
Research Report:

Local Government Career Pathways and Workforce Toolkit for Regional SA

September 2023

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Members of the Project Advisory Committee:

- Simon Millcock, CEO, Legatus Group
- Rhiannon Grebenshikoff, CEO, LG Professionals SA
- Peter Scott, CEO, Eyre Peninsula LGA
- Rowena McLean, Sector Development Director, LGA SA

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- UniSA Campus, Mt Gambier
- Specialist Recruiting Agency
- Group Training Organisation
- Welcoming Cities
- StudyAdelaide
- Light Regional Council
- Adelaide Plains Council

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Executive Summary & Recommendations

Executive Summary

Industries across Australia, including Local Government (LG), are facing acute skill shortages. LG is one of the most important employers in remote and regional Australia; it is also a source for skilled service employment. The challenges of attracting, developing and retaining a skilled workforce are greater in regional and isolated rural areas. Potential challenges include offering salaries and amenities that are competitive; developing career paths within LG; partnering with education and training providers to develop career and skill development programs; and providing flexible employment options for those with family responsibilities or for older workers.

Meeting current and future skill needs will be an ongoing challenge for the LG sector and more significantly regional councils. Within the context of a tightening national labour market the regional LG sector will find it difficult to compete against other industry sectors and urban based LGs to attract and retain skilled labour.

The overall objective and the research questions driving the project are as follows:

Research Objective

RO1: Develop a comprehensive LG Careers Toolkit to assist regional local government to attract Local Government workforces in regional SA.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the career pathways within and across the twelve local government job families?

RQ2: Who are the key stakeholders in SA regions that have the potential to collaborate with regional Local government in addressing their workforce issues?

RQ3: What are some of the regional initiatives that are being practiced across regional SA that could assist and inform the regional local government sector in terms of building partnerships to attract workers to the sector?

The results of a combination of desk research, regional field research, semi-structured interviews and case studies with an array of key informants and stakeholders is presented in this report and toolkit and makes the following recommendations to the LGA SA Secretariat.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Dissemination of the Report and Toolkit

That LGA SA engages with its regional member councils and Regional LG Associations to disseminate this report and associated Workforce and Careers Toolkit content for targeted strategies to attract different pools of labour and talent at three broad levels of the LG workforce: entry level jobs, mid-level jobs and senior roles.

Recommendation 2: Link Outcomes to Building Sector Capability project

The Report and its resources be linked into the LGA R&D Building Sector Capability project (2023.05) and further developed where it is deemed appropriate. Two members of this project's Project Advisory Committee are also the architects of the Building Sector Capability project which ensures a relatively seamless knowledge and product transfer. This also provides a level of continuity in terms of building on this project's resources and advancing these further through this recently commenced LG sector capability project.

<https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/members/financial-sustainability/grants/research-and-publications/library/2023/building-sector-capability>

Recommendation 3: Multiple Uses for Individual Regional LG Entities

Individual and or Regional LGAs consider exploring the multiple uses for the Toolkit for their own regional needs in terms of retention and to attract new staff. These could include:

- Performance management and career progression conversations
- Workforce and capability audits
- Workforce planning
- Job design and re-design purposes
- Creation of job profiles and examples of job roles in regional LG for regular social media and communications posting

The Toolkit provides ideas for pursuing closer collaboration with regional secondary schools and colleges and other regional education and training providers to promote awareness of employment opportunities and careers in Councils. In particular collaborations targeted at entry level job roles and to explore initiatives such as the Gap Year traineeship, scholarships and work experience opportunities for regional secondary school students/graduates.

Recommendation 4: Regional LGAs Member Workshops

We recommend Regional LGAs consider conducting regional workshops with members to explore uses for the Careers Toolkit for them individually and at a regional local government sector level.

This might include Regional Career Fairs in conjunction with regional education and training providers, regional Study Tours in partnership with StudyAdelaide, Information sessions from key Stakeholders (E.g., Regional Uni Hubs and campuses, Regional Migrant Resource Centres and Welcoming Cities). All would go some way to assist in increasing awareness of jobs and career opportunities in the regional LG sector and would assist in building the brand of the regional LG Sector as a Regional Employer of Choice.

Recommendation 5: Continued Engagement with this Project at State and National Level

It is recommended that the SA Regional Organisation of Councils (SAROC) and the LGA SA in collaboration with ALGA engages with this project and sustain its momentum by embedding this into Strategic and Business Plans.

Additionally, that through LGA SA they advocate and explore potential collaborative partnerships between the regional LG sector and potential state and federal funding to assist support these partnerships and related initiatives (E.g., StudyAdelaide, Migration SA, Skills SA and Department of Education).

1

Introduction

Introduction

This report begins with the background of this project and the emerging collaboration between the regional local government sector and Torrens University Australia in terms of local government workforce development issues and challenges in regional SA. Initially this collaboration was sparked in 2021 as an initiative funded by the Vice Chancellor of Torrens University Australia, Professor Alwyn Louw, through his PAN UNI Projects initiative. This initiative provided research funds for research initiatives between Torrens University Australia research centres and the wider community. The Centre for Organisational Change and Agility (COCA) at Torrens University Australia, (Wakefield campus, Adelaide) discussed workforce issues facing its member councils with the Legatus Group CEO and the project was conceived and allocated seed funding (\$10,000.00 by PAN UNI Projects initiative & COCA) to support the projects ideation through the resourcing of a Research Assistant to undertake the literature review and stakeholder mapping for the project.

Once this stage of the project was completed the Legatus Group co-invested in the project with a further \$10,000.00 and a Research Agreement between the two parties was signed. The second stage of the project commenced in early 2022 and concluded at the end of September 2022. Data was collected through a focus group at a Regional Workforce Forum and a Legatus member online survey were undertaken and a Final Report was delivered.

Many of the recommendations from this Report supported the enactment of this current project. The recommendations identified the need for regional LG to share resources and services, to engage in innovative sourcing for workforce talent, to market the regions to potential talents pools, create a strategy to attract more diverse workforces and to promote regional Local government as a Regional Employer of Choice through the development of a Regional Local Government Career Toolkit:

The Local Government sector has a limited approach to Career Pathways nor a recognised Workforce Toolkit that Regional SA Councils could utilise. Both these would be of immense value to the sector. Through the partnership developed by Torrens University Australia and with the support of Regional LGAs there is an opportunity to help develop these (Cameron, et al., 2022, p. 27).

This Report can be found at:

Cameron et al., (2022) Attracting, Developing and Retaining Regional Local Government Workforce Report. *Research Report_Legatus_TUA_LG Workforces_31 August_22*

The research team and the Legatus Group advanced consultations with other SA Local Government Regional Associations and LG Professionals SA to develop the LGA Research & Development Grant Application to develop a toolkit containing a series of resources and tools to assist SA regional councils in their quest to attract, develop and retain their workforces.

The Local Government Career Pathways & Workforce Toolkit will be a valuable resource for SAs councils and will assist regional SA councils to provide a level of service and skills development by promoting and enhancing their workforces. The project's resources will enable them to: develop workforce attraction and marketing strategies; explore options for shared services in terms of recruitment and professional services; map and actively promote entry-level and mid-level career pathways into regional local government employment from across their respective communities/local labour markets and map career pathways for senior professionally qualified council roles and staff within the sector more broadly.

The toolkit will assist with developing key education and training stakeholder relationships and partnered activities (Secondary Schools, VET sector and Higher Education) and; map the options available to diversify their workforces and therefore broaden the potential human capital pools available both locally and more broadly.

Section 2 of the report synthesises the existing research that has been conducted in relation to Local Government workforces. Section 3 describes the research design and methods employed for this study and Section 4 provides a summary of the activities undertaken in conducting the research. Section 5 reports the study outcomes and section 7 concludes the report.

2 ——— Literature Review

Literature Review

At a federal level, Regions 2030 (Australian Government, 2017) is the official plan to develop regional Australia across 5 key areas: jobs & economic development, infrastructure, education, health, and communication, while at the same time acknowledging that a “one-size fits all” approach will not be effective.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is the national voice of Local Government (LG) representing 537 councils across Australia of which 55% LGs are deemed rural, remote, or regional (Australian Local Government Association, n.d.) Within South Australia, there are a total of 68 LGs (Local Government Association of South Australia, n.d.)

In 2018, an ALGA Workforce & Future Skills Report (Australian Local Government Association, 2018) stated that, in terms of emerging skill shortages & training, LGs have a workforce that:

- is older than the all-industry workforce,
- declining participation level of workers under 30,
- lacks apprentices to meet future needs,
- faces skills shortage in key professional and technical occupations, and
- is not ready for new and emerging soft skills.

In fact, 69% of LGs reported a skills shortage & skills gap, while 60% reported unmet training needs, with availability, cost, and time constraints being identified their biggest barriers to staff gaining soft skills.

That same report identified:

- inability of LGs to compete with the private sector on remuneration,
- lack of suitably qualified and experienced candidates,
- many being regional and remote locations, and
- lack of opportunity for career progression particularly in small councils while also citing similar reasons to those reported at a national level.

In 2021, South Australia reported that 27% of the population live in regions, job vacancies had increased 73% from the previous year, there was a 26.3% decrease in available rental properties, and agribusiness, health, aged care, and energy were the top four occupations at risk experiencing a skills shortage over the next three years (Government of South Australia, 2021).

Meanwhile, the Growing our Regional SA Workforce report (2021) noted that regions contribute \$29B annually to the state economy and found that issues across the regions were affecting an available and skilled workforce. Six themes or “enablers” have been proposed: identification of job vacancies and growth needs, employment place-based readiness pathways in line with the Skilling SA Program, workforce attraction that is sustainable to attract and retain people supported by infrastructure and services, available, affordable and quality accommodation, migration reform, and business HR capacity and capability to help small businesses recruit and manage staff. Multiple programs have been funded to assist those industries to attract a skilled workforce, adopting technology, improving digital connectivity, and infrastructure, and ensuring sustainability.

To align with the Regional SA Workforce Report, the Legatus Group included in its 2022 year’s business plan a proposal to assist its members with attraction & retention of their workforce. A research project funded by the Legatus Group took place in collaboration between TUA and Legatus Group member councils and supported by the 5 other Regional LGAs. The project sought to understand their joint key challenges, enablers, and strategies to attract, develop, and retain their local government workforces.

Key findings from this project have identified the following areas are ripe for further exploration in relation to attracting, developing, and retaining LG workforces: Attraction and Branding strategies; mapping career pathways for potential local entry level and mid-entry labour market pools and professional occupational talent pools; potential for shared recruitment strategies given individual council’s recruitment spend and associated costs and the potential to tap into state and federal initiatives and policies that support diversifying regional workforces (Regional Skilled Migration Schemes, Indigenous employment programs, cadetships, and traineeships, e.g. Maxima) (Cameron et al, 2022).

This project has extended this initial research out to the other remaining Regional LG Associations and focused on these identified key issues which will then be considered with respect to the commonalities between regions but also the nuances for each of these regions and the local councils within them. Soon after the Legatus Project was finalised the ALGA released a commissioned report on LG workforce skills and capabilities:

2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey: South Australian Report (ALGA, 2022).

This report was released late 2022 and involved a survey of SA LGs together with focus group discussion of the nature and extent of the skills gaps, the current approaches to skills development; and potential policies towards addressing current and future skill requirements. The data and information provide a basis for the development of the workforce and careers planning toolkit that not only supports the addressing of the skills shortage but is an important resource for other key stakeholders.

The report highlighted that local government continues to experience skills shortages in multiple occupations; exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts

of climate change and the accelerated take-up of technology and digitisation of services. There were significant challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of skilled staff and accessing training opportunities to enhance workforce skills and capability. Employee attrition and an ageing workforce are ongoing and an escalating difficulty. Barriers to effective workforce planning and management include a shortage of resources within local government, a lack of skilled workers and the loss of corporate knowledge as employees retire or resign.

Details on the skills shortages; occupations affected; recruitment and retention strategies, together with current HRM programs were reported. Relevant to the skills toolkit the survey found that 63% of councils had engaged in a formal training program; 32% of councils were engaging in some form of workforce planning by forecasting vacancies or skill shortages; 47% of councils were either engaged in or considering sharing resources and employees across LGA boundaries. The most popular approaches to addressing skills gaps and shortages were to: offer targeted training courses; provide opportunities to act up and/or across other roles; provide coaching and mentoring; and providing informal on-job training. These are all relevant for the development of the workforce toolkit.

The report and the focus group discussions provide a detailed justification for the development of the workforce toolkit. To address skills gaps the report recommended better workforce planning, such as more detailed forecasting and developing an employee retention program; sector remuneration benchmarking for critical roles; developing local government-specific training programs/courses; enabling more local decision making between local governments and training providers, and building on existing relationships with educational institutions, and training and education providers. Further suggestions included providing support for traineeships, apprenticeships, and cadet programs and for fee-free and onsite training; improved access to trainers, particularly in regional areas, to reduce training costs; facilitating pathways for international students and skilled migrants.

There report further suggested that there was scope for greater flexibility in how roles are structured; developing attractive pathways into the LG sector; greater collaboration within the sector and across key stakeholders in service delivery; and developing fundamental soft and technical skills across the workforce. The focus groups suggest that there is value in considering a systems approach to regional learning and educational planning. Under a Regional Learning Systems approach local governments are positioned among a broader network of local authorities, businesses, educational institutions, and training providers to establish cooperative partnerships for training purposes but for job stimulus and regeneration.

Drawing on this report, the workforce career and training toolkit provides a tool to map occupational career paths within the LG sector; link these to training and education programs; identify ports of entry into the LG sector and provide a building block for improving employee attraction and retention across the sector as well as detailing points of stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The toolkit is an important resource not only for the LG sector, but for current and prospective employees; and for key stakeholders linked to the sector, especially education and training institutions.

3

Methodology

Methodology

This project involved close collaboration with the project partners and was coordinated through the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) made up of the TUA research team and representatives from partner organisations. The PAC met monthly and engaged in co-design and provided access to research participants for the field research and semi-structured interviews.

Originally the project was to undertake an online survey of regional councils however just before the end of 2022 the ALGA released a Report:

2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey- South Australia Report.

Key findings from this report have been included in the previous section of this report.

At the first meeting of the PAC this ALGA Report (2022) was discussed and a summary of the Report's key findings were presented at the PAC's first two meetings. For this ALGA report only nineteen SA Councils out of a possible 68 responded to the survey and of those 9 were regional SA Local Government bodies. This indicated a level of survey fatigue and so it was then decided by the PAC that this project would not pursue another survey of Regional SA Local Government organisations.

The methodology for the research was conducted across four sequential phases as depicted in Figure 1 and project activities are detailed in Sections 3.1 to 3.4. Phase I included a literature review, and an Ethics application to the Torrens University Ethics Committee. Phase II involved desk research and resulted in a Stakeholder Map and Careers Toolkit. Phase III involved field research to three regional areas and semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders and Phase IV saw the synthesis and analysis of the combined findings and outcome.

Figure 1: Research Design



3.1 Phase I: Literature Review and Ethics

Phase I: Review of Extant Literature and Research (January – February 2023)

- PAC Meeting #1 (January)
- Literature review & desk research.
- Development of Ethics Application for submission to the TUA Ethics Committee.

- The Ethics Application was developed by the research team and submitted to the Torrens University Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Approval (#0143) was granted on 01/03/2023.
- Refer to Appendix 8.1
- PAC Meeting #2 (February)

3.2 Phase II: Stakeholder Mapping & Career Toolkit - Desk Research

Phase II: Data Collection & Analysis (March – April 2023)

- PAC Meeting #3 (March)
- Stakeholder mapping
- Careers Toolkit compilation
- PAC Meeting #4 (April)

3.3 Phase III: Field Research and Semi-Structured Interviews

Phase III: Field Research and Semi-structured Interviews (May-June 2023)

Field Research Trips:

- Eyre Peninsula (Port Lincoln)
- Upper Spencer Gulf (Port Pirie; Port Augusta; Whyalla)
- PAC Meeting #5 (May)

Field Research Trip:

- Mt Gambier
- PAC Meeting #6 (June)

3.4 Phase IV: Synthesis and Analysis

- Semi-Structured Interviews (July-August 2023)
- Production of Three Career Pathways Posters/Banners (July-August 2023)
- Report Writing (July-August 2023)
- PAC Meeting #7 (July)
- Compilation and production of the toolkit resources
- Drafting of the Final Report
- PAC Meeting #8 (August)
- Finalise Report and Toolkit Resources (September)

4 — Summary of Findings

Summary of Findings

4.1 Phase II: Stakeholder Mapping

Key stakeholders linked to the evaluation of the research questions have been mapped and an overview of these can be found in Appendix 8.4.

An additional Resource provided for this project is a more comprehensive spreadsheet of these various stakeholders and is supplied as a separate Toolkit Resource.

Refer to:

Appendix 8.4: Overview of Stakeholder Map

Resource: Stakeholder Map

4.2 Phase II: Careers Toolkit

This phase involved desk research and was focused on the twelve local government job families. The data collected and analysed is stored in an excel spreadsheet and contains the following information for every job role across the 12 LG job families (these job families are listed below in Table 1).

- Job Family
- Job Role
- Qualification required
- Qualification Area
- Institutions who offer the qualification and their Location
- If the qualification is offered Online or Hybrid
- Salary rate pa (estimate as at September 2023)

The number of job roles across the 12 Job Families is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Twelve Local Government Job Families

Local Government Job Family	Number of Job Roles	Local Government Job Family	Number of Job Roles
Business Services	28	Tourism, Culture & Recreation	7
Planning & Development	6	Property	10
Human Resources	5	Finance	8
Environment	9	Facilities Management	7
Engineering & Assets	7	Economic Development	4
Communications	8	Community Services	6

The Career Toolkit will have multiple uses both internally for regional Local Government entities and for regional Local Government Associations and the sector more generally, to forge stakeholder collaborations at a regional level and more broadly across the State's regions.

We also believe the Careers Toolkit can be further developed to create marketing collateral to promote job roles and career pathways in regional Local Government.

Refer to:

Appendix 8.2: Overview of the LG Careers Pathway Tool

Resource: LG Career Pathways Tool

4.3 Phase III: Field Research

The project's field research involved travelling to three identified regional areas to speak with key LG representatives and stakeholders. The first region to be visited was the Eyre Peninsula (Port Lincoln) followed by the Upper Spencer Gulf (Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla) and then Mt Gambier.

4.3.1 Eyre Peninsula

The field visit to Port Lincoln coincided with Career Week activities and so the timing was fortuitous. The PAC meeting for April was conducted virtually from the RDA Eyre Peninsula Offices with the RDA CEO for EPRDA present as a guest. In addition to this, meetings with the following stakeholders were conducted during this visit:

- Port Lincoln Uni Hub
- Port Lincoln Council
- Dept of Education representative
- SkillsSmart Careers Pty Ltd

Supplementary interviews were also conducted.

4.3.2 Upper Spencer Gulf

The field trip to the Upper Spencer Gulf involved three locations: Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla. Visits were undertaken to the following organisations:

- Port Pirie: Uni Hub Spencer Gulf
- Port Augusta: Uni Hub Spencer Gulf
- Whyalla: Dept of Education

Supplementary interviews were also conducted.

4.3.3 Mt. Gambier

The Mt Gambier field trip involved several meetings and discussions with regional stakeholders:

- RDA Limestone Coast
- Group Training Organisation
- Regional Council
- Regional Migrant Resource Centre
- University of Adelaide campus

Supplementary interviews were also conducted.

4.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the meetings and discussions undertaken during the field research a number of formal semi-structured interviews were also undertaken. Most participants wished to be de-identified and so pseudonyms have been used. Participants come from a variety of LG stakeholders across South Australia. These included:

- A specialist Local Government recruitment agency
- Group Training Provider
- CEO of a regional council
- RDA representative
- Regional Migrant Resource Centre
- People and Culture Directors of three regional councils
- Department of Education representative

Several main themes emerged and pockets of innovative practice were identified. These included nuanced issues with recruitment and retention; uncovering of practices related to sharing services and job roles; the need to engage and partner with regional education and training providers; the value of Traineeships, Apprenticeships and Cadetships as a mechanism to attract younger people and to have a more strategic long-term and sector view of workforce attraction and development.

4.4.1 Recruitment and Retention

Key issues that arose in reference to recruitment and retention focused on those job roles which are hard to recruit for. Competing with metro councils and the private sector in terms of remuneration was also seen as a key challenge for regional councils. In terms of retention culture was identified as a key factor along with professional

development for future leaders. One council referred to the fact all senior leaders lived on the other side of the city and so flexible working arrangements were seen as crucial to retaining these senior staff.

For peri-urban councils recruitment issues centred on filling **outdoor staff, civil and horticulture job roles** and **pay structures**:

So, in my region, probably the biggest hassle we've had in recruitment is our outdoor workforce, civil and also horticulture. That's been our biggest turnover at the moment and it's also been the hardest one to recruit for to get the appropriate skills that we need. Part of that we understand is pay structure because our pay structures are quite limited compared to what they can get in the private sector. [Interviewee_SSI08]

Peri-urban councils also feel they are being utilised as **stepping stone for city councils**:

But the problem that we can sometimes encounter is we're used as a stepping stone for city councils and part of the workforce issue is because city councils pay more than what we do. We don't have the same rate base, so we're limited in our pay structure compared to our city counterparts. So people which drive out from the city, which isn't far, they will come out, work for us to cut their teeth and then go to a city council that's A, paying more and is closer to home. So that creates a bit of an issue for us around that as well. [Interviewee_SSI08]

Other recruitment issues identified relate more to the **highly specialised roles** such as planning, governance and more specialist areas. One participant stated “*It took us two years to recruit an accountant*” [Interviewee_SSI09]. Culture was seen as a key retention issue. Building a good culture impacted staff retention and more professional development was identified in terms of developing future leaders:

I think we need to be making sure that we get the right people to go into certain roles like leadership roles and that we're actually professionally developing them and so they understand what their roles are as leaders so that the culture is positive and then people will want to stay with you because of the culture. [Interviewee_SSI09]

Flexibility for those roles that hybrid flexible work from home options could accommodate was also seen as a retention strategy. **Wellbeing programs** and arrangements for staff to have gym memberships was also mentioned as a retention and attraction strategy. Additionally, serious attention needs to be given to **succession planning** given tight labour markets and competition from metro councils and the private sector and the additional pressure from aging LG workforces, “*we have got to really start thinking about succession planning and workforce planning and those sorts of things because we if don't get it right, we're not going to have the resources to be able to deliver what the community wants.*” [Interviewee_SSI09]

One regional council, through its engagement with a SA university over a five year period has managed to recruit planning graduates and has diversified its workforce as a result:

We've got two Indian graduates, and they've worked out really well. They've fitted into the community. We've actually got a really multicultural group now because of our recruiting initiatives. We've got Kenyans and Zimbabweans and all sorts of people have joined council in the last year or two, all with degree qualifications in finance or something like that. We really appreciate what it's done for quite a conservative country community. [Interviewee_SSI07]

One interviewee mentioned the lack of **promotion of the sector to women** and what could be done in respect to this by: *"promoting local government as a career in the market and particularly to women, has been something that's been not very well done and for a lot of people, it's a bit like they don't know what Council's function is"* [Interviewee_SSI04]. Mention was made of a couple of peri-urban councils which have a lack of female workers in the Outside/ infrastructure areas and they are looking for attraction strategies to obtain a better gender balance in these roles

4.4.2 Shared Services and Secondments

There was evidence of shared services amongst the regional councils which appears to be as per demand and MOUs are signed between neighbouring councils. Peri-urban councils engaged in a range of shared services with their neighbouring councils. Examples of shared services and job roles were provided for Community Waste Management and community inspector roles with neighbouring regional councils:

...we used to share services around our CWMS, so our community wastewater management system. More so because one of our neighbouring councils, [Council X], they couldn't secure a full-time position for that through council. So, we did a shared on-call service for them. Now they've got their own team running up in that now so that one ended. And we've also done that with community inspectors at times to do shared services around that to cover different regions and to share the on-call. [Interviewee_SSI08]

Another peri-urban council identified several areas of shared services and MOUs with neighbouring regional councils around several roles such as community inspectors, HR Services, building inspectors and environmental health offices [Interviewee_SSI09]. Another larger regional council described several shared model arrangements with neighbouring councils throughout the region in terms of shared services for environmental health officers and planners [Interviewee_SSI06]

An example of a **secondment** was also provided for a senior role in a regional council where the person resides in Adelaide but wanted to obtain experience at a more senior level and in a larger regional council. This interviewee also identified initiatives that

could be introduced such as: placements across the LG sector for retirement transitions and “short stints” and “secondment opportunities within councils from Metro to Region and Region to Metro” [Interviewee_SSI06]. It was noted that the same role could be very different in a metro setting as compared to a regional setting and vice versa. Secondments provide a variety of professional experiences and information sharing and exchanges of ideas.

One regional council discussed more formal arrangements between regional councils in terms of shared services:

We have a regional assessment panel where we rotate the planning authority for the higher-level planning approvals between the councils. We share the assessment manager role and rotates every 12 months. We've also shared environmental health officers with neighbouring councils, and we're just going through the process of freshening up all of our cross-authorizations for planning staff, general inspectors, and environmental health officers in all those compliance areas. So, we can cross borders with authority and do enforcement action and help each other out. [Interviewee_SSI07]

One regional education provider stakeholder talked about the realities of smaller regional councils taking on university cadetships and because of costs and supervision pressures, sharing the cadet was seen as a way forward for smaller regional councils:

It has taken them a bit longer to organize themselves internally around how they then might actually support, for example, university cadet taking on that qualification just because it's really expensive. There's no... Unlike an apprenticeship or a traineeship, there's no wage subsidies with the university cadet. So basically, local councils are paying for a full wage, paying a full wage for someone who's not qualified. And then the council generally pays for their training, time off to study. And then often, particularly in those professional roles, they don't have the internal capacity to provide full supervision. So necessarily they've got to partner with other councils or other employers to share that person around. So, it becomes really complicated, very expensive, and quite time-consuming. So, it's a lot for particularly smaller councils to navigate. [Interviewee_SSI01]

4.4.3 Engagement with Education and Training Stakeholders

Showcasing, promoting and offering a value proposition for the LG sector as an employer of choice was seen as vital for recruiting for the future. Tapping into what young people are looking for in work and then trying to align that with an awareness and promotional strategy for the sector was seen as an imperative and partnering and engaging with education and training providers is seen as key to this:

I think the sector, the sector really needs to promote itself, promoting why work for local government, like what are the benefits of working for local government? What are we offering that others aren't? And I think we need to be starting to partner with, you know, TAFEs and universities. [Interviewee_SSI09]

Mention was made as to the partnerships many of the metro councils have “in Metro Councils, I think there's a lot of collaboration with RTOs and with universities and graduate programmes that have worked well, which again is something not only for the in regional areas but across the labour market, we need to be looking at is dealing with RTOs universities creating those pipelines, even with schools’ [Interviewee_SSI06]. One interviewee mentioned growing regional LG engagement with university hubs regionally:

A lot of the councils have linked in with the university hubs at the moment, and there's a really good lineage there around pathways that I think has popped up in Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, Riverland, for example, that I think will have some really good outcomes. And I think linking in on general capabilities with those uni hubs, I think the councils are getting some good traction around that. [Interviewee_SSI05]

Others mentioned that school students present a sustainable recruitment option and an obvious piece of the recruitment puzzle for regional LG and that it also presents an opportunity for work experience placements for school students in regional LG.

A participant from a group training provider (traineeships & apprenticeships) located in regional SA has established strong engagement with four regional councils with 14 trainees currently placed across the four councils in the following roles: civil construction, clerical, horticulture, diesel and childcare. This organisation also has very good relationships with regional secondary schools across in this region thereby bridging across to regional employers.

One initiative being proposed are cadetships which have been discussed with some regional councils considering an associate degree in engineering and associate degree in business/accounting/finance:

So, it's taken councils as an employing body, a bit of time to really start engaging with us as an employer group. Starting with engineering as I mentioned. Business and accounting have been others that potentially councils could tap

into, but as of yet, haven't quite made the leap. There's some work currently going on with the Local Government Finance Authority to look at a university cadetship program that would financially support regional councils to take on a cadet in business or finance and accounting. So that's work in progress.
[Interviewee_SSI01]

A common theme was the need for LG to engage with secondary schools in the regions and those education and training providers that can act as partners in that process and help to “sell” job and career opportunities in LG:

We've got really good pay rates and you get to really kickstart to your career. And the opportunities within local government as a sector are really quite broad as well. So, it's trying to sell all those benefits, but it's having the employers alongside of us to package that up as well is really, really important.
[Interviewee_SSI01]

Another participant emphasised the importance of Regional LG engaging with schools and other education and training providers to promote jobs and careers in regional LG however the lack of awareness and knowledge about what job roles are available in LG for school students was noted:

...a lot of what we do is actually just trying to engage with schools around just what careers are available in regional communities. And local government's a big part of that. So, most kids wouldn't know what an urban and regional planner does, or the fact that that's even a job, let alone a surveyor. Or to be honest, even conversations around engineering. There's a real lack of understanding about what an engineer does and how those careers are available in the region and local government. [Interviewee_SSI01]

4.4.4 Traineeships, Apprenticeships and Cadetships

There appears to be mixed experiences with Traineeships and Apprenticeships. A peri-urban council has engaged with Maxima for Traineeships (Indigenous). An issue of tension is the supervisor capacity for these programs:

We have gone down the path of traineeships and things like that. We tend to find, and we've had some that have been promoted up through the organization through undertaking the traineeships and others, which have moved on quite quickly.

Unfortunately, one of the challenges we've had is there's limited positions that we can put traineeships in or apprenticeships in because of the supervision that's required. It can be a bit limiting because we're already running on a

very lean budget and with a lean amount of staff. So, you are already fully, I guess entrenched into your work and then to add that it's another level of responsibility and also work required to manage that. [Interviewee_SSI08]

One participant mentioned that one of the regional LG was rotating clerical traineeship participants through several departments (Library, Sales yards, airport and two council offices) to give them a “feel” for the different parts of the business and associated job roles across LG:

So, they actually get a bit of a feel for everything. And then if they have a leaning towards maybe more finance based or more law based or more health and safety based, then they kind of direct their clerical training with a slant on that. So that's worked particularly well at the moment. And as you know in a council organization, they employ so many different skills. So within that 18 month, or it's normally about over a bit over 12 months, they do these traineeships, they're an 18-month traineeship, but they do them over 12, they get good exposure to different areas. [Interviewee_SSI02]

University related regional education stakeholders put forward the concept of cadetships with associate degrees where the regional student starts at the Associate degree level (e.g., Engineering, Accounting) and becomes a cadet with local council:

in the context of local government in regional South Australia, I think it really is... It's having the councils actually jump in and commit to taking on university cadets. So every year, for example, when the councils do their... I don't know, take on their outdoor works apprentices or trainees or take on an admin trainee every year or whatever, if they were willing to commit to taking on a university cadet in one year, it might be accounting and the next year, it might be planning, and then they might have the rest for a couple of years. And then the next year, they might take a university engineering cadet on. That helps firstly make it real for schools and students.

So if we are then going into schools every year and going, okay, well, at the end of the year, these three cadetships are available through your local council. It means you can study X, Y, and Z in your local community and be supported and be working. That helps just change the narrative around what's available. And it makes it a lot more real and people in the community can start to see, oh yeah, Johnny left school and went straight into a university cadetship and it's a bit like an apprenticeship, but at a university level. So it's the showing by doing that I think really does make a difference. [Interviewee_SSI01]

4.4.5 Pockets of Innovative Practice

Pockets of innovative practice was identified from several councils and education and training stakeholders. Four are highlighted here. The first two are around addressing shortages of planners, the second relates to Gap Year Traineeships and the third relates to producing marketing videos to attract tree-changers to the particular region as a recruitment strategy.

Partnerships to address shortages for Urban & Regional Planners

There were two partnership initiatives which were mentioned around addressing shortages for urban and regional planners:

Similarly, with urban and regional planning, massive shortage nationally for urban and regional planners, and local councils in regions are always the last on the end of every line to attract and retain those professionals. So, we are partnering with University of New England and our counterparts in the Murraylands, the Murray River Study Hub to broker and support local councils and students into study and career paths in urban regional planning. there's currently a proposal with the South Australian minister for planning to again look at subsidizing councils to make it more financially viable for them to take on a university cadet. [Interviewee_SSDI01]

Another pioneering initiative was described as being in its fifth year and involves placements of third year planning students:

We had a reasonable amount of success in partnering with training providers and developing some fairly close relationships. We have been working with UniSA for the last five years to attract new graduate planners to the region. On behalf of the [region X], we pioneered a program that we started five years ago where we bought third-year planning students into the region for their project placements. We had, I think, in the first tranche about 15 students came down. We put them up in the local caravan park that we own and operate. We're able to provide them with some fairly cost-effective accommodation.

Then we got them to work on local projects down here of their choice for their third-year program. All of them came up with some really innovative ideas that helped us with our thinking. But more importantly, they were introduced to the region. They spent some time down here and we sent them a very clear message that when they graduated we wanted to employ them. We've been successful in attracting two master's graduates through that pipeline. [Interviewee_SSDI07]

Gap Year Traineeships

The regional group training organisation has established a successful program around gap years with regional employers which allows Year 12 graduates to work for a year-18month in a Traineeship which then allows them to access Independent Living Allowance/Youth Allowance before enrolling in University. They employ approximately 25 of these gap year traineeships with 15 or so local employers many of whom ask for another when the current trainees finish. These are mainly clerical traineeships.

We have quite a good record with gap years. So basically down in [X Council]... because if they're going up to university and they have to board, if they make a certain amount of money and it's basically proving that they're independent, make a certain amount of money, then they are supported by, I don't know, youth allowance or something like that when they go to Adelaide. So, we have a lot of students that will finish year 12 and then go and do a traineeship for a year, and then they'll go off to uni after that.

Yes. It's clerical. And the main thing with that is because it's an 18-month traineeship, which you can do in 12 months and that suits most of these people because you normally don't finish their year 12 exams until late October, November. And then pretty much they will often start straight away and then maybe go through to about January, very early February the next year because uni starts in March each year. So yeah, normally by end of February they're finished. So, they might do a 13- or 14-month traineeship. [Interviewee_SSI02]

Promotional Videos: Attraction strategy

One regional council is using a marketing firm to assist them develop a series of promotional videos to attract tree-changers and international graduates to the region and its LG workforce. The council's experience in recruiting for a finance manager sparked the idea, "we've been without a finance manager for 1.5 years. We've had three different headhunting HR organizations working with us over that period. We've only just found somebody, and they are moving here for a tree change. They used to spend their holidays at [destination X] and that was the attraction' [Interviewee_SSDI07].

The strategy and initiative stem from the Council's vision statement:

...the council's vision statement is a great place to live and work and that was pre-COVID and pre-everything. We came up with that because it is a beautiful place to live and work. It's green and clean, and there's water, and all the things that the rest of the world is missing out on at the moment. So, we're actually going to promote that theme to try and attract those tree changers. [Interviewee_SSDI07]

These promotional videos will be posted out through social media.

4.4.6 Grow your Own: Long Term Thinking

Many interviewees showed a level of frustration with a lack of long term thinking from the sector:

It's like, yeah, but if you don't train them, you won't have them at all. So it's those employers thinking differently, yes. And thinking about the longer term and the fact that if they keep running on the same strategies, there's going to be having the same outcomes in another 20 years' time, which is just almost crisis management as opposed to growing their own solutions. So for me, that's a silver bullet. They've got to start by actually getting it embedded within their organizational structures as a pathway and as a succession plan for the longer term. [Interviewee_SSI01]

Another participant echoed this and referred to sustainable regional strategies and the role LG needs to take, particularly for youth in regions:

So many of these civil constructions that they've got, or horticulture in particular, and aging workforce in LGAs, what are their strategies moving forward? Is it about poaching? Is it about offering more money from people from other regions? They're not sustainable strategies. They need to look at strategies that actually encompass youth. And you've got to start by engaging with school students and high schools and looking at that as being the way forward as a sustainable LGA [Interviewee_SSI05]

One regional council participant emphasised the need to start strategies for recruiting for the future. Engaging with younger cohorts about what they value in employment and how the sector can align these values [Interviewee_SSI09]

4.4.7 Need for Sector Wide Action

Key areas noted both by LG interviewees and other stakeholders revolved around sector wide strategies to **engage with regional education and training providers** and to resource efforts to **market, brand and promote awareness** of the sector and the career and job opportunities that it offers.

One participant commented on the fact that demographics are changing and the sector needs to really think about how to attract the next generation of the sector's workforce, *"what attracted people say 20 years ago to their roles is completely different to what the new generation are wanting. And I think that we need to start understanding and we need to work out what that is. There is no promotion and marketing"* [Interviewee_SSI009].

One interviewee called for sector wide action and even proposed the resourcing of designated sector roles for engagement with secondary schools:

So, they've got to actually come to the party. They've got to actually recognize that this is an issue, I think, before it really turns, and this is almost as a collective, not just as individual councils, that they need to be focusing more on this because it is their future and the advocacy is one major part of it, but it's also internally their own structures and their own ability to want to say, "All right, we need youth."

It's not their key priority, focusing on linking in with schools and industry and students. They almost need to have a person, if I'm being honest, the larger ones need to actually almost have someone that's fully in that role that can liaise with the Education Department and liaise with schools and liaise with industry and look at providing those pathways locally for students, not only with the LGA, but with their local key stakeholders, if I'm being brutally honest. [Interviewee_SSI05]

Others mentioned the need for a unified approach for promotion of the sector, especially to secondary school students and regional youth:

As a sector, one of the things that we are missing is a unified approach to actually advertising what LG does. No child goes through school and goes, "My career is going to be a rates officer." They don't even know it exists. LG as a sector doesn't promote what it actually does and what the career opportunities are within LG, and there are some significant career opportunities for people. So, I think, as a sector, to have a promotion around that to actually get people interested in actually considering LG as a career opportunity would benefit all of us. [Interviewee_SSI08]

Another interviewee from a regional council advocated for sector wide approach to promoting regional LG as an Employer of Choice and for sector advocacy:

There can be a lot that can be done in terms of positioning the sector of local government as an employer of choice, making it an attractive sector to come and work with. So, from a branding perspective, EVP perspective. And there's a role there for advocacy for the sector and also funding. With, you know from state or federal government in terms of looking at the skills shortage and ideas of talent pipelines, I think that's really important assistance for relocation or incentive to move into regional areas might be something that would be lucrative as well. So, I think it's all about collaboration and partnership with our communities and our existing staff who are our brand ambassadors. [Interviewee_SSI06]

One interviewee suggested a sector wide or centralised function for the sector in SA that could promote and market the regions and LG similar to what SA Tourism does:

If there was a centralized function, call it LGTC, Local Government Tourism Commission, whatever, I'm being silly here in a way, but it's no different, then each council is a member, and there's a subscription annually. For that, you get your region and it's recruitment needs planned. There's a program, and because it's a shared cost, it's not one council bearing the cost of everything, and those that are in dire need, which would be most, pay whatever to have this function represent them, and that's exactly what they do. And a program is incorporated, and it might be a quarterly or a half-yearly. I think that's probably about the right frequency. Doing it any more often than that, there's got to be strong lead time to attract enough people to make it cost-effective to bring them to the region. So maybe twice a year, I don't know. And then those that are interested in participating, then there is a centralized organization, grant funding is applied for to help fund it, and there could be some collaboration with educational institutions. [Interviewee_SSI04]

The following organisations participated in interviews and discussions and welcome contact from the regional Local Government sector:

4.5 Case Studies

The following three case studies showcase different types of examples of education and training partnerships and activities/programs that regional LG and Regional LG Associations can engage with. The first, Uni Hubs Spencer Gulf, is a regional educational partnership. StudyAdelaide has been conducting regional study tours for International students to showcase employers in the SA regions in partnership with RDAs and Welcoming Cities is a national network of cities, shires, towns and municipalities who are committed to an Australia where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life.

4.5.1 Uni Hub Spencer Gulf



Uni Hub Spencer Gulf presented the project with details of their programmes, partners, partnerships and student numbers and this information is included in this report. Further information is available from the Uni Hub Spencer Gulf website below.

The Uni Hub Spencer Gulf is part of the Australia wide Commonwealth funded Regional University Centre network with approximately 30 of these centres located across regional Australia. Uni Hub Spencer Gulf operates across five locations in regional

South Australia and has a partnership with local government in each of those sites who want these services in their communities. These locations include: Port Pirie, Port Augusta, the Copper Coast, Port Lincoln, and an outreach in Roxby Downs. Any university student can access these Hubs. It doesn't matter who the student is studying with or what course they're studying, they can come in and use the Hubs.

So, what do these Hubs look like?

The Hubs at Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Copper Coast, and Port Lincoln have a campus type feel, with buildings that have dedicated study space or reading spaces, an onsite campus coordinator and access to a generalist tutor. Students have a range of study spaces, a little kitchen area, exam room, and workshop or tutorial room and printing services. For Roxby Downs, because of the size of that community is much smaller, there is a part time coordinator who students can access for advice on workforce qualifications that are offered by the universities that the Uni Hub partners with.

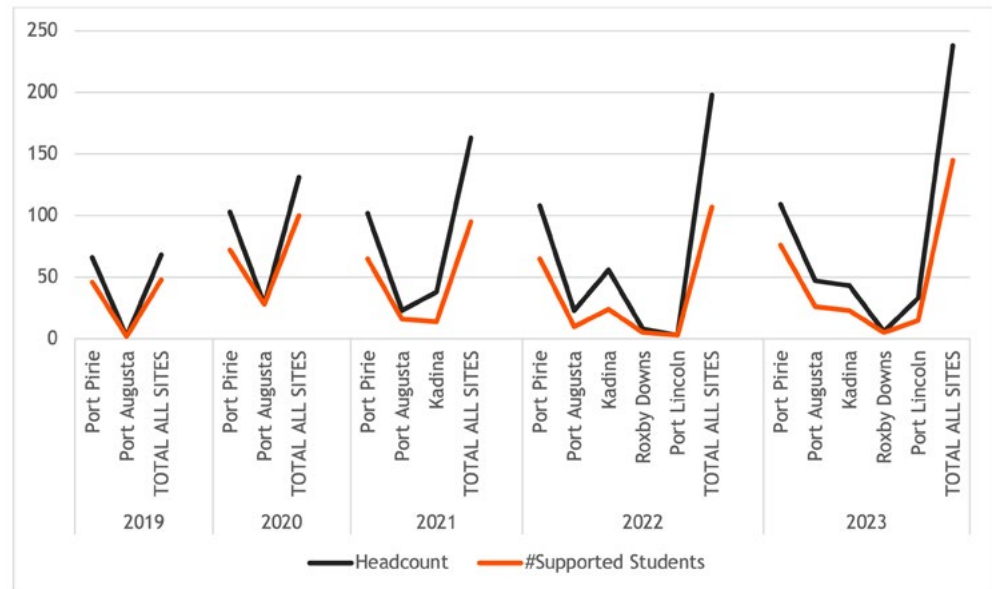
What is the connection with regional LG?

Uni Hub Spencer Gulf was established by the Spencer Gulf Cities Local Government Association, specifically as a solution to workforce issues. As a result, the Uni Hub also spends a lot of its time and resources in the workforce development space. The Uni Hub Spencer Gulf partners with universities and training providers to broker and coordinate and support local delivery of qualifications that help meet the workforce needs of the Spencer Gulf regions.

The Hubs were established at different times and the early student numbers were dominated by students already in the workforce who were wanting to upskill and were predominantly in areas like nursing and education (teachers). The Port Pirie Uni Hub started in 2019, the Port Augusta Hub in 2020, followed by the Copper Coast Hub in 2021, and the Port Lincoln Hub in 2023 along with Roxby Downs Hub in 2022. Figure 2 below shows the growth of student numbers across the Hubs sites since 2019.

The Hub partners with several Universities in offering courses across four main areas: Health and Community; Engineering; Business and Management and Education. University partners include Flinders University, the University of Adelaide and CQUniversity.

Figure 2: Uni Hub Spencer Gulf Student Use 2019 - 2023



Uni Hub Spencer Gulf Partnerships

Partnership with CQU, BHP and Roxby Childcare Centre

A partnership between Uni Hub Spencer Gulf, BHP, Roxby Downs Children’s Centre and RTO Central Queensland University (CQU) has been formed to deliver a pilot project to help solve the significant shortage of early childhood workers in the small, remote, mining community of Roxby Downs in South Australia. The pilot project will deliver a Certificate III or Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) qualification for up to 15 Roxby Downs locals, via a ‘blended learning’ model. This model is unconventional, resource intensive and relies heavily on trust between the education provider and the regional partners ‘on the ground’.

The approach is based on the successful blended learning model implemented by Uni Hub Spencer Gulf over the past five years for university level qualifications, but adapted to address the different funding and delivery requirements of the competency based vocational education system. Participants will be enrolled with CQU as online students, with local face to face student and industry support provided by Uni Hub Spencer Gulf. The project will be delivered and supported on site in Roxby Downs, in collaboration with the Roxby childcare centre.

Flinders University new Degrees in Allied Health, which will be delivered face to face in the region from 2024 with small student cohorts across three regional locations.

Link to Uni Hub SG student/industry partner videos: <https://vimeo.com/unihubsg>

Further details can be found at:

How does it work? - Uni Hub Spencer Gulf (unihubsg.org)

4.5.2 Case Study - StudyAdelaide's Regional Careers Tours



StudyAdelaide presented the project with details of Regional Study Tours and this information is included in this report along with contact details.

Introduction

In early 2021 StudyAdelaide proposed collaborating with Regional Development Australia (RDA) to take international students and recent graduates on field tours to regions as a potential solution to the statewide skills shortage and increasing career opportunities for students.

The concept aimed to connect employers and international students/graduates to address the many challenges to international students successfully gaining regional employment. These include the students' lack of knowledge and/or misperceptions about what the region has to offer including job opportunities, and the employers' lack of knowledge and/or misperceptions about the diversity and skills offered by international students and how to hire them.

StudyAdelaide's Regional Careers Tour project commenced with a pilot tour in April 2021, a day trip to Murray Bridge, Mannum, and Tailem Bend in partnership with RDA Murraylands & Riverland. The RDA identified health and hospitality as the skills most in demand, this included aged care and social workers, and with a new 4.5-star hotel close to opening, chefs and hotel management staff. Nearly fifty students with 14 nationalities joined this first tour, an equal mix of health/allied health students and tourism/hospitality students.

Evolution of the Regional Careers Tour Program

The Regional Careers Tour program has continued to evolve, with the tenth tour planned for August 2023 to the cities of Port Pirie and Port Augusta to coincide with the annual Global Maintenance Upper Spencer Gulf (GMUSG) Conference and Trade Expo. Each tour is curated to the skills needs of the region, with students/graduates with matching higher education or VET qualifications invited to attend. Qualifications include engineering, IT, agriculture, education, tourism and hospitality, health and allied health, and food technology. The students are targeted through StudyAdelaide's database of over 1,800 students who have registered their interest in living and working in a regional area.

In collaboration with various RDAs, the tours have covered towns and cities in the Limestone Coast, Murraylands, Fleurieu Peninsula, Riverland, and Eyre Peninsula regions. Other important stakeholders include regional councils and government agencies like Workforce Australia whose input and support are invaluable in designing the tours and engaging employers. The tour itineraries consist of several elements enabling:

- stakeholders to showcase their region, lifestyle and opportunities through welcome events, industry panels, guided city tours, and tourism experiences
- internationals already settled in the regions to share their stories via presentation or panels
- employers and students to make connections at networking events and during site visits



Photo: Eyre & Far North Study Tour

Preparing the participants

To maximise the outcomes of the tours StudyAdelaide holds workshops for the employers and students. The student workshop aims to get them ready for the tour by outlining the expectations of them during the tour, profiling the organisations involved and potential job opportunities, preparing their resumes and LinkedIn profiles, and building their networking and follow-up skills. The employer workshop aims to ‘myth bust’ the barriers to hiring international students and provides information

about the international student demographic (nationalities, qualifications, and for the large numbers of post-graduate students, their prior skills and experience), the temporary graduate visa (subclass 485) and post-study work rights, and tips for successfully welcoming students into the workplace. The workshop also highlights the many benefits international students bring to a business beyond enhancing workplace cultural diversity, including fresh perspectives to problem solving and innovation, a global outlook, insights and connections into international markets, and an independent, resilient, and loyal workforce.



Photo: Murraylands & Riverland Study Tour

Outcomes of the program

The regional tours have been successful in changing the students' perception of living in the region and the career opportunities available to them. Post-tour surveys revealed

- 93% of tour participants had a positive change of perception about working and living in a regional area
- 90% of tour participants stated they are highly interested in working in a regional area following the tour

“Before I thought working in a regional area would not be worth it or they would not be much job opportunities. However, after the trip, meeting and listening to several people I realised there is a huge working sector and regional areas

have a lot to offer to me as a nursing student especially. They need employees in bulk and are heartily welcomed. As far as transportation or other amenities are concerned that too is feasible and enough support is available. It is a small community where everyone knows each other, and I would not think twice going and working there.”

Another potential avenue for regional organisations is offering work placement or internships with more than 80% of students surveyed interested in regionally based opportunities. These programs give the organisations and local community the chance to fulfill the expectations inspired by the warm welcome experienced on the tours and encourage a permanent move to the region.

While one of the challenges of the program is tracking the results of students gaining employment and moving to regional areas, each tour has resulted in students successfully applying for placement or roles in the regional area they visited or having the confidence to apply for roles in other regions. Examples include

- Engineering students having participated in the Limestone Coast and Murraylands tours moving to Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge, Jamestown, and Whyalla.
- Social workers moving to Naracoorte, Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln following the Limestone Coast tour
- Nursing students moving to Waikerie, Murray Bridge, Mannum, and Loxton
- A chef working at The Bend, Tailem Bend

Changes in employer perceptions have not been measured but anecdotally there is a greater understanding of and appreciation for international students. This is also evident in the increased willingness to engage in the tour program.

Recognising the value of international students to increasing workforce outcomes in regional South Australia, StudyAdelaide has been invited to join the Upper Spencer Gulf workforce reference group for the Regional Connector and Collaboration Program funded by the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS). With the increasing collaboration with the RDAs, councils, and other agencies the program has the potential to expand.

Career Pathways for International Graduates – Post Study Work Rights

<https://studyadelaide.com/career-pathways>

International Students who study in Adelaide have longer post-study work rights than those in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane as outlined below.

Scenario	Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane	Adelaide
VET qualification	2 years	2 years
Bachelor degree	2 years	3 years
Bachelor degree (Eligible qualifications)	4 years	5 years
Masters degree	3 years	4 years
Masters degree (Eligible qualifications)	5 years	6 years
Doctoral degree	6 years	7 years

Regional councils and LG Associations can contact StudyAdelaide direct:

<https://studyadelaide.com/contact-us>

Jane Johnston, Chief Executive

Jodie McDonald, Communication and Engagement Manager

4.5.3 Welcoming Cities – Opportunities for Regional Local Government



Welcoming Cities is a national network of cities, shires, towns and municipalities who are committed to an Australia where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life.

Welcoming Cities is a Founding Partner of Welcoming International – a growing network of more than 200 municipalities across the world.

Welcoming Cities is an initiative of Welcoming Australia, which is also supported by the Scanlon Foundation. Welcoming Cities is a membership network of 77 local governments around Australia, representing over 40% of Australia's population. The local governments in the network consist of large metro councils, urban and city fringe councils, regional cities, and regional towns as well.

There are currently 77 members Australia wide with 9 councils in SA members of Welcoming Cities.

South Australia (n=9)

Metro:

City of Port Adelaide Enfield

City of Adelaide

City of Unley

City of Salisbury

City of Playford

City of Tea Tree Gully

Regional:

The Rural City of Murray Bridge (M&Rs LGA)

Tatiara District Council (Limestone Coast LGA)

Welcoming Cities supports those local governments to be more welcoming and inclusive, both in their policy and their practice. We also have the Welcoming City Standard, which allows councils to benchmark their practice both internally and externally against being a welcoming city.

So what is the Welcoming City Standard?

The Welcoming City Standard has six categories, which traverse the whole offering of a council. So not just community development, but also economic development, places and spaces, learning and skills development, leadership. And so, it's a broad approach to all of what council can do to be more welcoming and inclusive. Councils can then use that as a tool to benchmark their practice. And if they choose, they can move through an accreditation process to become an accredited Welcoming City by us, as well. [Interviewee_SSI03]

Welcoming City Vignettes

Regional Partnerships to Increase Regional Migration:

We've worked with a number of councils around Australia specifically on supporting them, and supporting to increase migration to those areas. So, in Queensland, we worked on the Regional Partnerships Project in conjunction with the state government. And that was working with three local governments in Southwest Queensland to plan and prepare their communities. But also, the council as an organization, to be more welcoming and inclusive [Interviewee_SSI03]

Attraction and retention of migrant workers in regional LG:

And actually it's all about attraction and retention of migrants. And so, to take one example, we worked with a council, they brought someone into the community, and it was the first person who wasn't a native English speaker to work at council. And so they had quite a few... What's the best thing? Teething problems, I suppose. But there was a lot of learning on both sides, in terms of what needed to happen in terms of translation, but also the employer's role in making sure that person settled into the community.

For instance, the local GP didn't have the most up-to-date translation number. It was a small but significant barrier that had to be overcome. That person's partner didn't speak English so council worked with the local primary school to have her work there, or volunteer there. She could both up her English game, meet local people in the community, but feel like she was doing something really valuable.

And I think that's so important when bringing people into an area, is it's not just about the role of having somebody, and seeing them as an employee, and it's their time at work. You're bringing a whole package into a community.
[Interviewee_SSI03]

Manager of Welcoming Cities:

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E: sebastian@welcoming.org.au

<https://welcomingcities.org.au/the-standard/>

<https://welcomingcities.org.au/what/>

5 ————— **Study Outcomes**

Study Outcomes

Given the desk research, field research and semi-structured interview findings we address each of the study's Research Questions as outlined below.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the career pathways within and across the twelve local government job families?

The Careers Pathway Tool has produced an excel spreadsheet with very useful collated information and forms a database and a set of infographics that can be utilised for a variety of internal and external strategies, tools, marketing collateral and stakeholder engagement initiatives.

This will provide individual regional LG with baseline data to which they can utilise internally for staff retention purposes (Performance Reviews and Career Development discussions with staff, workforce skills audits and workforce planning) and for awareness and attraction strategies with regional education and training providers.

Refer to:

Appendix 8.2 Overview of the LG Careers Pathway Tool

Appendix 8.3 Infographics: Posters and Banners

Resource: LG Career Pathways Tool

Resource: Infographics: Posters and Banners

RQ2: Who are the key stakeholders in SA regions that have the potential to collaborate with regional Local government in addressing their workforce issues?

There was a level of frustration from some key education and training stakeholders, that the sector needs to develop sector wide strategies and initiatives in the regions to assist them to meet current and future demands.

This research unearthed an array of key Stakeholders in regional SA and also shone a light on some initiatives that are being developed to attract professionals to regional areas.

The Toolkit may also assist regional LGAs to support members through fostering regional initiatives and partnerships/collaboration for promoting and attracting future staff to the regional local Government sector. This could include Regional Careers Fairs in conjunction with regional education and training providers, regional Study Tours in partnership with

StudyAdelaide, Information sessions from key Stakeholders (E.g., Regional Uni Hubs and campuses, Regional Migrant Resource centres and Welcoming Cities). All would go some way to building the regional LG Sector as a Regional Employer of Choice.

The stakeholder map is a useful resource for regional LG when planning strategies for collaboration and potential partnerships with stakeholders to pursue attraction and recruitment initiatives aimed at the three levels of jobs across the twelve LG job families.

Entry Level Jobs:

- Regional Secondary High Schools and Colleges
- Dept of Education: Industry Engagement, Student Pathways and Careers, Dept of Education
- VET Pathways
- Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Regional Group Training Organisations (GTOs)

Mid-Level Jobs:

SA Universities:

- Torrens University Australia,
- Flinders University,
- University of Adelaide
- UniSA
- Uni Hubs and Regional University Centers
- StudyAdelaide
- Professional bodies

Senior Managerial levels:

- Universities
- Professional Bodies
- StudyAdelaide
- LG Professionals SA

Attracting skilled migrants:

- Regional Migrant Resources Centers
- Welcoming Cities
- StudyAdelaide

Refer to:

Appendix 8.4 Overview of Stakeholder Map Tool

Resource: Stakeholder Map Tool

RQ3: What are some of the regional initiatives that are being practiced across regional SA that could assist and inform the regional local government sector in terms of building partnerships to attract workers to the sector?

The regional initiatives discussed and presented in Sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.5 of this report provide rich evidence of existing initiatives across the regional LG sector. These include in the following areas:

- Recruitment & Retention
- Shared Services and Secondments
- Engagement with Education and Training Stakeholders
- Traineeships, Apprenticeships and Cadetships
- Pockets of Innovative Practice

One example is the close relationships between the Spencer Gulf Uni Hubs with regional councils and their focus on regional workforces. Other initiatives include regional councils sharing services, partnerships with education and training providers, a peri urban council strategy to increase the number of women in the outdoor workforce, joining Welcoming Cities, partnering with StudyAdelaide tours to regions for international students, providing gap year traineeships for high school graduates and involvement in Careers Week and related activities.

6

Conclusion

Conclusion

The research has identified an array of job roles across all twelve local government job families and provided detailed information for each of these job roles. The research has also identified career pathways within job families and across job families. This base data can now be utilised by the regional LG sector to inform targeted marketing and attraction strategies for securing its future workforces. Pockets of best practice and regionally based initiatives have been uncovered and shared in this report.

Key findings:

A key outcome of the study was the identification of closer and targeted engagement with regional secondary schools/TAFEs/training providers and SA based universities in relation to LG career pathways, work integrated learning (WIL), Gap Year Traineeships, Cadetships, Study Tours for international graduates and work placements.

Other key findings include:

There exists some sharing of services and professional roles between neighbouring regional Councils which can be drawn upon as test cases for how this might be operationalised more broadly across the regions and sector.

The need for sector wide marketing of SA regions as an attraction strategy with emphasis on a LG Regional Employer of Choice campaign.

The imperatives for sector wide long term strategies for workforce attraction, development and planning.

Project evaluation:

The project addresses a number of the research and development priorities set out by the LGA Research & Development Scheme including;

Community awareness of local government: especially as a regional Employer of Choice by promoting greater engagement between local councils in promoting career pathways into the sector through key stakeholder engagement and partnerships with education and training providers and other key stakeholders.

The project also aligns with the research priority:

Community wellbeing and inclusion: the toolkit identifies strategies and activities that could assist local councils and the local government sector in SA regions diversify their workforces, especially with respect to Indigenous Employment Schemes, Cadetships and Traineeships, and exploring options for meeting the demands for professional staff through accessing international graduates from SA universities and engaging with StudyAdelaide and Welcoming Cities.

Through this project:

A suite of potential processes is identified in a tailored LG toolkit that will enable individual LGs to address workforce challenges. These range from scoping the workforce, including occupational and career pathways; training and skills partnerships; and connecting with key stakeholders.

Through the project partnership options within the LG sector, and with other key stakeholders are identified. These could include specific training programs; job sharing; secondments, scholarships and gap year initiatives.

The research will provide an evidence base to identify new efficiencies and reduction in the duplication of effort in relation to marketing regional SA to potential recruits (local talent and professional talent pools) and recruiting LG workforces. The Toolkit contains a database on job and careers opportunities which can inform strategies for improving LG career marketing such as the value-add proposition (VAP) of LG as a Regional Employer of Choice and will assist in fostering an appetite between regional councils for shared professional services and shared recruitment costs.

It is anticipated the Toolkit will advance local government engagement with local and regional education and training providers (High Schools, RTOs, and VET providers, universities) and other key stakeholders (Regional University Centres, StudyAdelaide, Welcoming Cities) and includes tools to assist the regional LG sector to engage more directly with key education and training stakeholders. This includes potential local/regional Career Fairs, work placements, and work integrated learning with VET and university students. In terms of professional roles, the toolkit will provide strategies for promoting the advantages of working in regions for professionals in relation to the diversity and scope of professional practice and career pathways within the sector more broadly.

The report's Recommendation 2: Link Outcomes to Building Sector Capability project, enables the project to deliver ongoing outcomes beyond the life of the project.

7

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8

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 8.1 Ethics Approval



Professor Roslyn Cameron Principal Investigator

Professor Roslyn Cameron Investigator

E-mail: ethics@torrens.edu.au

15/03/2023

Dear Roslyn and Roslyn

Ethics Application 0241 Local Government Career Pathways & Workforce Toolkit for Regional South Australia (SA)

Torrens University Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Approval Notification

Thank you for submitting 0241 for ethical review. This research project was reviewed by the HREC at the **8 February 2023** meeting.

I am pleased to advise you that 0241 meets the requirements of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 \(updated 2018\)](#) and ethical approval for this research project has been granted by the Torrens University Australia HREC.

In this research project the methodology and participating site(s) are as stated in the application.

Note: If additional sites are engaged prior to the commencement of, or during the research project, the Principal Investigator is required to notify the Human Research Ethics Office. Notification of withdrawn sites should also be provided to the Human Research Ethics Office in a timely fashion.

Approval of this project from the Torrens Australia University HREC is valid from 15/03/2023 for a period of three (3) years, subject to the following conditions being met:

- The Principal Investigator will immediately report anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project.
- The Principal Investigator will notify the Human Research Ethics Office of any event that requires an amendment to the originally approved ethics application. An Ethics Amendment Request should be completed and any change must be approved prior to implementation.
- The Principal Investigator will notify the Human Research Ethics Office of any adverse or serious events that may impact participant welfare.
- The Principal Investigator will provide an annual progress / final report to the Human Research Ethics Office for submission to the HREC and notify the HREC when the project is completed at all sites.
- The Principal Investigator will notify the Human Research Ethics Office if the project is discontinued at a participating site before the expected completion date, with reasons provided.
- The Principal Investigator will notify the Human Research Ethics Office of any plan to extend the duration of the project past the approval period listed above and will submit any associated required documentation. An Ethics Extension Request should be completed and any change to the approval period must be approved prior to implementation.
- The Principal Investigator will notify the Human Research Ethics Office of their inability to continue as Principal Investigator including the name of and contact information for a replacement.

This letter constitutes ethical approval only. This research project cannot proceed at any site until specific site permission has been obtained from the appropriate authority.

Should you have any queries about the review of your research project please contact the Human Research Ethics Office, ethics@torrens.edu.au.

The Torrens University Australia HREC wishes you every success in your research.

Kind regards

Suzette Rawady, Human Research Ethics Officer

on behalf of

Torrens University Australia HREC

The Torrens University Australia HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 \(updated 2018\)](#)

Appendix 8.2 Overview of LG Career Pathway Tool

This phase involved desk research and was focused on the twelve local government job families. The data collected and analysed is stored in an excel spreadsheet and contains the following information for every job role across the 12 LG job families:

- Job Family
- Job Role
- Qualification required
- Qualification Area
- Institutions who offer the qualification and their Location
- If the qualification is offered Online or Hybrid
- Salary rate pa (estimate as at September 2023)

Career Area	Job Family	Job Role	Qualification Level	Qualification Area	Institution	Location	Online Delivery	Salary
12	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Strategic Academy	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
13	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Austin Training & Education	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
14	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Australian Global Academy of Education	Adelaide	Yes	\$52,972
15	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Fulcrum People	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
16	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Academic Pavilion	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
17	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TransformED	Adelaide	Yes	\$52,972
18	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	William Angles Institute of TAFE	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
19	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	HTA Training and Employment	Clarence Gardens	No	\$52,972
20	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	HSYA Training and Employment	Salisbury	No	\$52,972
21	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Independent Institute	Salisbury	No	\$52,972
22	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Integrity Business College	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
23	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	MADEC	Port Pirie	No	\$52,972
24	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	MADEC	Adelaide	No	\$52,972
25	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	MADEC	Murray Bridge	No	\$52,972
26	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	MADEC	Remark	No	\$52,972
27	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	North East Vocational College	St Agnes	No	\$52,972
28	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	Quality College of Australia	Weyville	No	\$52,972
29	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	SG Learning and Development	Woodville	No	\$52,972
30	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TAFE SA	Adelaide	Yes	\$52,972
31	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TAFE SA	Berrit	Yes	\$52,972
32	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TAFE SA	Murray Bridge	Yes	\$52,972
33	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TAFE SA	Victor Harbour	Yes	\$52,972
34	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TAFE SA	Whyalla	Yes	\$52,972
35	Business Services	Service Manager	Certificate IV	Leadership & Management	TAFE Education and Training	Mt Gambier	No	\$52,972
74	Business Services	Procurement Specialist	Certificate IV	Procurement and Contracting	TransformED	Adelaide	No	\$84,012
75	Business Services	Contracts Specialist	Certificate IV	Procurement and Contracting	TransformED	Adelaide	No	\$75,585
76	Business Services	Procurement Officer	Certificate IV	Procurement and Contracting	TransformED	Adelaide	No	\$75,585
81	Business Services	Contracts Officer	Certificate IV	Procurement and Contracting	TransformED	Adelaide	No	\$75,585
118	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	GEM College of International Business	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
119	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	Fulcrum People	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
120	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	Jahn-Hospira Institute of Technology	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
121	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	Stanley International College	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
122	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	Academic Pavilion	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
123	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	Australian Institute of Technology Transfer	Elizabeth	No	\$51,988
124	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TransformED	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
125	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	MADEC	Port Pirie	No	\$51,988
126	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	MADEC	Adelaide	No	\$51,988
127	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	MADEC	Murray Bridge	No	\$51,988
128	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	MADEC	Remark	No	\$51,988
129	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TAFE SA	Adelaide	Yes	\$51,988
130	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TAFE SA	Berrit	Yes	\$51,988
131	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TAFE SA	Murray Bridge	Yes	\$51,988
132	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TAFE SA	Victor Harbour	Yes	\$51,988
133	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TAFE SA	Whyalla	Yes	\$51,988
134	Business Services	Personal Assistant	Certificate IV	Business	TAFE SA	Mt Gambier	Yes	\$51,988
304	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	GEM College of International Business	Adelaide	No	\$73,561
260	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	Fulcrum People	Adelaide	No	\$73,561
266	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	Jahn-Hospira Institute of Technology	Adelaide	No	\$73,561
267	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	Stanley International College	Adelaide	No	\$73,561
268	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	Academic Pavilion	Adelaide	No	\$73,561
269	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	Australian Institute of Technology Transfer	Elizabeth	No	\$73,561
270	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	TransformED	Adelaide	No	\$73,561
271	Economic Development	Economic Development Officer	Certificate IV	Business	MADEC	Port Pirie	No	\$73,561

The Career Toolkit will have multiple uses both internally for regional Local Government entities and for regional Local Government Associations and the sector more generally, to forge stakeholder collaborations at a regional level and more broadly across the State's regions.

We also believe the Careers Toolkit can be further developed to create marketing collateral to promote job roles and career pathways in regional Local Government.

Refer to:

Resource: [LG Career Pathways Tool](#)

Appendix 8.3 Infographics: Posters & Banners

Infographics

- 12 Job Families in Local Government
- Database Jobs/Qualification
- Education and Training Providers
- Set of Careers in Local Government
- Posters & banners

Considerations:

- 3 target audiences, school leavers and VET qualified, graduates and post- graduates
- Job families must be highlighted
- Jobs and qualifications illustrated where possible
- Diversity in gender and race
- Age-appropriate representation
- Images inspired by regional South Australian sites, flora, fauna and festivals.
- Scalable



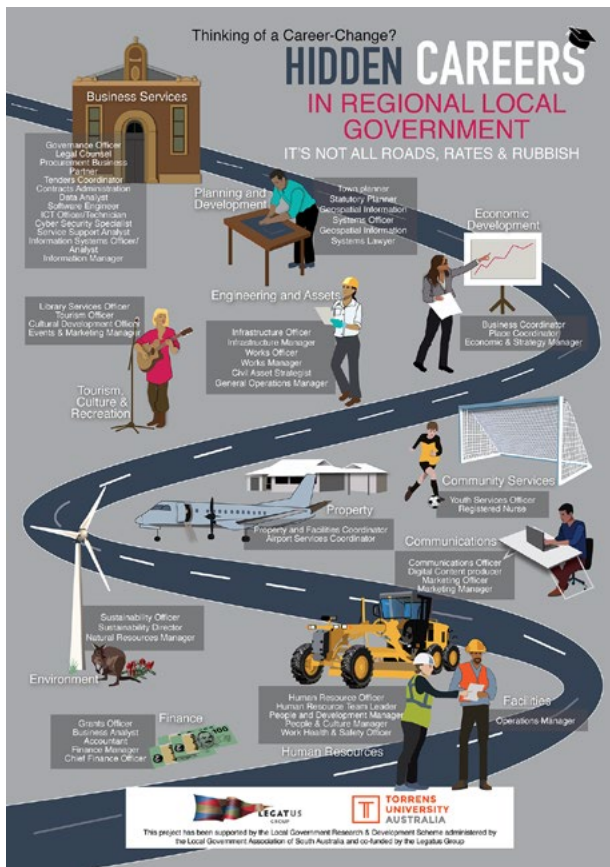
Poster 1

- Size A3 poster (can be scaled)
- Target audience: school leavers & VET students
- 12 job families on signpost
- Coloured signs indicate jobs available for this user group in these sectors.
- Colour coded information available in thought bubble.
- Note age of person indicates late teen early 20s



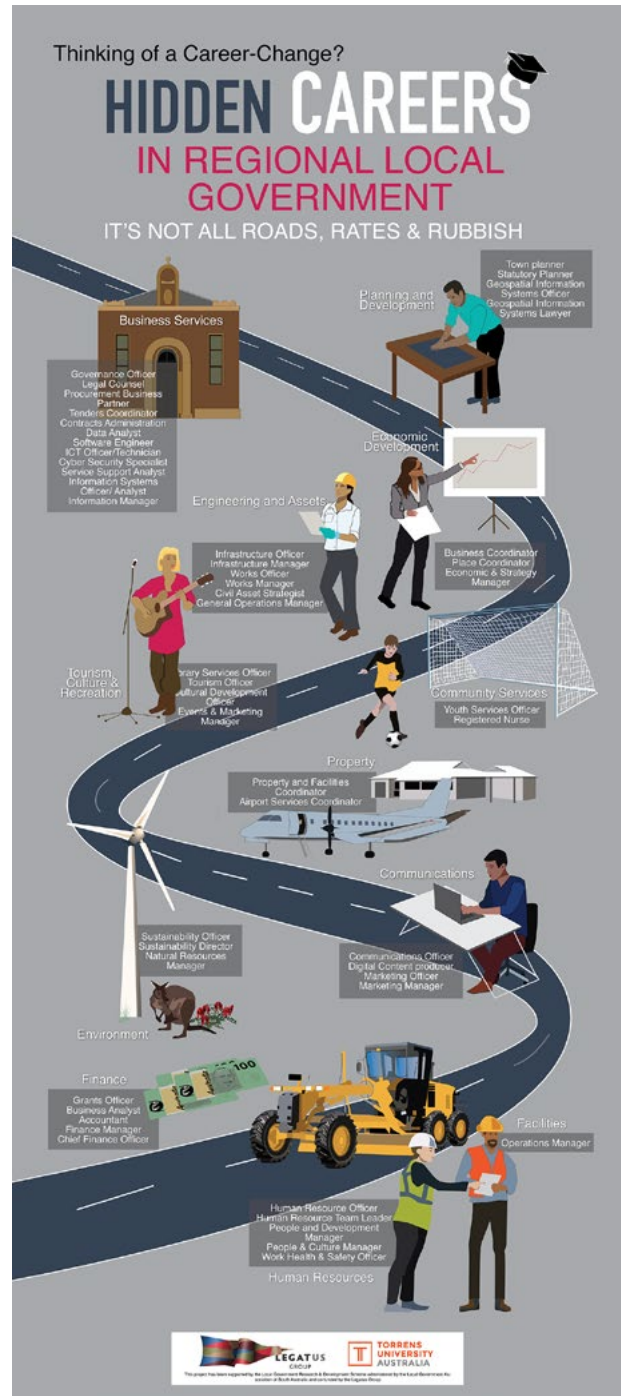
Banner 1

- Size 85cm x 200cm
- Target audience: school leavers and VET students
- 12 job families on signpost
- Coloured signs indicate jobs available for this user group in these sectors.
- Colour coded information available in thought bubble.



Poster 2

- Size A3 poster
- Target audience: University Graduates
- 12 job families in headings
- Grey boxes indicate jobs available in each job family



Banner 2

- Size 85cm x 200cm
- Target audience: University Graduates
- 12 job families in headings
- Grey boxes indicate jobs available in each job family
- Note age of people indicate mid 20s onwards



Poster 3

- Size A3
- Target audience: Postgraduates
- 8 job families in headings
- Grey boxes indicate jobs and qualifications needed for each job available in each job family



Banner 3

- Size 85cm x 200
- Target audience: Postgraduates
- 8 job families in headings
- Grey boxes indicate jobs and qualifications needed for each job available in each job family
- Note age of people generally 40+

Appendix 8.4 Overview of Stakeholder Mapping

Local Government entities:

All regional SA Local Government Associations.

- Legatus Group
- Eyre Peninsula LGA
- Limestone Coast LGA
- Murraylands and Riverland LGA
- Southern and Hills LGA
- Spencer Gulf Cities

LGA through the SA Regional Organisation of Councils (SAROC) and the LGA Secretariat Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

LG Professionals SA

- Regional Development Australia organisations (RDAs) SA which are delivering Employment Initiative

Workforce Australia Local Jobs network

- Mid North SA
- Murray and South East
- North West Country

Regional Work SA

Education and training providers:

- **Regional University Centers:**
- Uni Hub Spencer Gulf - Port Pirie
- Uni Hub Spencer Gulf - Port Augusta
- Uni Hub Spencer Gulf - Copper Coast, Kadina
- Uni Hub Spencer Gulf - Port Lincoln
- Uni Hub Spencer Gulf – Roxby Downs
- Barossa Campus, Nuriootpa (Barossa Valley)
- Murray River Study Hub, Murraylands (Murray Bridge) and Riverlands (Berri)

StudyAdelaide

Higher Education providers:

- Torrens University Australia
- University of Adelaide
- UniSA
- Flinders University

Secondary education and VET providers:

- Dept of Education-secondary schools
- Private/Independent schools and colleges
- VET sector providers (private and public)
- Group Training Organisations (GTOs)

Professional bodies:

- Industry bodies/Professional Associations/Recruitment Agencies e.g. Local Govt IT SA, Economic Development Australia and Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (SA)
- Regional Australia Institute
- Engineers Australia (EA)
- Planning Institute
- CPA
- Welcoming Cities

Employment & Training services:

- Maxima
- McArthur
- Group Training Organisations
- TAFE SA

Federal and State Government Departments

- Skills SA
- Australian Industry & Skills Committee (AISC)
- Migration South Australia

Refer to Resource: Stakeholder Map Tool

