure 2 (below), labour force information for the Southern (WA) ESA indicates a move away from the agriculture, forestry and fishing and manufacturing sectors. The trend for both the agriculture and manufacturing sector cannot be understated. The recent reduction in production at both Fletchers and WAMMCO, due to the shortage of sheep is a good example of this trend, although both abattoirs are expected to return to full production in 2013. Over the same time, there were increases in employment in construction, retail, education and training, and health care and social assistance industries.

Figure 2: Changes in employment by industry sector (Great Southern WA)



Source: ABS, 2001 and 2011 Census.

Consultations with local stakeholders have indicated that agriculture in the region has become less commercially viable with declining rainfall in southern Western Australia over the past 20 years. This has impacted on the sheep farming industry, with flow-on effects on the meat processing industry (which is a major employer in the Great Southern region).

Great Southern Workforce Development Plan

To meet the challenges of increased demand for skilled labour, the Western Australia State Government has developed 'Skilling WA', a workforce development plan for Western Australia. Skilling WA is a dynamic document and will be regularly reviewed and updated. It focuses on growing the workforce through increased participation, targeted skilled migration and attracting and retaining a skilled labour force in Western Australia's regions.

As part of this development, regional groups have been formed called Workforce Alliances. The RESJ Coordinator is representing DEEWR on the Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance, which oversees the development and implementation of the Great Southern Workforce Development Plan. The alliance is chaired by the Great Southern Development Commission and its members comprise representatives from local industry and community.

The Great Southern Workforce Development Plan was released in April 2013 and aims to build, attract and retain a skilled workforce to meet the economic needs of the Great Southern region. Its outcomes and actions include opportunities for DEEWR to increase its involvement in workforce development in the region.

Other characteristics

Regional Development Australia Fund

The Australian Government's Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) provides financial grants to support the infrastructure needs of Australia's regions. It is based on the principle that regions and their communities are best placed to identify the key opportunities that will support sustainable economic, environmental and community growth and to ensure that investments are targeted at projects of lasting benefit. Expressions of Interest are invited from the local community and are assessed by the local RDA Committee. The Committee works with successful applicants to progress their projects under the fund.

As part of RDAF Round One in September 2011, the Shire of Katanning received \$7.42 million towards the completion of the new sheep saleyards in Katanning; the total project cost is \$25.47 million. The project also received \$17 million from the Royalties for Regions funding from the Western Australia State Government.

Western Australian Government – SuperTowns

Through the Western Australian Department of Regional Development and Lands, the Western Australian Government has established a SuperTowns (Regional Centres Development Plan) initiative under Royalties for Regions. It encourages regional communities in the southern half of the state to plan for the future and position themselves to pursue opportunities created by population growth in Western Australia.





The Western Australian Government's vision for SuperTowns is to create 'balanced communities', with lifestyle options and access to services. SuperTowns will have affordable, quality housing and a diverse range of job opportunities offering more attractive, options for people to live in regional areas rather than in the Perth metropolitan area. In the Great Southern region, the town of Katanning is identified as a SuperTown.

ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

This section sets out the issues and goals identified through local consultation. It also details the specific strategies that will help achieve the community's objectives. The issues and strategies will be reviewed and may be modified throughout the implementation of the plan to June 2014 to ensure they respond to emerging issues and opportunities or changing community or government priorities in the Great Southern RDA region.

The programs and stakeholders listed in the following tables are indicative only. Both may vary over time and any listing does not guarantee either the availability of program funding or stakeholder involvement.

Colour codes indicate how each issue relates to the four key themes of the *Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans* initiative:

	Early childhood education and care
	School education
	Tertiary education and training
	Jobs, skills and workforce development

The numbering of each issue is for ease of reference only and does not indicate its priority within the region. They are generally sequenced according to the life cycle of the four key themes listed above.

Issue 1 Early childhood AEDI results are below average for language and cognitive skills, and physical health and well-being.

Goal: *Improve and/or increase access to quality child care and early childhood education services.*

Early childhood education and care	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the local Early Years Network in the Great Southern region with a particular emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ addressing the assessed deficiency in language and cognitive skills for young children living in the shires of Katanning, Cranbrook Gnowangerup and Plantagenet ○ improving the physical health and wellbeing of young children living in Albany ○ developing at least one new Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program project to improve childhood development for young Indigenous children in the region during 2012–13 ○ Organising an Early Childhood Education round table to identify issues and develop strategies to optimise service delivery in the region by June 2013. • Promote Australian Government initiatives to assist the child care sector and child care workers during their workforce development and transition to meeting the requirements of the National Quality Framework including Recognition of Prior Learning initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Communities (WA) • Department of Education (WA) • Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs • Great Southern Development Commission • Great Southern Employment Development Committee • Great Southern Institute of Technology • RDA Great Southern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PaCE • Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Grants • Royalties for Regions • School Business Community Partnership Brokers 	

Issue 2 **Year 12 achievement and completion rates are below regional and national averages.**

Goal: Improve rates of Year 12 achievement and completion.

School education		
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Department of Education (WA), Catholic Education Office and Association of Independent Schools of WA on activities to improve Year 12 achievement and completion, including literacy and numeracy outcomes through relevant National Partnerships. • Investigate and develop opportunities to support Indigenous school students and their families in the Great Southern region by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ developing at least one new project under the Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program ○ working with the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways (IYCP) providers to establish school based traineeships in the Great Southern, with particular focus on the Health Industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association of Independent Schools of WA • Catholic Education Office • Department of Education (WA) • Great Southern Employment Development Committee • RDA Great Southern • WA Country Health Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PaCE • IYCP

Issue 3 Young people are at risk of disengaging from education, training or employment services.

Goal: *Increase engagement of young people in training and tertiary education pathways, through to employment.*

	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Department of Education (WA) on school-based activities that increase the options for young people to obtain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ encouraging secondary schools with Trade Training Centres to promote their capacity to deliver accredited qualifications to both potential students and employers ○ working with local group training organisations and employers to develop new school based apprenticeships and traineeships ○ promoting Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways (IYCP) program in the region with particular focus on the Health and Community Care sector. • Work with the Department of Education (WA) and Job Services Australia (JSA) providers to ensure the engagement of disengaged young people in training pathways where an alternative to school education is required. • Work with universities and other providers to increase the number and types of courses available to be studied locally and to better prepare young people for the transition to higher education. • Work collaboratively with all stakeholders to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and traineeships in the region by actively participating in the working groups that are developing two career expos in 2013. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Apprenticeship Centres • Department of Education (WA) • Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education • Great Southern Institute of Technology • Group training organisations • JSA providers • Local schools • Skill Hire (Youth Connections) • University of Western Australia • WA Country Health Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Apprenticeships • IYCP • JSA • Trade Training Centres in Schools • Youth Connections 	

Goal: <i>Increase the participation of disadvantaged job seekers in training and employment.</i>		
	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Job Services Australia (JSA) and Disability Employment Service (DES) providers to develop projects to lift the employability and work readiness of disadvantaged job seekers in smaller towns in the region. This will involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working with large, local employers presently operating or developing projects in the Katanning region, such as Ausgold and West Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative, to identify and pursue opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers ○ working with the resource sector and local employers to develop new projects that will increase employment of Indigenous job seekers including Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) projects that identify, prepare and deploy a Great Southern based Indigenous Fly-In Fly-Out (or Drive-In Drive-Out) workforce ○ working with Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to investigate flexible funding options to support engagement activities in the smaller towns ○ continuing to develop opportunities for Indigenous people to work with the WA Country Health Service in the Great Southern, including regional centres ○ identifying new opportunities for National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) projects that will train and prepare disadvantaged job seekers to meet the labour requirements of local employers and industries. • Work with the Department of Regional Development and Lands (WA) to identify and respond to emerging job creation opportunities in Katanning as a result of Royalties for Regions investment under the SuperTowns initiative. • Work with key stakeholders such as JSA and training industry associations to develop pathways to sustainable employment opportunities for mature age job seekers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community First International • Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs • Department of Indigenous Affairs (WA) • Department of Regional Development and Lands (WA) • DES providers • Fletcher International Exports • Great Southern Development Commission • Great Southern Personnel • JSA providers • RDA Great Southern • Rio Tinto Iron Ore • Shires of Cranbrook, Broomehill-Tambellup and Gnowangerup • Skill Hire • Southern Aboriginal Corporation • WA Country Health Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JSA • DES • IEP • Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program • Experience+ • NWDF

Goal: <i>Improve access to information on job opportunities and connect employers with skilled job seekers.</i>		
		Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect skilled job seekers in Albany and surrounding areas to employers with suitable job opportunities (local and Fly-In, Fly-Out). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jobs (and relevant skill sets) will be identified by employers. ○ Job Services Australia (JSA) and Disability Employment Service (DES) providers will identify local job seekers with the relevant skills and attributes. ○ Employers, JSA and DES providers will establish an ongoing dialogue on matching skilled job seekers to jobs and their training requirements. • Work with local partners to develop proposals for the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF), Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) and/or the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program. • Work closely with employers to monitor the progress of major projects in the region in order to identify emerging workforce development needs and coordinate appropriate local responses in a timely and effective manner. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identifying skilled workers that are made redundant or are underemployed in the region and connect them to emerging job opportunities ○ aligning this with the work of the Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance and outcomes and actions in its plan. • Promote the need for employers to develop and implement Indigenous employment strategies in the Great Southern region, connecting them to the range of support available through the IEP and others (e.g. Australian Government Skills Connect). • Continue working closely with mining companies doing Fly-In, Fly-Out to promote opportunities for local job seekers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local shires • Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Department of Human Services (Centrelink) • Department of Indigenous Affairs (WA) • Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education • Department of Training and Workforce Development (WA) • DES providers • First Quantum Minerals • Great Southern Development Commission • Great Southern Employment Development Committee • JSA providers • Local industry (specifically targeting the meat industry in both Katanning and Albany) • RDA Great Southern • Rio Tinto Iron Ore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government Skills Connect • DES • IEP • JSA • NWDF • WELL

APPENDICES

Appendix A — Stakeholders

Below is a list of organisations consulted during the development of this RESJ Plan, listed by sector.

Stakeholders involved in the RESJ Plan development	
Sector	Stakeholder
Local government	Shires of Katanning, Kent, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup and Plantagenet, City Of Albany,
State government	Department of Education; Department of Training and Workforce Development; Great Southern Development Commission; Department of Corrective Services.
Australian Government	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Department of Human Services (Centrelink); Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport; Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.
Early Childhood Education and Care	Child care – Wanslea Family Services, Kingdom Care Child Care, Early Years Network Parent and Community Engagement Program – Great Southern Employment Development Committee.
Education	Catholic Education Office - St Joseph's College Principal Albany; North Albany Senior High School Principal and Deputy Principal; Western Australian Department of Education regional executive director and participation manager.
Vocational Education and Training	Registered training organisations - Great Southern Institute of Technology, Skill Hire, Community First International.
Higher education	Great Southern Institute of Technology.
Youth	Job Services Australia providers – PVS Workfind, Community First International and Skill Hire; School Business Community Partnership Broker – Great Southern Employment Development Committee; Youth Connections provider – Skill Hire; WA Department of Education – participation team.
Employment	Disability Employment Service provider – Great Southern Personnel; Fletcher International; West Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative; Indigenous Employment Program – Southern Aboriginal Corporation; Skill Hire; Job Services Australia providers – Community First, Skill Hire and PVS Workfind.
Indigenous organisations	Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Walitj Aboriginal Corporation, Mount Barker Aboriginal Corporation, Katanning Aboriginal Corporation
Regional development	Regional Development Australia Great Southern WA; Great Southern Development Commission.

Appendix B — Existing related plans and strategies

This section includes some of the related strategic plans in the region which have:

- influenced the direction of this RESJ Plan
- have complementary goals and strategies and/or
- have significance in the region in relation to education, skills and jobs.

It provides an overview of how each strategy or plan has had an impact on this RESJ Plan and how it may be utilised to maximise outcomes.

Plan or strategy	Impact on RESJ Plan	How it can be used/linked/expanded
Regional Development Australia (RDA), Great Southern	The RDA Plan provides a framework for sustainable regional development in the Great Southern.	The goals and strategies of this RESJ Plan complement those included in the RDA Great Southern Roadmap.
Regional Development Australia Fund – Saleyards project	The saleyards project will increase training and employment opportunities in Katanning.	The Katanning sheep saleyards project, funded for \$7.42 million under the Regional Development Australia Fund, will offer increased training and employment for local job seekers.
Royalties for Regions – SuperTowns	Royalties for Regions investment in Katanning as a SuperTown may improve child care, education and training infrastructure as well as being a source of potential jobs creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be integrated planning in Katanning with regard to early childhood, education and training infrastructure. • Infrastructure projects may provide a source of employment and skills development during the construction phase. • Expansion of health, education and community services infrastructure may provide a source of longer term employment in these sectors.

Plan or strategy	Impact on RESJ Plan	How it can be used/linked/expanded
Great Southern Workforce Development Plan 2013-2016	<p>This plan aims to build, attract and retain a skilled workforce to meet the economic needs of the Great Southern region. It contains a range of priority actions which were identified by local stakeholders to address local workforce development challenges.</p> <p>The plan aligns with the State Government's 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated planning of workforce development in the Great Southern region will assist in aligning efforts between government, industry and community. • The Great Southern Workforce Development Plan provides an important reference point for all stakeholders as it identifies the challenges, agreed solutions and organisations that have a key stake in its implementation.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Term
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEDI	Australian Early Development Index
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DES	Disability Employment Service
ESA	Employment Service Area
IEP	Indigenous Employment Program
IYCP	Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways
JSA	Job Services Australia
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NWDF	National Workforce Development Fund
PaCE	Parental and Community Engagement
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDAF	Regional Development Australia Fund
RESJ	Regional Education, Skills and Jobs
WELL	Workplace English Language and Literacy