



Australian Government

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Central Coast-Hunter Priority Employment Area

Local Employment Coordinator
Jack Ritchie



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The document must be attributed as the Regional Employment Plan - Central Coast-Hunter Priority Employment Area.

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A plan to help drive local solutions to labour market issues

The Local Employment Coordinator for the Central Coast – Hunter priority employment area is Jack Ritchie.

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Jack is supported by an Advisory Committee comprised of key local stakeholders

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN

In the 2011-12 Budget the Australian Government announced that it would invest over \$3 billion in skills and training initiatives over six years through the *Building Australia's Future Workforce* package to deliver the skilled workers the Australian economy needs. As part of the package, the Priority Employment Area initiative including Local Employment Coordinators and Jobs and Skills Expos was also extended for two years until 30 June 2013.

Local Employment Coordinators have been appointed to 20 priority employment areas through the Priority Employment Area initiative. They will work closely with employers, employment services providers, local communities and all levels of government to help drive local solutions to labour market issues. This involves identifying opportunities, issues and helping to coordinate responses from businesses, government and other organisations to put in place strategies to help address them.

Local Employment Coordinators also develop and implement a regional employment plan that sets out their key goals and strategies to address unemployment, skills and labour issues for their priority employment area.

The Local Employment Coordinator for the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area is Mr Jack Ritchie. Mr Ritchie has developed this regional employment plan with support from an Employment Project Officer and an Advisory Committee made up of key local stakeholders who will work with him to implement the strategies set out in the plan.

The committee comprises key local stakeholders and includes:

- Mr Tony Sansom, NSW Trade and Investment
- Mr John Tilston, Gosford City Council
- Mr Garry McLachlan, Wyong Shire Council
- Ms Ruth Hutchinson NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services
- Ms Maggie MacFie, Youth Connections
- Mr Graeme Hooper, Lake Macquarie City Council
- Mr Steven Adams, Indigenous Communities Alliance
- Ms Pennie Kearney, Mai-Wel Limited
- Mr Matthew Newcombe, Salvation Army Employment Plus
- Mr Todd Williams, Regional Development Australia Hunter
- Mrs Karen Minto, NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet
- Mr Bill Tatnell, NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet
- Mr Andrew Roach, Regional Development Australia Central Coast
- Mr Frank Sammut, Sammut Group, Innov8central
- Mr Greg Best, Central Coast Group Training
- Ms Lyn Bourke, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Mr Greg Combes, Regional Development Australia Central Coast
- Mr Glenn Rumble, Central Coast, Hunter and North Coast Jobfind Centre
- Mr Graham Baker, Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
- Mr John Coyle, HunterNet Co-Operative Limited
- Mr Daniel Farmer, NSW Business Chamber
- Mr Roger Stephan, Hunter Councils Incorporated

- Ms Louise Hamilton, Department of Human Services
- Mr Norm Chapman, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Ms Janine Pitt, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

DEEWR acknowledges the traditional Custodians of the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area and their elders past and present recognising their continuing connection to country. This regional employment plan strives to build and harness mutually respectful relationships and reflect community priorities in education, skills and jobs development for the region.

SUMMARY

This regional employment plan guides specific strategies that respond to the employment, training and participation challenges and opportunities identified across the Central Coast and the Lower Hunter and Great Lakes regions of the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area.

The goals identified in this regional employment plan will be achieved through partnerships with many stakeholders in the regions, including eight local councils, all levels of government operating in the area, the Local Employment Coordinator Advisory Committees and local employment services providers.

This regional employment plan identifies challenges and opportunities for the area in employment, job creation and regional capacity. It sets out goals and specific strategies to take up these opportunities and address these challenges.

The four (4) key goals are:

- Support employment, workforce participation and skills development including through maximising Government investments;
- Facilitate employment and training opportunities for job seekers, including disadvantaged groups, with a focus on industries experiencing skills shortages;
- Help retrenched workers transition into new employment and/or training; and
- Grow social enterprise and social procurement to provide employment opportunities for, and re-engage, disadvantaged job seekers.

CENTRAL COAST-HUNTER PRIORITY EMPLOYMENT AREA

The Central Coast–Hunter priority employment area includes two distinct regions—the Central Coast region and the Lower Hunter and Great Lakes region. The priority employment area stretches along the NSW coastline from the Central Coast peninsula suburbs of Woy Woy and Ettalong in the south, to the towns of Forster and Tuncurry in the Great Lakes Local Government Area in the north, and inland to Maitland and Cessnock.

The priority employment area covers eight Local Government Areas: Cessnock City Council, Great Lakes Council, Gosford City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Newcastle City Council, Maitland City Council, Port Stephens Council and Wyong Shire Council.

The Federal Electorates of Charlton, Dobell, Hunter, Newcastle, Paterson, Robertson, and Shortland fall, wholly or partly, within this priority employment area.

The Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area stretches from Woy Woy in the south to Forster and Tuncurry in the north and inland to Maitland and Cessnock

The Central Coast – Hunter priority employment area covers the Cessnock, Great Lakes, Gosford, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland, Port Stephens and Wyong Local Government Areas

The Federal Electorates of Charlton, Dobell, Hunter, Newcastle, Paterson, Robertson, and Shortland fall, wholly or partly, within this priority employment area

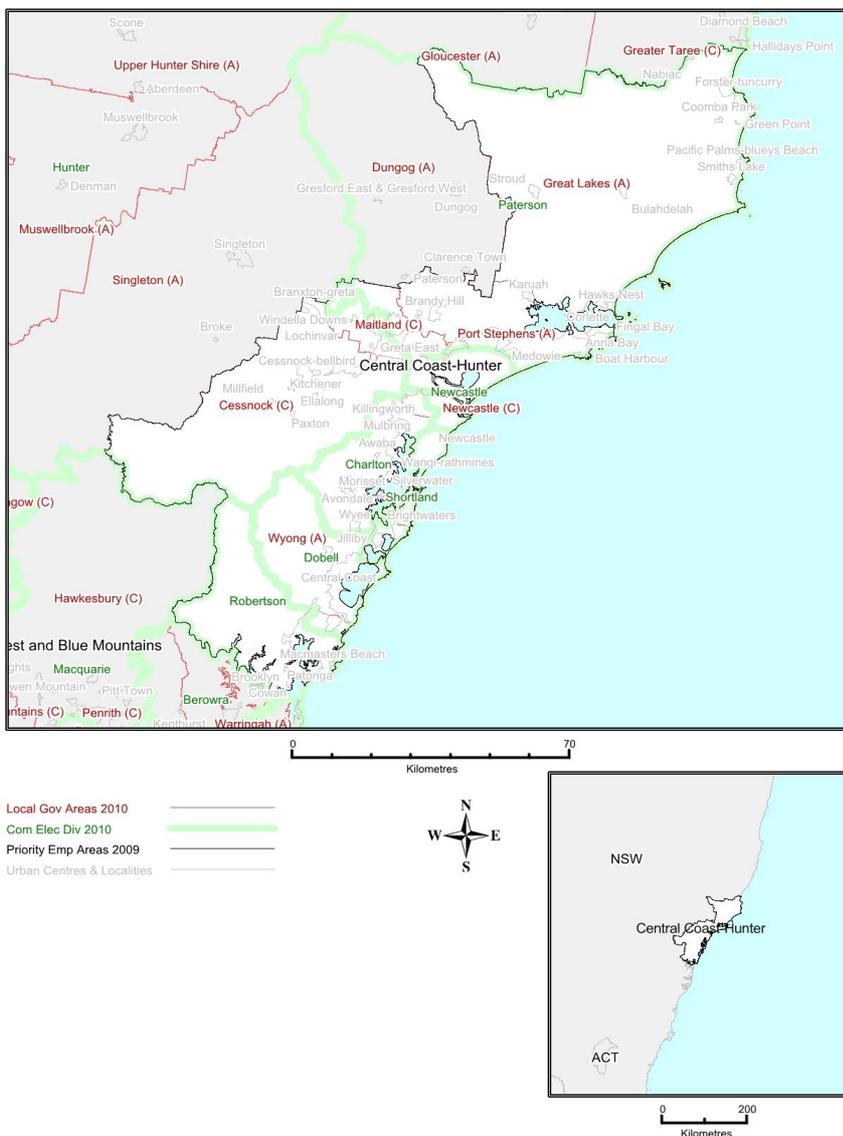


Figure 1: Central Coast - Hunter priority employment area

In February 2012, the unemployment rate for the priority employment area was 4.7 per cent

The participation rate in the priority employment area is lower than the national average

High school completion rates are lower than the national average

The University of Newcastle has two campuses in the priority employment area

Employment and labour market participation

In February 2012, the unemployment rate in the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area stood at 4.7 per cent, below the comparable national unemployment rate (of 5.5 per cent). The youth unemployment rate is also marginally lower than the national average. However, the average duration of unemployment stood at 50 weeks in February 2012, significantly higher than the national average of 37 weeks. Moreover, the participation rate in the region stood at just 59.8 per cent in February 2012, well below the 65.4 per cent recorded for Australia.

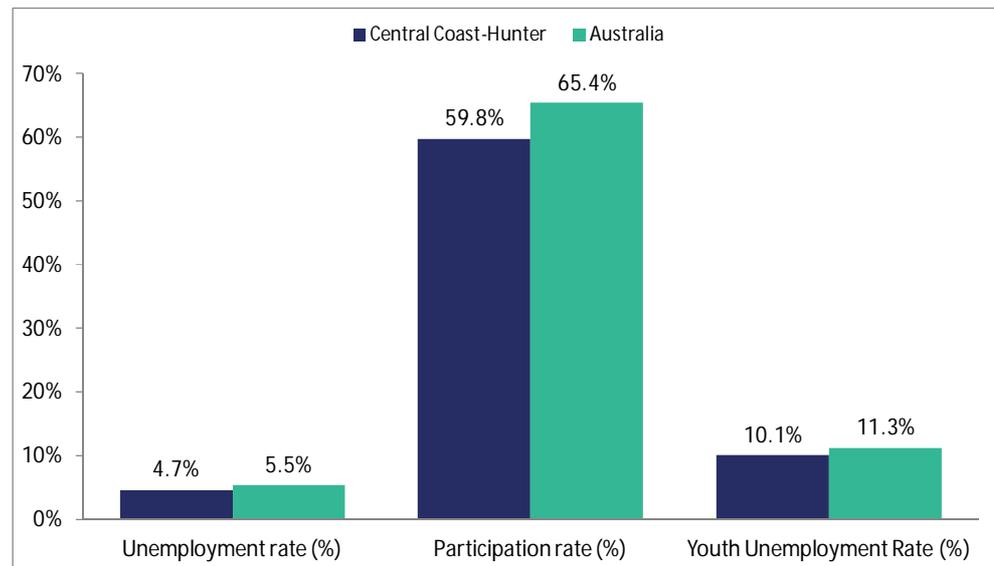


Figure 2: Unemployment and participation rates in the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area

Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Electronic Delivery February 2012 (Cat No. 6291.0.55.001). Unemployment rate data are three month averages of original estimates, while youth data are 12-month averages of original data. The priority employment area of Central Coast-Hunter is approximated by the combined ABS Labour Force Regions of Gosford-Wyong and Hunter.

Education

The priority employment area has below average educational levels of attainment, with only 38 per cent of the working age population having completed Year 12, compared with 50.7 per cent nationally.¹ Moreover, only 13.3 per cent of the working age population in the priority employment area have attained a Bachelor degree or higher, compared with 19.7 per cent nationally.

The priority employment area contains a number of major educational facilities including the University of Newcastle (Newcastle and Central Coast campuses) and 15 TAFE campuses across the region. The region also has research facilities such as the Hunter Valley and Central Coast Research Foundation, Hunter Medical Research Institute and the Newcastle Innovation research facility. These local research facilities benefit the education sector and broader economic and regional development.

¹ Data are from the 2006 ABS Census of Population and Housing

A large number of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) operate across the area, delivering a variety of training packages and qualifications.

Population

The Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area has an estimated residential population of around 902 400.²

Transport

The F3 Freeway and the Sydney–Newcastle rail line provide major transport links from south to north and vice versa. Bus services operate within the suburbs and often link to train arrival and departure times. Travel times from suburbs to train stations can be between 30 to 50 minutes plus train travel time.

Generally, there is a high dependency on private motor vehicles as the preferred method of transport. The rail link between Sydney, Gosford and Newcastle provides access for workers to commute to the Sydney area.

Limitations in public transport timetables and routes hinder the mobility of job seekers and workers however large-scale changes to the transportation infrastructure of the region are outside of the scope of this plan.

Economic development

The NSW Central Coast Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES) identifies the need for an additional 45 000 jobs in the Central Coast region by 2031.³ To achieve the required job growth, a number of strategies are outlined in the REDES including:

- attracting new businesses and supporting existing businesses;
- improving the training and skills development opportunities;
- increasing research, knowledge and innovation;
- ensuring appropriate planning processes and land supplies;
- planning for regional economic centres;
- providing new infrastructure; and
- marketing the region as an attractive business location.

Industry composition

The Central Coast–Hunter priority employment area has a large proportion of employment in the ‘at risk’ industries of construction, retail trade and accommodation and food services, suggesting the area may be vulnerable to any future deterioration in labour market conditions.

² ABS 2010 Estimated Resident Population data

³ NSW Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy, pg. 3, <http://www.rdacc.org.au/filelibrary/Regional%20Economic%20Development%20and%20Employment%20Strategy%20Document.pdf>

Around 902,400 people live in the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area

There is a high dependency on private motor vehicles, with limitations in public transport

The need for an additional 45,000 jobs in the Central Coast region by 2031 means attracting larger businesses to the region

The priority employment area has a large proportion of employment in ‘at risk’ industries including construction, retail trade and accommodation and food services

The top five industries providing employment in the Central Coast are health care and social assistance, public administration and safety, retail and construction and manufacturing

The top five industries providing employment in the Hunter region are retail, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, construction and education and training

Structural steel and welding trades, general clerks, sales assistants and building and plumbing labourer positions have been persistently difficult to fill since 2009

The top five industry employers in the Central Coast region are health care and social assistance, public administration and safety, retail, construction and manufacturing. The industries reporting the lowest employment numbers are arts and recreation services, agriculture, forestry and fishing and mining.

Tourism remains a significant contributor to the Central Coast regional economy, contributing over \$252 million in visitor expenditure annually and supporting thousands of jobs related to the tourism and hospitality industries.⁴

The Hunter region has experienced growth across all occupations within industry sectors except advanced clerical and service workers which have fallen slightly. The highest growth has been among professionals, increasing by almost 20 per cent since 2001, and the intermediate clerical sales and service workers sector which increased by almost 15 per cent.⁵

The top five industries providing employment in the Hunter region are retail, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, construction and education and training. The industries reporting the lowest employment numbers are agriculture, forestry and fishing and arts and recreation services.

The Hunter region economy, which was heavily dependent on BHP Steel as one of the main drivers of the economy, has undergone considerable development and this has resulted in a region with a diverse and developing economic base. While the region is vulnerable to downturns, the expanded economic base helped the region to weather the recent global financial crisis.

Jobs and skills in demand

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' (DEEWR) regular employer surveys provide an opportunity to assess the impact of labour market fluctuations on employer recruiting experiences. This provides useful information to help target or adjust activities. The occupations most commonly reported by employers in the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area as difficult to fill during the 12 months to August 2011 were:

Bachelor Degree or Higher VET Qualifications	
Metal Fitters and Machinists	Real Estate Sales Agents
Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers*	Electricians
Retail Managers	
Other occupations	
Receptionists	General Clerks*
Sales Assistants (General)*	Building and Plumbing Labourers*
Truck Drivers	

*Occupations marked with an asterisk were also reported as difficult to fill in the region in July 2010, which suggests that employers have experienced persistent difficulty filling these vacancies.

⁴ Tourism Research Australia, *National Visitor Survey*, Year Ended December 2009

⁵ ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006

Opportunities

Results from DEEWR's Survey of Employer Recruitment Experiences indicate that there are opportunities for job seekers in entry-level occupations such as Sales Assistants (General) and Building and Plumbing Labourers. Opportunities also exist for job seekers willing to take up apprenticeships or traineeships, particularly in the Accommodation and Food Services industry.

There may also be opportunities for job seekers in some parts of the Central Coast – Hunter priority employment area to take advantage of Government relocation initiatives and obtain employment in other parts of Australia where demand for labour is higher.

There are entry level opportunities for job seekers as sales assistants and building and plumbing labourers

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following four goals and related strategies have been developed in response to regional issues and opportunities.

Each of these goals is underpinned by the broader strategy of building and strengthening relationships between stakeholders, including employers, industry networks, the three tiers of government - local, state and Federal - employment services providers, Group Training Organisations (GTOs), RTOs and the Department of Human Services - Centrelink. The Local Employment Coordinator will meet regularly with these stakeholders to share information regarding existing initiatives, programs and services and identify opportunities to work collaboratively to develop projects which will maximise employment and training outcomes for local job seekers.

The regional linkages and effective collaboration between stakeholders has been a crucial component of workforce and skills development in the priority employment area.

Goal 1: Support employment, workforce participation and skills development including through maximising Government investments

To promote the availability of existing programs and courses and flexible training options and to encourage the take up of work experience and employment places created by employers, the Building Australia's Future Workforce Advisory Committee nominated the following broad strategies:

- facilitate and promote Jobs and Skills Expos in the priority employment area to improve stakeholder knowledge and access to training pathways, work experience and employment opportunities;
- raise awareness with employers and industry groups of opportunities offered through government programs and initiatives to increase access to employment and training; and
- work in collaboration with NSW State Government agencies around the NSW 2021 Plan to identify opportunities to collaborate on projects that increase employment, skills development and participation.

Strategies

1. **Increase job seeker and employer turnout at the Australian Government Jobs and Skills Expos** by promoting the events to local employers, employment services providers and training and education providers. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - actively promote the events to local network groups and at business meetings, forums and conferences;
 - work closely with DEEWR and the Department of Human Services – Centrelink to directly contact business and employer networks and encourage their participation;

- identify opportunities to utilise the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool to support pre-Expo events to generate local interest and support for the Jobs and Skills Expos.
2. **Raise awareness of, and increase access to, opportunities offered through Australian Government employment skills development and workforce development programs and initiatives.** The Local Employment Coordinator will:
- work with stakeholders, including the Advisory Committee, to identify and develop activities and projects for funding through the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool;
 - work with DEEWR and regional government bodies to develop an information pack for businesses and individuals;
 - circulate targeted information on Australian Government programs and services to business and related organisations; and
 - present information on Australian Government programs and services at industry network meetings, local business meetings, forums and conferences.
3. **Identify emerging business and employment opportunities in the aged care, construction, retail and hospitality industries** and maximise employment and training opportunities for local job seekers by connecting stakeholders to these opportunities. Projects include the Stocklands expansion at Maitland; the Hunter expressway; the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN); Department of Defence contracts; Weston Aluminium industry recycling initiative and retail opportunities from Charleston Square. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
- build on the results of a survey of the local aged care sector to develop a coordinated response, in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services and TAFE, that addresses workforce and skills development needs of the industry by potentially utilising the National Workforce Development Fund;
 - develop projects with local employers, employment services providers and RTOs that establish pathways to employment in the hospitality, construction, horticulture, metal fabrication and retail sector that will provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers e.g. pathways to employment in associated fields including the hospitality in the vineyard region and retail projects targeting Charlestown Square;
 - maintain regular contact with networks and industry bodies to identify and maximise emerging employment and training opportunities; and
 - utilise local intelligence, industry contacts and media stories to identify regional projects and follow up with project owners to ensure that any workforce and training needs can be met by connecting them with local employment services and training providers.
4. **Maximise employment and training opportunities for local job seekers through the roll out of the National Broadband Network (NBN)** by working with major contractors and sub contractors to identify and meet skills and

workforce development requirements and linking them to local employment service providers and regional support networks by:

- continuing to work with Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees in the Central Coast-Hunter priority employment area. RDA is the regional coordinating body and liaises with NBN Co to coordinate support for employment and skills development to support the rollout;
 - working with RDA and other stakeholders to develop long term strategies to utilise broadband capacity to increase economic benefit and employment in the priority employment area;
 - working closely with the NBN major contractor and their nominated training provider to ensure local jobs and skills development opportunities are maximised by establishing connections with employment service providers;
 - working with local employment services providers including Job Services Australia providers to ensure they are linked into any training or employment opportunities;
 - working with DEEWR's NBN team to develop information packs and facilitate connections between NBN contractors and Australian Government programs; and
 - participating in forums as required to provide support and guidance to NBN sub-contractors.
5. **Maximise stakeholder awareness and take-up of the Education Investment Fund (EIF)** by working in collaboration with the DEEWR Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator to promote the program across the priority employment area. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
- provide assistance, where required and in conjunction with the DEEWR Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator, to potential applicants and work with successful applicants to explore procurement arrangements that can be put in place to maximise employment for disadvantaged job seekers on construction projects.
6. **Address language, literacy and numeracy skills gaps by promoting the Australian Government's Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)** to young people, Indigenous job seekers and culturally and linguistically diverse communities through employment service providers, the Department of Human Services - Centrelink and community organisations. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
- identify and promote opportunities to utilise LLNP in the priority employment area, and integrate the program with training and workforce development components of employment and training projects to ensure disadvantaged job seekers gain the required basic skills to be more competitive in obtaining employment.
7. **Promote and connect the opportunities presented through the Government's Clean Energy Future programs** with employment and skills development initiatives in the priority employment area by:

- working with stakeholders including the Newcastle Institute of Energy and Resources (NIER), Newcastle University and TAFE to secure funds, establish initial positions and commercialise projects with a focus on increasing employment opportunities for Indigenous job seekers, growing Indigenous enterprises and skills development;
 - bringing key stakeholders together to explore options for local projects that include employment generating components that may be funded through the Clean Energy Future program; and
 - where appropriate, linking Job Services Australia providers to potential job and training opportunities.
8. **Promote infrastructure funding** available via the Regional Development Australia Fund, State Government NSW and Hunter Infrastructure Funds and the potential employment and skills development opportunities that can be linked to projects by:
- working with RDA, project proponents and the NSW State government to connect employment, participation and skills development opportunities with current and upcoming infrastructure projects;
 - distributing information on Australian government support and assistance options via email groups and networks; and
 - bringing key stakeholders together to explore options to include an employment focus for local projects.

Goal 2: Facilitate employment and training opportunities for job seekers, including disadvantaged groups, with a focus on industries experiencing skills shortages

This goal aims to provide a framework to identify areas of skill shortages across industry sectors within the priority employment area and connect job seekers to employment opportunities.

The Local Employment Coordinator, DEEWR Employment Project Officer and DEEWR Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator will work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including the Advisory Committee and employers to ensure that education and employment pathways are developed and job opportunities are maximised in industry sectors with identified skill shortages.

Strategies

- 1. Develop initiatives in the priority employment area which maximise employment, participation, education, skills development** by utilising and developing working parties consisting of local and regional stakeholders. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - support the working parties currently operating in Raymond Terrace, Cessnock and East Lake Macquarie and progress the work being undertaken to develop alternate learning pathways (with transition to employment) for disengaged young people; connect job seekers with local employment opportunities; and address local barriers to employment participation such as transport;
 - establish working parties in Foster/Tuncurry, Wyong and Peninsula and West Lake Macquarie to help address local employment and participation issues;
 - work with stakeholders including the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet to develop responses to employment and participation issues in emerging vulnerable communities in the area; and
 - work with businesses and project proponents in areas where local working parties are in operation and connect employment and participation outcomes where possible.
- 2. Support and participate in the regional industry network groups** for the Lower Hunter, Central Coast and Upper Hunter regions (managed by the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services). These industry network groups were developed over the past two years and continue to grow and provide networking and information sharing opportunities across the priority employment area. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - build connections with employment and industry representatives attending the industry network meetings to explore and work through employment and skills development opportunities; and
 - present information on Australian Government initiatives and updates at network meetings.

3. **Identify current and future skills and workforce development requirements and opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers** by working with industry network groups and the DEEWR Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - utilise linkages with employers and industry groups to identify skills needs and workforce development requirements that will provide opportunities to up-skill existing workers and provide for potential entry level opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers;
 - convene regular meetings with the DEEWR Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator and DEEWR Employment Project Officer to identify regional trends and proposed responses; and
 - maintain and build the linkages with industry networks, employer bodies, chambers, the NSW Department of Education and Communities – State Training Services and other agencies to identify and disseminate information regarding regional trends.
4. **Develop and deliver Jobs Drives in the Central Coast and Cessnock.** It is anticipated that the Jobs Drives will run over a six (6) week period with the timing of these activities dependant on the scheduling of the Australian Government Jobs and Skills Expos. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - engage with employment services providers, employers and industry networks to determine employment requirements, skills needs and future employment requirements;
 - promote assistance available to employers through government programs, employment services providers and regional agencies with a media and fact sheet campaign built around the Jobs Drive initiative;
 - identify opportunities to utilise the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool to support pre-events to generate local interest and support for the Jobs Drive;
 - work with the established Cessnock working party and with the planned working party in the Central Coast to develop the Jobs Drive; and
 - work with employers, industry networks and employment service providers to maximise participation and employment outcomes by encouraging their participation and highlighting the benefits of this collaborative approach.
5. **Work with the Department of Human Services** in the delivery of relevant elements of the Wyong Better Futures, Local Solutions measure to maximise participation outcomes by:
 - actively participating as a member of the Local Advisory Group and providing input into planning and implementation; and
 - linking employment services providers and regional organisations to assist with the transition of program participants to participation, training or employment outcomes.
6. **Continue to work with proponents of Indigenous employment and enterprise initiatives** to assist in making connections that increase employment opportunities for Indigenous job seekers by:

- connecting stakeholders and project proponents to DEEWR's Indigenous Employment Program (IEP);
- assisting Indigenous organisations in the development of Indigenous employment and enterprise development programs which are targeted at providing training and employment opportunities for Indigenous communities; and
- continuing to support the implementation of the Many Rivers Regional Partnership Agreement, including various Green Teams projects and the development of tourism and cultural projects.

7. Support industry sectors that experience existing and emerging skills and workforce shortages by:

- working with stakeholders including the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services, TAFE and the aged care sector to identify and respond to skills and workforce issues. This includes assisting with National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) applications, convening industry forums and coordinating support from employment services providers to address shortages;
- continuing to work with the manufacturing industry, including the Hunternet and Central Coast Manufacturing Connect industry networks to identify skills and workforce requirements;
- working with employment services providers, the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services and RTOs to develop responses to industry skills and workforce requirements that could potentially include applying for NWDF assistance; and
- working with the health sector and employment services and training providers to identify entry level employment options and deliver training and employment pathways to meet industry needs.

8. Develop and maintain stakeholder networks by:

- Building on existing working relationships with RDA, the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet, NSW Trade and Investment, the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services, Local Governments, Partnership Brokers, Youth Connections, Hunternet, Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Connect and other stakeholders to further promote, identify, create and assist in participation, skills development and employment creation activities and opportunities.

Goal 3: Help retrenched workers transition into new employment and/or training

Strategies

- 1. Provide a rapid response to announcements of industry downsizing** (over 100 employees) or closures of businesses in the priority employment area by working with NSW Trade and Investment (Lead Agency) and other Australian and State government stakeholders. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - contact employers and help to assess the training, employment and other needs of affected workers; and
 - liaise with the rapid response team to coordinate a response. The rapid response team includes DEEWR, the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet, NSW Trade and Investment, the NSW Department of Education and Communities – State Training Services and the Australian Government Department of Human Services – Centrelink.
- 2. Help to develop a response to retrenchments that affect less than 100 workers** by working with the Department of Human Services - Centrelink and the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services. The Local Employment Coordinator will:
 - promote the retraining options available to retrenched workers through the NSW Department of Education and Communities - State Training Services; and
 - distribute DEEWR information and fact sheets via e-mail or information sessions, depending on individual circumstances.
- 3. Provide support, information and assistance to retrenched workers and affected businesses** including information regarding labour adjustment packages and Australian Government employment services by:
 - distributing DEEWR information and fact sheets via e-mail or information sessions, depending on individual circumstances.
- 4. Identify opportunities to directly link retrenched workers to alternative employment opportunities** available through other employers in or outside of the region by:
 - maintaining a close relationship with employer and industry networks across the region to facilitate links with retrenched workers and potential employment opportunities; and
 - ensuring that affected workers are provided with information regarding the availability of alternative employment opportunities both locally and further afield.

Goal 4: Grow social enterprise and social procurement to provide employment opportunities for, and re-engage, disadvantaged job seekers

Social Enterprises present an effective model for providing supported employment places for disadvantaged and sometimes disengaged job seekers, providing a pathway to further employment opportunities. Social procurement provides a framework to support the expansion and growth of social enterprise.

The aim of this goal is to work with stakeholders to grow social enterprises and encourage social procurement in the Central Coast - Hunter priority employment area by effectively building the supply side through the support of existing and emerging social enterprises while also building the demand side through procurement changes.

Strategies

1. Continue support for the development and implementation of social enterprise strategies across the priority employment area by:

- promoting the benefits of social enterprise models and options through local working parties and project working groups;
- establishing an information portfolio on social enterprises and social procurement that can be provided to stakeholders. This information includes social enterprise models, strategies, procurement details and franchising models;
- identifying opportunities to utilise the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool to support the development of social enterprises aimed at providing employment and skills development opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers;
- identifying and supporting opportunities to utilise existing social enterprise models e.g. the highly successful E-recycling project established through the Jobs Fund, and investigating opportunities to duplicate and franchise these models across the priority employment area;
- working with regional organisations including the Central Coast Social Enterprise Network and the emerging Hunter Social Enterprise Network to build capacity by providing support and advice to social enterprises and assisting in their growth and employment generating capacity;
- ensuring that local agencies e.g. Business Enterprise Centres, are aware of what they needed to do to support social enterprises; and
- working with youth and employment service providers to support the development and utilisation of social enterprise models that aim to help young people and disadvantaged job seekers through workplace training and into mainstream employment.

2. Promote the adoption and utilisation of social procurement policy across contracting bodies in the region by:

- collaborating with RDA, other Local Employment Coordinators and NSW and local government representatives to build social procurement capacity within NSW;
 - utilising the Local Employment Coordinator Flexible Funding Pool to support the development of a guide to social procurement policy for local and NSW government; and
 - working with project owners to explore opportunities to incorporate social procurement models within project contracts that increase the availability of employment opportunities of disadvantaged job seekers.
3. **Promote the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund (SEDIF)** as an opportunity to further support the development of social enterprises in the priority employment area by:
- working with DEEWR and regional government bodies to develop an information pack for the promotion of SEDIF;
 - distributing information via email groups and networks to community organisations, social enterprises, business and related organisations;
 - promoting SEDIF at network meetings, local business meetings, forums and conferences;
 - bringing key stakeholders together to explore options for local projects and assist in the development of proposals; and
 - connecting with SEFA and Foresters (the organisations in receipt of SEDIF funds) to assist local organisations in need of social enterprise financing.