

Jobs & Skills for Regional SA **Engagement Plan**

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of State Development (DSD) is planning a comprehensive engagement approach to better understand demand and need in non-metropolitan South Australian regions; and to collaborate with a broad range of local stakeholders and communities to develop tailored responses that address skills, training and employment challenges, and opportunities.

A key priority identified by the Industry Leaders Groups (ILGs) and Regional Development Australia (RDAs) at the September 2016 Regional Forum was the need for differentiated responses to skills and employment challenges and opportunities in each region. This engagement approach outlined in this Plan will address this priority, using contemporary engagement frameworks and approaches including the State Government's [Better Together principles](#).

PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

We will:

- consult, involve and collaborate with stakeholders to understand industry demand and individual need in relation to skills, training and employment initiatives in each non-metropolitan region
- collaborate with a broad range of local stakeholders and communities to develop tailored responses that address regional skills, training and employment challenges and that seize new opportunities.
- develop a Skills and Workforce Development Plan for each non-metropolitan region with short, medium and long term goals and strategies.

REFERENCES TO GUIDE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Two key references will be used to guide the engagement process:

- ¹OECD Conceptual Framework - Understanding Skills for Competitiveness
- ²Australian Productivity Commission, Initial Report – Transitioning Regional Economies

OECD Conceptual Framework

The OECD Conceptual Framework will be used as a guide for the regional engagement process to better understand the relationship between skills demand and skills supply at a regional level. This framework shows regional areas categorised as one of four types:

- A low skills equilibrium – a situation of low supply of and low demand for skills
- Skills gaps and shortages – a situation of low supply and high demand for skills
- A skills surplus – a situation of high supply and low demand for skills
- A high skills equilibrium – a situation of high supply and high demand for skills

Applied to any given region, each type represents an 'average' condition, which might conceal much more varied conditions in different industries or in regional centres. In developing policy and program responses we will develop a more detailed and nuanced understanding of local labour market conditions and dynamics, through the comprehensive engagement process.

Productivity Commission Report

The Productivity Commission Report references:

- "There is no 'one size fits all' approach that will promote successful adaptation in all regions, although there are 'no regrets' policies that should be pursued as soon as practicable.
- Strategies for successful adaptation and development are those that focus on supporting people in regional communities to adjust to changing economic circumstances. Strategies work best when they are:
 - identified and led by the local community, in partnership with all levels of government
 - aligned with the region's relative strengths
 - supported by targeted investment in developing the capability of the people in the local community to deal with transition, adaptation, and securing an economic future
 - designed with clear objectives and measurable performance indicators and subject to rigorous evaluation."

¹ Anne Green (May 2012), Skills for Competitiveness, Country Report for United Kingdom, www.oecd.org

² <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/transitioning-regions/initial>

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

We will:

- build on local knowledge and information already provided by stakeholders
- identify key stakeholders and promote a variety of engagement opportunities in order to gather quality information from an extensive range of people from local communities and stakeholders, so that new voices and new perspectives can be heard.
- engage with a broad range of regional stakeholders/communities to identify demand and need as well as opportunities to collaboratively problem solve and prioritise solutions to address challenges and opportunities.
- lead solution-focused engagement to improve skills and employment outcomes for job seekers and employers by better understanding and meeting of industry demand and individual needs.
- implement tailored responses to skills and employment challenges and opportunities in non-metropolitan regions in 2017/2018.

SCOPE DEFINITION

The scope of this project in each region is:

- A stakeholder engagement process to better understand the demand and need in relation to skills, training and employment; and to develop tailored responses to address the identified demand and need.
- The identification of priority initiatives and the development of responses in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders to address skills, training and employment issues, which maximise outcomes for individuals, employers and key stakeholders in non-metropolitan regions.
- The output of the engagement process will be a Skills and Workforce Development Plan for each non-metropolitan region with short, medium and long term responses to the identified individual need and industry demand.
- The project will focus on skills and employment issues as the priority, but there will be a process using the [Joined Up Policy Guide](#) to ensure other issues that impact on skills and employment are actively pursued with other areas of Government.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

In broad terms, the stakeholder groups who will be engaged in this process include:

Employers	Employer bodies/associations	Job seekers including unemployed people / retrenched workers
Local Government	RDAs and ILGs	Training providers
Job Active providers	Potential contractors	Job seeker support services
Aboriginal groups	Specific cohorts, e.g. migrant/refugee groups, young and mature aged people	Community groups / organisations
Department of State Development	Non-government organisations	SA Government agencies (e.g. PIRSA/Regions SA, DECD, SA Health/DAASA, DCSI, DPTI, SATC)
Chambers of Commerce	Australian Government (e.g. Department of Employment)	

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

This engagement approach has three different levels of engagement (consult, involve, and collaborate) for the diverse needs of stakeholders. The level of engagement (or level of influence for stakeholders) will depend on the stage of the process, the stakeholders involved, and the local context.

[Better Together principles](#) and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) [Spectrum](#) will be used to determine and clearly communicate the level of engagement at each stage with stakeholders.

TIMELINES

In broad terms, the timing of the regional engagement project will be as follows:

Indicative Project Timeframe	
Date	Activity
March/April 2017:	Preliminary engagement with RDAs and ILGs in all non-metro regions to explain the purpose and scope of the engagement process and seek their advice
May/June 2017	Preparation work – develop regional profiles; summarise the reports provided to date; develop communication materials and finalise engagement planning.
July - September 2017:	Stakeholder engagement activities (staggered timeline across regions)
October 2017:	Develop agreed responses for each region and prepare Skills and Workforce Development Plan for shared action between stakeholders
November 2017:	Tender process(es) as required
From January 2018:	New projects implemented

Please note, the timing above may be different in some regions, depending on advice from key stakeholders and other logistical considerations).

PROJECT BUDGET

A budget will be allocated within existing resources to cover the costs associated with implementing the engagement process in each region, which will include:

- Venue hire
- Catering
- Travel expenses
- Printing of communications materials (if printed externally)
- Graphic design (when unable to use in-house resources)
- Independent facilitator(s) for workshops
- Other professional services as required.

In general, the staging of stakeholder engagement activities in all non-metropolitan regions is detailed below.

Engagement Process Stages		
Stage	Activity	Timing
Stage 1	Preliminary consultation - RDAs and ILGs	March to May 2017
Stage 2	Initial engagement to identify need and demand including cohort workshops/focus groups, interviews/1:1 meetings and YourSAY online engagement	June / July / August 2017
Stage 3	Finalise regional responses including major workshop(s) with a broad range of stakeholders and in consideration of feedback provided in stage 2.	Sept / Oct 2017
	Tender process(es)	Nov 2017
Stage 4	Co-deliver actions / implement responses	From early 2018
Stage 5	Evaluation ; at end of each stage above; and as required to report on key targets and KPIs.	Ongoing

KEY MESSAGES

1. Our approach is to better understand demand and need, and then to respond appropriately and effectively to it.
2. We must understand the varied and changing needs across individuals, groups, places/regions and sectors.
3. Once we understand need we must be flexible to tailor or differentiate our responses to meet the need.
4. This is not a one-size fits all approach. We are listening closely and responding to feedback from stakeholders and local communities.
5. We are introducing more flexibility to our initiatives, recognising that not all individuals, industries or regions are alike.
6. We have a renewed and strengthened commitment to openly and genuinely engage with stakeholders to decide, design and deliver our initiatives.
7. Another aspect of differentiating our initiatives is ensuring that people who need additional help, who are vulnerable, who have higher needs, are supported and not left behind. Disadvantage should not be a barrier to gaining skills and getting a job.
8. We are facilitating the delivery of skill development and employment initiatives that will help people, businesses and communities to participate, enter and thrive in the rapidly changing world of work in South Australia.
9. There are two key directions that are informing our approach:
 - a. Better understanding the demand for skills within the State, variable and changing demand across individuals, cohorts, projects, places and sectors
 - b. Ensuring our initiatives are appropriately tailored to respond effectively to this changing demand and need.
10. Involving local people and experts in understanding challenges and opportunities, as well as developing tailored responses will enable the community and stakeholders to own and drive solutions.
11. The Jobs and Skills for Regional SA project will provide the opportunity for new voices and new perspectives to be heard by consulting, involving and collaborating with a broad range of local stakeholders.
12. The project will focus on skills and employment issues as the priority, but there will be a process to ensure other issues that impact on skills and employment, are actively pursued with other areas of Government.

INTRA-AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

We will coordinate with other State Government departments to actively pursue other issues that impact on people and stakeholders in relation to skills, training and employment, such as:

- DECD – linked to education and work pathways from school
- DCSI – for access to other community services in regions
- SA Health – linked to mental health issues forming a significant barrier to study and work for some people
- DAASA – to provide links to drug and alcohol programs
- DPTI – linked to public transport in regional areas
- SATC – tourism opportunities
- Other Departments as identified.

A process, using the [Joined Up Policy](#) Champions will be put in place for other government agencies to participate in the engagement process and provide information and / or referrals for other government programs and services, as indicated by stakeholders.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS (HOW WE WILL ENGAGE)

The approach has a number and variety of engagement activities tailored for each region to maximise participation in the process by stakeholders and local communities. Broadly the tools and techniques to be implemented includes:

- **An initial small scale engagement** with the Department's Industry Leaders Groups (ILG) Chairs, and Regional Development Australia (RDAs) Chief Executives to provide the context for the engagement process and to gain their input to the proposed approach due to their significant local knowledge and valued history of partnering with the Department to deliver skills and employment programs.
- **Stakeholder interviews / meetings** as appropriate
- **Focus groups** with stakeholders, job seekers and specific cohorts such as young / mature aged people and job seekers (event format and promotion will be tailored for specific groups and regions)
- **Workshops** with training providers / contractors / other key stakeholders, and other events for employers as appropriate
- **Online engagement** through the State Government's [YourSAy](#) website, including regional web pages, discussion forums and surveys as required (hard copy options will also be available)
- **A major workshop** with a broad range of stakeholder representatives in regional centres, to provide opportunity to hear new voices and new perspectives and create shared understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities. This major workshop will be hosted in September / October in each region to bring together stakeholders to develop tailored responses for each region, based on the feedback gathered from the engagement activities outlined above.
- Consideration of engagement activities in **regional centres / towns** across each region.

The specific tools implemented in each region will be determined in consideration of the local context and tailored for local stakeholders.

COMMUNICATION MATERIALS FOR GENUINE ENGAGEMENT

As part of this project a number of communication materials and key documents will be developed to enable genuine and evidence-based engagement with stakeholders including:

- **Regional Workforce Profiles** (one for each region)
- **Background and history document** (for each region, as a literature review to summarise and analyse existing reports, plans and other intelligence held by key stakeholders)
- General **Fact Sheet** as an overview of the engagement process and set the high-level context
- Other fact sheets, presentations, videos and communication materials as required in local regions.

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Evaluation

The success of the engagement process will be measured by:

- number of participants in the engagement process
- quality of input provided by stakeholders and local communities
- level of participation by stakeholders in developing tailored responses in each region
- number of participants with barriers to employment and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds
- number of people from specific cohorts (such as young people and Aboriginal people) participating in the engagement process
- feedback and input provided by new stakeholders
- stakeholder and community satisfaction with the engagement process
- other Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets to be determined for each non-metropolitan region
- outcomes of the tailored responses, as indicated by labor market and training provider data in future years.

More detailed KPIs and targets will be determined early in the planning phase for the engagement process.

Reporting

Closing the feedback loop will be an important part of the engagement process to ensure stakeholders are informed about how their input and participation has influenced the decision and outcomes. Developing tailored responses in each region will require ongoing dialogue and collaboration between DSD, stakeholders and local communities.

A subscription option (available through the YourSAy website) will be provided in all communication materials and at all events to enable local communities and stakeholders to continue to collaborate as the project progresses. The subscription tool will also be used to invite stakeholders and local communities to continue participating as new opportunities in the engagement process become available.

A feedback report and the Skills and Workforce Development Plan will be made available on both the YourSAy and WorkReady websites by late 2017 to close the feedback loop with stakeholders and local communities. Other updates will be provided through the subscription database as the project progresses.