

PART 2 Strategic Plan Yorke and Mid North ESF
SASP Region

REGIONAL PROFILE -YORKE AND MID NORTH REGION

The **Yorke and Mid North region** is in the central part of the State with a population of 74,521 representing 4.7% of the State's population. The region encompasses the Employment and Skills Formation (ESF) Networks of Mid North, Southern Flinders and Yorke regions. The three ESF Networks have agreed on the following aim and values to underpin their approach to employment and training initiatives across the region:

Aim

All members of our communities have the opportunity and ability to participate in the workforce and contribute to the regions economic and social prosperity.

Values

- Inlusiveness
- Accessibility
- Engagement
- Respect for individual and community differences

The region includes the local government areas of Barunga West, Clare and Gilbert Valleys, Copper Coast, Goyder, Mount Remarkable, Northern Areas, Orroroo/Carrieton, Peterborough, Port Pirie, Wakefield, Yorke Peninsula.

Footnote: Orroroo/Carrieton and Peterborough LGA's will be serviced operationally by the Northern Regional Development Board in 2009/10.

The **population profile** of the Yorke and Mid North region has above average proportions of school-aged children (0-14 years) and older people (45 years and older) compared to the State average of 18.1% and 26.1% respectively. The region has low proportions of families with children, reflecting the older age profile of the region. There have been below average population increases over recent years and the population is projected to continue to grow at a rate lower than the State average.

While regular **labour force** indicators for the Yorke and Mid North region show unemployment rates generally below the State average, unemployment had reached the State average (4.8%) by June 2008. Mid North continues to be well below the State average at 2.7% while Southern Flinders is 5.8%, 1% above the State average. Data from the 2006 Census suggests higher than average unemployment and below average participation in the labour force for key populations. Residents of the region are represented highly in managerial, trades and laborer occupations and in farming. Agriculture, retail and health and community services are the largest employing industries in the region, with health and community services showing particularly strong employment growth since 2001.

The general level of **education and qualifications** in the Yorke and Mid North region is below the State average, with comparatively low levels of school achievement and post-school qualifications. This may be a reflection of the relatively low proportions of younger people in the region.

Rising levels of unemployment are evident as a result of prolonged drought, the current global economic crisis and an older workforce suggest a degree of **economic** uncertainty for the population. The region has above average levels of income support recipients and below average incomes. The prevalence of home ownership in the region indicates a solid and established population and there has been a tendency for migration into the region (particularly Yorke Peninsula) of retired couples and unemployed.

Key Industries

At the time of the 2006 Census, the industries in which the largest proportion of residents of the Yorke and Mid North and Southern Flinders were employed:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (21.3%) 5,708 employed
- Retail Trade (13.7%) 3,903 employed
- Health and Community Services (12.1%) 3,435 employed
- Manufacturing (10.1) 2,736 employed

	Mid North	Southern Flinders	Yorke	Region Total	S/Aust
Population June 2007					
Estimated Res Population (ERP)	12,852	28,639	33,030	74,521	1,584,197
Share of State's Total Population	0.8%	1.8%	2.1%	4.7%	100.0%
Net Change in ERP since June 2006	0	147	293	440	15,993
Rate of Population Change (%)	0.0%	0.5%	0.9%	0.6%	1.0%
Age Groups (ERP) June 2007					
	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>
0-14	19.2%	20.4%	17.6%	18.9%	18.1%
15-24	10.8%	10.7%	9.6%	10.2%	13.7%
25-44	23.3%	22.9%	20.3%	29.3%	26.9%
45-64	29.2%	27.8%	30.5%	29.3%	26.1%
65+	17.5%	18.3%	22.0%	19.8%	15.2%
Total All Ages	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%
Indigenous Status 2006 Census					
	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Indigenous	0.9%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%
Labour Force 2006 Census					
Total Employed	5,803	10,382	11,776	27,961	689,901
Total Unemployed	217	930	790	1,937	38,178
Labour Force Participation Rate	60.6%	51.9%	48.6%	51.9%	59%
Unemployment Rates 2006					
Total Rate	3.6%	8.2%	6.3%	6.5%	5.2%
Youth (15-24 yr olds), Full Time Rate	6.9%	21.9%	15.1%	16.0%	12.4%
Mature Age (45-64 yrs) Rate	3.5%	5.7%	5.2%	5.0%	3.3%
Indigenous Rate	13.6%	20.4%	26.7%	22.1%	16.0%
Non-Indigenous Rate	3.6%	8.0%	6.1%	6.3%	5.1%
People with Disabilities (15-64 yrs)	11.8%	15.3%	16.7%	15.2%	11.5%
DEEWR June 2008					
Total Employed	6,839	12,804	13,673	33,316	772,300
Total Unemployed	189	791	705	1,685	39,000
Unemployment Rate	2.7%	5.8%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%
Participation Rate, June 2007	69.3%	61.1%	54.1%	59.4%	61.4%

Population and Social Characteristics

The Yorke region has below average proportions of younger people (0-45 years) and above average proportions of older people (45 years and over). The low proportion of families with children reflects the older age profile of the region. There have been above average population increases over recent years and the population is projected to continue to grow at a rate higher than the State average.

The Mid North region has above average proportions of children less than 15 years and people aged 45 years and older. The population has fluctuated over recent years with strong growth between 2005 and 2006. The population is projected to continue to grow until 2011 and then begin to decline.

The Southern Flinders Ranges has above average proportions of children and people aged 45 years and older. There have been fluctuating population changes over recent years, and the population is projected to decline in the future.

The Southern Flinders region has historically reflected higher than average welfare dependency.

Labour Force (DEEWR June 2008)

Total employed 33,316

Total unemployed 1,685

Unemployment rate 4.8%

Youth

The total youth population (15-24) of the region is 10.2% (7,605) of the total population compared to the State average of 13.7%. The Yorke youth population is 9.6% (3,161), Mid North is 10.8% (1,393) and Southern Flinders is similar at 10.7% (3,051).

Mature Aged

The total mature aged (45-64) population of the region is 29.3% (21,799) of the total population compared with the State average of 26.1%. Yorke has 30.5% (10,085) mature aged in its population, Mid North is lower at 29.2% (3,754) and Southern Flinders is the lowest at 27.8% (7,960).

Aboriginal Australians

The total aboriginal population of the region is 1.75% (1,308) compared to a State average of 1.7%. Southern Flinders has the highest at 2.1% (588), Yorke has 1.9% (610) aboriginal in its population whilst Mid North is lower at 0.9% (110).

Disability

The proportion of people with a disability for the combined region is 15.2% (1,811) compared to the State average at 11.5%, while Yorke has 4.5% (843) of its population with a disability, Southern Flinders has 4.3% (713) and Mid North has 3.3% (255).

Workforce Participation

The average workforce participation for the region is 59.4% compared to the State average of 61.4%. Mid North is the highest at 69.3% with Southern Flinders at 61.1% and Yorke is the lowest at 54.1%.

ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THE LOCAL NETWORK'S AREAS

Yorke and Mid North SASP Region incorporates three ESF Networks serviced by Yorke Regional Development Board, Mid North Regional Development Board and Southern Flinders Ranges Development Board. The regional development board framework is currently under review and some board mergers may occur.

Mid North Network

The vast majority of businesses in the Mid North are of micro size, employing less than 5 people. The relatively high participation rate in the Mid North masks the high levels of under-employment, which is seen to be a major issue for the network. While there are job opportunities in the region, a significant proportion of the workforce is employed casually or seasonally in agriculture, viticulture, retail and tourism/hospitality industries. Of these, viticulture and agriculture sectors are under pressure from successive years of drought, which impacts on whole communities.

The Mid North 15-24 year cohort as a proportion of the population is below the State average. The Mid North region lacks resources and infrastructure in the area to deliver trade qualifications which contributes to the youth drain.

Yorke Network

The mature aged cohort in Yorke is growing as a result of an influx of retirees. The 45-65+ aged group is 52.5% of the population. Current economic conditions are likely to lead to more mature aged residents returning to the workforce in casual employment. Reliance on agriculture, which is likely to consolidate, and the growth in the retirement sector has the potential to negatively impact on the workforce participation in the area. On the up side food processing and mining may provide some new jobs growth.

Southern Flinders Network

Southern Flinders has the highest youth unemployment figure at 21.9% and this issue remains a key focus for project delivery. The Southern Flinders economy and workforce is more reliant on the resource sector for business opportunities and employment. This sector offers long term growth potential, however, economic conditions prevalent at the commencement of the planning period will dampen labour demand in the short term. The network will focus on addressing the ongoing skills shortages in this sector while confronting shorter term challenges posed by the downturn in metals prices.

ISSUES COMMON ACROSS THE REGION

Drought

Indications are that further consolidation of farm ownership will continue in the short term. There will be some people looking for new employment opportunities as a result and they will need assistance with this transition. The impact of drought on the agriculture and viticulture sector will continue and flow on effects will be felt in service and retail sectors. The networks will engage with people affected in communities looking to find new job opportunities and provide Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) opportunities and relevant assistance including training to maximise their job prospects. The northern cropping zone is particularly vulnerable due to subsequent years of drought.

Changed Economic Environment

A recent Mid North business survey indicates significant loss of contracts within the viticulture sector and need to foster new opportunities and share intelligence with key agencies to respond to labour shedding and business closures. A collaborative response with relevant agencies is proposed.

Yorke and Mid North region is very dependant on agribusiness and tourism which are likely to experience difficulties in the short term. Retail and engineering are already showing a slow down and are anticipated to reduce workforce further in the short term. The scale and duration of the global

financial crisis and its specific impact on our region is uncertain at this point, however, there is growing evidence of increasing unemployment and increased numbers of individuals seeking welfare support.

Mobility of Target Groups Accessing Training

Data suggest participants are crossing existing network boundaries to access relevant training. A collaborative approach across the three networks and identification of suitable training to address demand will be investigated.

Mature Aged

Mid North continues to have higher aged profile than the state average which in part reflects lifestyle choices of retirees. Proportions of these are highly skilled and are likely to seek re-entry to the workforce due to falling retirement incomes. Attraction and workforce participation strategies may be needed to support this. The mature aged cohort in Yorke is growing with influx of retirees, with the 45-65+ aged group representing 52.5% of population. The current economic climate is likely to see more mature aged returning to the workforce seeking casual employment. This trend is likely to continue at least for the short term and add to the pool of mature age job seekers.

Youth Unemployment

Southern Flinders has the highest youth unemployment figure of 21.9% and remains a key focus for program delivery. The unemployment figure for youth in Yorke is still very high at 15.1% and is also a key target cohort for that network. SACE completion rates are improving slowly but needs to improve across the region. The lack of skills training facilities is contributing to the youth drain in the Mid North region. Projects will need to support successful transition from school to further education or employment.

Increased Unemployment

In the short term unemployment is likely to increase across the region and projects will need to focus on volunteering, training and work experience to

keep people engaged and prepared for employment when labour market demand improves.

Barriers to Employment

There are still many common barriers that prevent people from participating in the workforce. Some of these issues include willingness to work, lack of suitable opportunities locally, transport and licensing can make it hard for those that are required to travel for training and work. Literacy and numeracy levels remain a barrier for many and there are many personal issues such as drugs and alcohol and lack of family support networks.

Aboriginal People

Transition from school to work and early disengagement from school are ongoing issues for aboriginal residents. Lack of mentors in the community to support and encourage young people is evident. Family issues often impact on capacity for individuals to retain a job. Low numeracy and literacy is also evident when working with aboriginal people and disengaged youth. There are a limited number aboriginal owned enterprises which can provide work opportunities and this still remains a challenge on Yorke. Employer commitment to giving aboriginal people a go still needs to improve.

Transport availability and lack of driver licences often limits participation in training and availability for work. The aboriginal community is relatively small but continuing to grow. The increasing unemployment rate caused by the economic down turn will impact on this community in a disproportionate manner. Networks will continue to identify and create opportunities for aboriginal people to gain employment.

People with a Disability

This is an important group across the region with the numbers proportionally higher than for the rest of South Australia. The networks need to work closely with key service providers and schools to understand the future numbers and capacity of people to work so their skills can be matched with workforce demand. Increasing work opportunities for people with a

disability will be an important means to increase overall workforce participation.

Underemployment/Up-skilling

There is still significant numbers of underemployed, seasonal and casual workers in agriculture, viticulture, hospitality and tourism sectors. Many more workers look likely to have their work hour reduced, if not lost altogether, and the labour force is experiencing increasing levels of casual employment. The need to provide up-skilling has been identified by the South Australian Economic Development Board as a key issue and our network plans will invest in this area.

Underlying Skills Shortage

The global financial crisis and resulting slow down in business activity may mask underlying skill shortages for the short term, however, networks cannot afford to wait for an inevitable upturn in labour demand to address this fundamental challenge. Networks will continue to promote vocational training in schools and post school to ensure that long term areas of skills shortages are addressed. The challenge will be to ensure businesses plan to keep skilled workers and provide opportunities for uptake of trades. The longer term outlook for resource sector growth remains very positive. By working with regional development boards and industry networks will be able to ensure training programs are flexible and linked to workforce demand.

THE OBJECTIVES - FACILITATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES BY

Objective 1- Increasing workforce participation

These strategic directions have been developed in response to current economic conditions, demographics and emerging trends. The ultimate goal is to link employment and training to skills shortage and workforce demand particularly for vulnerable groups in our communities. Notwithstanding the impacts of the global economic crisis and drought our networks will continue to focus on helping disadvantaged transition into work as a key mechanism to increase overall workforce participation.

The State Economic Development Board acknowledges that skill development needs to be integrated with other supporting services that address personal needs. These include pre-employment assistance, work experience, literacy and numeracy programs, on the job training, post placement support, career counselling, case management and mentoring.

The networks concur with this position and the projects developed will include these elements. Increasing workforce participation is important to the State and the regions future productivity and prosperity particularly in addressing emerging skills and labour shortages.

The strategies adopted in this plan will drive the initiatives of the three networks in boosting access to career planning and training whilst addressing barriers experienced by our target groups.

Strategy 1.1 Assist disadvantaged people to make an effective transition to employment

Strategy 1.2 Provide pathways for skills development in growth industry sectors

Strategy 1.3 Assist people to up-skill and re-engage in the workforce

A range of initiatives will be developed under the strategies to engage the key target groups of youth, mature aged, indigenous and people with a disability, underemployed and redundant workers to re-engage or transition into work including:

- Engagement projects
- Pre-voc training
- Pre-employment and core skills training
- Career development services

Objective 2 - Increasing industry engagement

Industry specific training and work experience/mentoring have proven to be effective mechanisms to assist people into employment. Networks have the opportunity to build partnerships with growth businesses and develop training that matches future demand. Improved engagement can be achieved through industry associations, industry skills councils, business forums and closer working relationships with economic development officers and business advisers. Developing industry partnerships, and leveraged funding sources that address barriers to employment will improve community capacity to engage more people in work or training.

Underlying Skills Shortage

The global financial crisis and resulting slow down in business activity may mask underlying skill shortages for the short term, however, the region cannot afford to wait for an inevitable upturn in labour demand to address this fundamental challenge the networks will continue to promote vocational training in schools and post school to ensure that long term areas of skills shortages are addressed. The challenge will be to ensure businesses plan to keep skilled workers and provide opportunities for uptake of trades. The longer term outlook for resource sector growth remains very positive. By working with regional development boards and industry we will be able to ensure our training programs are flexible and linked to workforce demand.

Strategy 2.1 Gather relevant labour demand data and skills requirements from local industries to inform initiatives

Strategy 2.2 Engage local employers to support and participate in local initiatives

Gathering relevant labour demand data and understanding key skills required by employers will ensure that pre-employment and training projects are relevant and provide participants in *South Australia Works in the Regions* projects the best possible chance of gaining meaningful employment.

Initiatives to engage with industry to capture labour demand data and develop relevant local responses will include:

- Business forums
- Workforce demand surveys
- Industry specific training

Where growth industries are identified specific partnership projects will be developed including where practical, financial and in-kind contributions being provided by industry.

Federal Government Stimulus Package

The result of the stimulus package will be a number of capital works projects across the region in schools, public housing and through local government. Regional development boards and their respective ESF networks will use the stimulus packages and other government infrastructure spending to help retain local businesses and jobs. A partnership approach with local industry and employment service providers can deliver opportunities to for new employment associated with building and construction activity.

Areas of Growth

The building and construction sector should benefit from the Australian Government economic stimulus package while aged care and allied health should remain strong.

The resources sector represents a medium to long term opportunity and requires partnerships with key labour hire companies in this sector.

Workforce Demand

Consideration will need to be given to how we maintain and increase skills through this current period of a constrained economy. In addition we need better workforce planning data from industry to develop the right skills in response to industry and employer needs. The networks will benefit from on-the-ground industry knowledge gathered by regional development boards who act as *South Australia Works in the Regions* Grantees. Conversely this provides an avenue for promotion of *South Australia Works in the Regions* programs to business and industry.

Objective 3 - Supporting state-wide economic direction by building regional capacity

The partnerships established by *South Australia Works in the Regions* through the ESF networks and regional development board grantees provide a great opportunity for collaboration at both the local and regional level. As a result of the existing connections with local government and industry of the grantees the ESF networks are well positioned to engage not only employment and training providers but a broad cross section of industry, government agencies and community organisations which enables projects to be better targeted and the limited resources available maximised in achieving common objectives. These initiatives have an impact on both economic and social capacity of the region while empowering individuals who would otherwise struggle to engage with the workforce.

Strategy 3.1 Encourage partnerships and cross regional collaboration

Strategy 3.2 Provide targeted and responsive solutions that builds regional capacity

The networks will continue to identify new alliances and evaluate project performance. It is essential that our limited funds are well targeted and duplication is avoided in delivery of services. The operation of the three ESF networks across the region engages community, local government, industry and service providers which provides the framework for building regional capacity.

The following approaches will demonstrate regional capacity building in the region:

1. A collaborative approach involving network members and key regional stakeholders including industry to produce more outcomes and value for money.
2. An innovative approach that exploits opportunities such as Federal Government Productivity Places Program Job seeker training to do more with the same resources.
3. A workforce development perspective that ensures our projects and programs link with a broader workforce objectives of the region and State.
4. Retain and build the regional training and employment service delivery capacity. This capacity is essential for residents who seek to enter the workforce and develop their skills.
5. Expand capacity to deliver employment and skills formation services in rural areas where services are weakest.
6. Expand and enhance ESF networks to include all organisations with a role or interest in improving skills, employment, and workforce participation in the region.
7. Where possible achieve leverage by working with a range of agencies and community organisations to achieve better results
8. Promote quality career planning services to disadvantaged groups and redundant workers in the region.