



Australian Government

REGIONAL EDUCATION, SKILLS AND JOBS PLAN

NEW SOUTH WALES – FAR WEST

2012 – 2014

JULY 2012



July 2012

Details in this report are correct at time of drafting.

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

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

Disclaimer about data used in this plan

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

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REGIONAL EDUCATION, SKILLS AND JOBS PLANS

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

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

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

For more information, including the contact details of your local RESJ Coordinator, please refer to www.deewr.gov.au/resj

Strategies

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

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

Community engagement

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

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

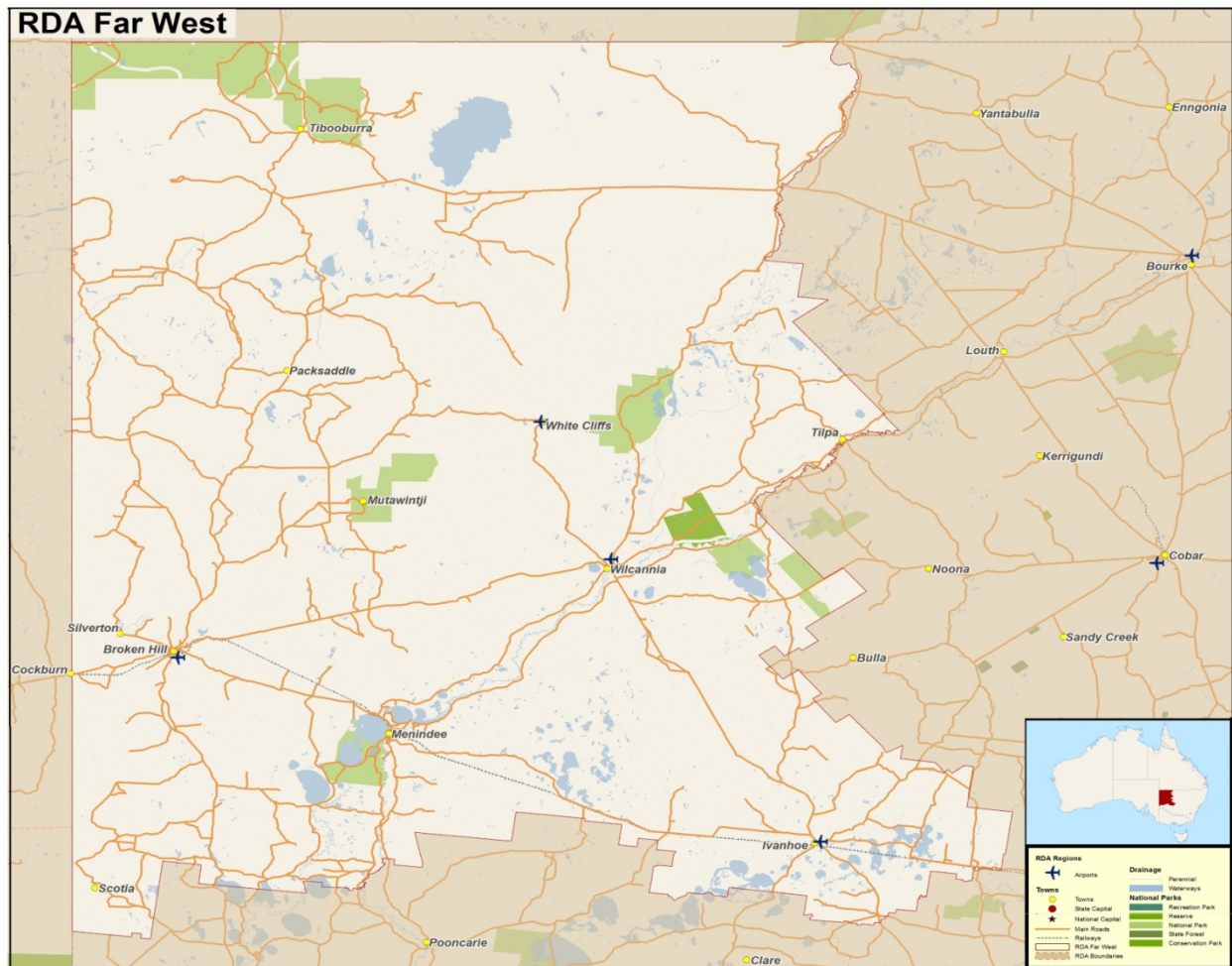
Implementation

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

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

The plans are living and responsive documents that will be revisited throughout their implementation to June 2014 to ensure they respond to emergent issues and opportunities or changing community or government priorities in regional Australia.

MAP OF FAR WEST



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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Far West region of New South Wales is located in the north west of the state. The Darling River winds through a network of national parks and flows through the Menindee Lakes Storage Scheme catchment, built to augment the River Murray, meet water requirements along the lower Darling, provide urban and mining needs in Broken Hill, and provide a resource for flood mitigation. The semi-arid climate traditionally fostered a mining and pastoral economy; but emerging industries have been identified in goat and meat sheep production, grapes, stone fruit, tourism, and renewable energy. The Far West region of New South Wales is covered by three Local Government Areas: Broken Hill City Council, Central Darling Shire Council and Unincorporated New South Wales.

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

- meeting Closing the Gap targets in all areas for Indigenous Australians
- the requirements of the early childhood education and care reforms
- the immediate and long-term implications of the early childhood education and care reforms on providers and the workforce
- meaningful and engaging educational pathways to encourage young people to complete Year 12 or equivalent
- local options and pathways to tertiary and further education for people to study and work in the region
- high youth and Indigenous unemployment and regional skill shortages.

The key goals of the RESJ Plan are to:

- expand, link and celebrate Closing the Gap programs and projects for Indigenous Australians
- support early childhood education and care providers to meet the immediate and longer term child care reform requirements:
 - to have strategies in place to address the workforce changes; and
 - to meet the needs of local communities
- help young people to complete Year 12 or equivalent by improving the accessibility of meaningful and engaging educational pathways
- develop localised pathways to tertiary and further education and training
- increased awareness of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- improve employment outcomes for unemployed job seekers, particularly Indigenous Australians, to meet current and future skills needs in the region.

Wilcannia, which is located in the Far West region, is one of two New South Wales communities to be identified as a remote service delivery community. Remote Service Delivery is a commitment by governments to work with Indigenous communities to improve the delivery of services. The aim is to improve access to government services and facilities, raise the quality of these services, and better support Indigenous community governance and leadership. A local implementation plan has been negotiated with the Wilcannia Aboriginal community, identifying projects and priorities that the community would like addressed. The RESJ Plan will complement the existing work being done in Wilcannia through Remote Service Delivery.

The region has a RDA Committee with a broad plan including education, skills and employment opportunities. This RESJ Plan complements the existing goals and strategies in the RDA plan.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

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

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

Population

ABS 2010 data indicate there was an estimated 22 948 residents in the Far West region. Bordering Queensland to the north and South Australia to the west, the Far West region is one of the most sparsely populated areas within New South Wales, stretching across 147 142 square kilometres or 18.4 per cent of the state, but only housing 0.4 per cent of the state's population, with 87.0 per cent of the region's population living in Broken Hill. Table 1 gives some further detail.

The Far West region includes three Local Government Areas: Broken Hill City Council, Central Darling Shire Council and Unincorporated New South Wales. Within the region the main urban centre is Broken Hill; there are the smaller townships of Wilcannia, Menindee, Ivanhoe and White Cliffs as well as smaller villages. Utilising the ABS Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia, almost the entire Far West region is classified as either 'remote' or 'very remote'. The region has strong cultural and economic ties to South Australia and Victoria and, unlike the rest of New South Wales, Broken Hill operates on Central Standard Time.

Table 1: Population by Local Government Area, 2006

Local Government Area	Population
Broken Hill City Council	20 139
Central Darling Shire Council	2008
Unincorporated New South Wales	1120
Total	23 269

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census.

Over the past 50 years the Far West has experienced dramatic population declines which have been directly linked to changes within the mining industry and to drought. According to ABS data the population declined 1.6 per cent between June 2005 and June 2009, with the Broken Hill Statistical Local Area (SLA) recording the largest decline in the state. In a national context, the Far West RDA region falls within an area that over the 10 years to 2010 suffered the greatest population decline of any area of the country.

The region is the traditional lands of the Wilyakali, Danggali, Barindji, Paakantji (Barkindji), Wiljali, Bandjigali, Wandjiwalgu, Gunu, Barundji and Wongaibon Aboriginal Nations, which consist of a number of tribes and clans.

Aboriginal people make up a significant percentage of the region's population. Some 9.4 per cent of the total Far West population identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander during the 2006 Census, compared to 2.1 per cent state wide. The proportion is lower in Broken Hill (6.6%) and the Unincorporated New South Wales Local Government Area (3.3%), but much higher in Central Darling Shire, where the proportion is 38.2 per cent. In Wilcannia, the Indigenous population is two-thirds (67%) of the community, while in Menindee, it is almost half (46.4%) of the community.

Within the Far West region the Aboriginal population has been growing while the non-Aboriginal population has been declining. In 2011 the New South Wales Government Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs reported that in the last 15 years the Aboriginal population of Broken Hill increased by 50.5 per cent, while the non-Aboriginal population fell by 5.9 per cent; and the Aboriginal population of Wilcannia increased by 14.4 per cent while the non-Aboriginal population fell by 6.5 per cent. This is in part due to many Aboriginal people moving to regional towns, drawn mainly from smaller towns, while at the same time non-Aboriginal people are moving out of the region.

ABS 2010 data indicated residents of the Far West region aged 15 to 24 years represented 12.1 per cent of the region's population, compared to 14.1 per cent nationally; those aged over 65 years made up 18.6 per cent of the region's population, significantly higher than the national average of 13.5 per cent. The average job seeker age in the Far West region, according to DEEWR in 2012, is 34 years which is younger than the national average age of 36 years.

Early childhood education and care

In 2010 ABS data estimated that 18.2 per cent of the resident population in the Far West region was aged 0 to 14 years. In the 2006 Census Aboriginal children accounted for approximately 17 per cent of the total population aged 14 years and under in the region.

As part of the National Reform Agenda for Early Childhood, the Australian Government has committed to achieving universal access to early childhood education and care for all children in the year before full-time school. The early childhood education sector includes public, private for-profit and community-based service providers and includes preschools, occasional care, family day care, long day care and outside school hours care services. Currently within the Far West region there are two long day care services (both in Broken Hill), one family day care service, nine services that provide preschool education, one mobile children's service, one toy library that also provides outreach services and two early intervention services.

Community consultation has identified that a number of towns and communities outside Broken Hill have limited or no child care services and the long day care services in Broken Hill report waiting lists, particularly for the 0 to 2 years age group. Preschool services in most communities are also stretched to their limit. Some services are geographically isolated and may be the only service within a town, with limited established networks with other services to share information, resources, training, staffing and ideas.

Community consultation has also identified that fewer Aboriginal children and their families access early childhood education and care services. A New South Wales Department of Human Services research report published in March 2011, *Child care choices of Indigenous families*, identified some of the reasons Indigenous families do not access services, including that they do not feel welcome and that services do not always offer the quality of service that they want for their children. Families said that they wanted services to be more 'natural', with mixed age groupings, more inclusive of parents and local community. The report also said that there is a need to educate and employ more Aboriginal staff in child care centres. The Murdi Paaki Aboriginal communities have identified that their top priorities are to increase and improve early childhood education and to increase Indigenous employment and economic development.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measures young children's development across five domains: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; school-based language and cognitive skills; and general knowledge. 2009 AEDI data indicated at a national level, 23.6 per cent of children were vulnerable on one or more domain and 11.8 per cent were vulnerable on two or more domains. The AEDI found that in the Far West RDA region, the community of Broken Hill central had the lowest proportions of vulnerable children for the region, less than the national rates on both measures. However, the AEDI community of Menindee/Wilcannia/White Cliffs had the highest proportions of vulnerable children—more than twice the national averages on both measures.

Some of the reasons attributed to these results include the particular challenges faced by rural and remote families including but not limited to access to appropriate medical and allied health services such as speech pathology and occupational therapy within the region, thus delaying early intervention. According to the Far West Child Development and Well-Being Management Group many of the region's people are from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities where fewer residents complete their secondary education in comparison to the rest of New South Wales and where there are more people on income support than in the rest of New South Wales.

School education

There are 17 schools in the Far West RDA region: nine government primary schools (including School of the Air), two high schools, three central schools, two Catholic primary schools and one special non-government school.

Research by the University of New South Wales lists social disadvantage as a major contributing factor to poor school performance and that performing poorly at school can further entrench this disadvantage. Through consultation, people have identified a need for more alternative education pathways and programs within the region. Those alternatives will assist schools, students and families and ensure that students, particularly students at risk of disengaging, have consistent and ongoing support. Some existing services in the region are offered by the Department of Family and Community Services New South Wales, the Blacktown Youth College Incorporated Broken Hill campus, Robinson College, TAFE Western, LETS Employment and Mission Australia.

According to the 2010 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results for the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) Western New South Wales region, the percentage of students who sat NAPLAN who are at or above the minimum standard for reading is below the DEC average for all years from Year 3 to Year 9. (There is not an exact alignment between the DEC Western New South Wales and RDA Far West regions; however they do cover similar geography.) The same applies for numeracy results. This indicates that there are larger numbers of students in the Western New South Wales region who are behind their New South Wales counterparts in terms of literacy and numeracy. For both literacy and numeracy, the gap between Western New South Wales results and the DEC average is greatest at Year 5. The DEC Western New South Wales region data does, however, include the results from schools outside the RDA Far West region, including all the towns from Lithgow to Coonabarabran and then west to Broken Hill.

As part of the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions, the Council of Australian Governments has set a target of 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2015. According to DEC NSW 2010 mid-year census data, the apparent retention rates for schools within the Far West region was as follows: Year 7–10 apparent retention rate (88.5%), Year 10–12 (59.5%). The overall apparent retention rates in 2010 Years 7–12 for schools in the Far West region was 49.6 per cent, 1.5 per cent higher than the 48.1 per cent reported in 2009. At a regional level, apparent retention rates tend to be more volatile because of smaller cohort sizes, varying enrolment patterns associated with the completion of secondary education and the movement of students between school regions and school sectors.

Of the 1.1 million full-time school students enrolled in New South Wales in 2009, 4.2 per cent identified as Indigenous. ABS data suggests Central Darling Shire Council had the second highest proportion of full-time equivalent Indigenous students enrolled in a government school (74%) within the state. Within the Catholic education system in the Wilcannia-Forbes Catholic Diocese 14 per cent of students enrolled in February 2012 identified as Indigenous.

The DEC NSW 2010 mid-year census indicated a total of 158 Higher School Certificates were awarded to students within the Far West region; an increase of 21 from 137 in 2009. Both the Catholic education system and DEC reported that a number of innovative programs implemented locally in schools within the Far West region to combat poor attendance and retention have resulted in gradual increases in school attendance in recent years. An example published in the Smarter Schools National Partnerships New South Wales Progress Report 2011 is St Therese's Community School in Wilcannia, which has used national partnership funding to develop a wellbeing framework. The framework has delivered tangible support for students, parents and teachers, helping them to address attendance and engagement and to improve learning outcomes. To date, school attendance has improved from 78 per cent in 2010 to 82 per cent for the first half of 2011, and behavioural referrals to the principal are down by 60 per cent.

Over the past 10 years the variety of courses available and the quality of delivery within the region has improved, allowing better access to learning for students. Trade training is an important element of the government's workforce development agenda and will help address national skills shortages in traditional trades and emerging industries by improving the relevance and responsiveness of trade training programs in secondary schools.

Broken Hill High School (as the lead school in a cluster of schools, including Ivanhoe Central School, Menindee Central School, Wilcannia Central School and Willyama High School) was successful in Round One (phase one) of Trade Training Centre in Schools funding. The Trade Training Centres in Schools are offering students training in metal industries, construction and hospitality.

Regionally there has been good take-up of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SbATs) to date. According to figures from the Integrated Vocational Education and Training System database on 6 March 2012, there were 143 people in SbATs in the Western New South Wales Region. Of these, 21 school-based trainees were in schools in the Far West region. However, there is potential to further promote SbATs to families and the community and to increase the variety of industry areas to ensure that what is on offer is matched to students' interests and identified career paths and relevant to local employment opportunities.

The University of Sydney's Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health has developed the Far West Re-engineered Health Career Pipeline Model. This model aims to help students from a young age understand the work opportunities available in the health care sector from a young age via exposure through experience to deep immersion in relevant education and training from entry level to career professional. The health pipeline model could be extended to other industries within the region, including resources and mining.

Tertiary education and training

In the 2006 Census, 43 per cent of the total population in the Far West region aged 15 years and over reported having post-school qualifications, compared with a national average of 52.5 per cent and a New South Wales state average of 54.5 per cent. The vast majority of these qualifications were at certificate level or were inadequately described.

There are opportunities to increase the higher education qualification levels within the Far West region and to improve the options to live and study in the region. Major higher educational facilities in the region include TAFE Western; Robinson College; and the Fowlers Gap Arid Zone Research Station, a teaching and research facility of the University of New South Wales. Charles Sturt University has a presence in the region, particularly through Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health (BH UDRH). Over 400 health science university student placements are currently offered in Broken Hill and surrounding areas through a partnership between BH UDRH and the Far West Local Health District.

TAFE Western, as well as delivering courses on campus across their sites in far western New South Wales, have recently expanded their course offerings through the launch of TAFE Western Connect. TAFE Western Connect, through the use of technology, allows training and assessments to be delivered to students utilising flexible methods, including online courses, courses delivered by mobile learning units and connected classrooms. TAFE Western Connect allows students to access training where they live and when it suits them and to choose from a wider range of courses.

The University of Sydney, through the BH UDRH, has been delivering a Health Career Academy Program (HCAP) in far western New South Wales since 2008. The HCAP is a component of the 'Far West Re-engineered Health Career Pipeline Model', which targets secondary school students in Years 7–12, encouraging them to develop aspirations to and entry into health careers. The HCAP is an educational, developmental, experiential model that enables secondary school students to participate annually in career development activities that are age-relevant and specific to multiple health disciplines. Health academies are offered for the disciplines of medicine, nursing, allied health and mental health and counselling careers. Approximately 120 secondary school students participate in the HCAP annually, with a 30 per cent Indigenous participation rate.

Community feedback has identified that rural and regional students often face very complex and dynamic challenges to entering tertiary pathways. In order to access desired tertiary education opportunities, young people often have to move to a metropolitan area or another regional area or, as is the case for many Far West students, to other states such as South Australia or Victoria. There are other barriers too. For example, not all courses are available within the region, there may be difficulties in attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff, there may be difficulties in developing and raising aspirations in relation to further learning, and there are often substantial costs (for students and their families) in accessing educational opportunities. These have a great impact on rural students.

Jobs, skills and workforce development

Industry and employment across the Far West region vary significantly, with some areas experiencing significant growth associated with the mining resources boom and increases in agriculture while other areas suffer severe socioeconomic disadvantage, high unemployment and low economic development opportunities.

Broken Hill and the greater Far West have a very strong mining history, and are acknowledged as the birthplace of the global mining company BHP. Many mining companies have generated considerable revenue from the Broken Hill area. At its peak in 1952, the Broken Hill mining industry employed 6500 people. In comparison, according to the 2006 Census data, 719 people were employed in the mining industry in the Far West area. Mines are still in operation in the region, and the commodities boom has underpinned recent growth and minerals exploration and has the potential to further increase employment and business opportunities within the region.

A key goal of the RDA Far West, identified in their current Regional Plan, is to diversify the local economy and broaden the economic base by strengthening the regional infrastructure capacity, particularly in the areas of water management, renewable energy, the creative industries, tourism and communications.

Table 2 shows some employment characteristics for the seven largest employing industries in the region identified in the 2006 Census.

Table 2: Employment in the Far West region, by industry

Industry	No. of people employed	Total people employed (%)
Health care and social assistance	1129	14
Retail trade	1089	13
Mining	719	9
Accommodation and food services	693	8
Public administration and safety	653	8
Education and training	621	8
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	600	7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census.

An economic update for the Far West region, released in November 2011 by RDA Far West and Broken Hill City Council, confirms that projects at the local and regional levels will be competing for labour resources, and that in coming years there is potential for high growth in local employment. The mining sector is currently recruiting more labour and has a high growth outlook for construction and mining operations over the next decade and beyond. The other critical areas for skills include the digital economy, creative arts, renewable energy (once construction of the Silverton Wind Farm begins) and general business in the region (spanning agriculture through to retail).

According to DEEWR's Small Area Labour Markets estimates the unemployment rate in the Far West region was 8.9 per cent in the September quarter of 2011, much higher than the national unemployment rate of 5.1 per cent. In the 2006 Census, the Indigenous unemployment rate for the Far West RDA region was 23.7 per cent, much higher than the New South Wales state average of 19.2 per cent.

Table 3 provides further detail on unemployment rates.

Table 3: Unemployment rates by statistical local area

Statistical Local Area	Unemployment rate (%)	
	September 2010	September 2011
<i>Australia</i>	5.2	5.1
<i>New South Wales</i>	5.3	5.1
Broken Hill	8.2	8.3
Central Darling	13.9	14.2
Unincorporated Far West	8.2	8.3

Source: DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets data.

As shown in Table 3, unemployment rates increased across the region between 2010 and 2011. Central Darling recorded the second highest estimated rate of unemployment in New South Wales in 2011 (14.2%).

According to ABS data in far western New South Wales, people accessed income support payments at a greater rate than the state average. The rate of people receiving pension payments (for example, age, disability or carer pensions) in the Far West (25%) was higher than the rate for New South Wales (14.7%). Approximately 4.2 per cent of the region's population received income support payments (for example, Newstart Allowance) compared to the New South Wales state average of 2.5 per cent.

Commencing on 1 July 2013, the new Remote Jobs and Communities Program will provide a more integrated and flexible approach, providing better participation and employment services for people living in remote areas of Australia. The new service will become the 'one stop shop' for people in remote Australia currently being assisted by Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services, Indigenous Employment Program and the Community Development Employment Projects program. Wilcannia in the Far West RDA region that will have the new service.

Other characteristics

Murray–Darling Basin plan

The Darling River and the Menindee Lakes System are significant features and assets within the Far West RDA region. The townships of Wilcannia and Menindee, in the Central Darling Shire, and the city of Broken Hill depend on water from the Darling River. Agriculture in the Far West region has traditionally been largely based on pastoral activities such as wool production. However, in recent years significant growth in irrigation has allowed the sector to produce cotton, malting grains, grapes and stone fruits, providing much-needed employment opportunities.


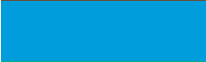


The availability of water in the Menindee Lakes has a significant effect on current and potential tourism within the region. There is potential for further tourism growth associated with the lakes, including bird watching, Indigenous tourism, ecotourism and recreation. DEEWR will continue to collaborate with the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on providing local support to regional communities through the transition of policy reforms, including the proposed Murray–Darling Basin plan.

ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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

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

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

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

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

Issue 1 Closing the Gap in all areas for Indigenous Australians

- Goals:**
- Increase training, employment and economic development outcomes for Aboriginal people within the Far West region.
 - Expand, link and celebrate Closing the Gap projects and achievements for Indigenous Australians.

Early childhood education and care	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage providers to implement strategies, including the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP), to train and employ Indigenous staff.• Promote and support the development of proposals using Indigenous education funding to support greater access to early childhood education and care by Indigenous children.• Support whole-of-government initiatives within remote service delivery (RSD) communities and the established Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly sub-groups• Promote literacy programs, including the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP), to industry as a means of skilling their current and future workforce.• Work with local government and key local industries, including the mining industry, to develop local Aboriginal employment strategies to increase employment opportunities and pathways.• Collaborate with and provide support to local Aboriginal education consultative groups (AECGs) to provide information to Aboriginal communities on key government programs and funding relating to education, training and employment.• Support Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation to implement their workforce development plan and continue to increase Aboriginal employment and development within the Far West and improve Aboriginal health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal Affairs (NSW)• AECG• Business Enterprise Centre• Catholic Education• Department of Education and Communities (DEC) (NSW)• Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Indigenous Coordination Centre• Department of Family and Community Services (NSW)• Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, Tertiary Education• Disability Employment Services (DES) providers• IEP panel members• Job Services Australia (JSA) providers• Local Government• Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation• Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly• NSW Industry and Investment• School Business Community Partnership Brokers• State Training Services• TAFE Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal economic development officers• DES• IEP• Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program• Indigenous Youth Leadership Program• Indigenous Youth Mobility Program• JSA• LLNP• National Workforce Development Fund• New Careers for Aboriginal People• Parental and Community Engagement• Supplementary Recurrent Assistance Program• WELL	

Issue 2 The immediate and long-term implications of the early childhood education and care reforms on providers and the workforce.

- Goals:**
- *Early childhood education and care providers are aware of and supported to have strategies in place to meet the early childhood education and care reform requirements.*
 - *Promote access to early childhood education and care to families.*

Early childhood education and care	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regional early childhood education and care (ECEC) project which brings identified ECEC Champions to communities to help providers to meet requirements and increase expertise. • Provide information to local ECEC providers on the recommendations from the Brennan independent review on allocation of funds for ECEC. • Provide information on key initiatives and programs to all ECEC providers in the region to access funding, programs and initiatives. • Through established ECEC providers, identify workers with additional language and literacy support needs to meet qualification requirements, and link clusters with Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program broker to develop tailored projects. • Through established ECEC provider networks, identify experienced workers and link them with funded Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) providers. • Undertake an industry round table in Broken Hill in mid-2012 with ECEC providers, Job Services Australia (JSA) providers, registered training organisations (RTOs) and other stakeholders to share information on the workforce changes arising from the National Quality Framework and develop local initiatives to meet those changes. • With relevant stakeholders, develop an Indigenous ECEC workforce strategy, utilising the Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program and Indigenous Employment Program to support recruitment and retainment of Indigenous employees in the sector. • Work with eligible local early childhood education providers within Far West to apply for Supplementary Recurrent Assistance funding to accelerate educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians beyond those which could reasonably be expected from mainstream and own-source funding. • Increase the number of people training for and entering employment within the early childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Connections Solutions Australia • Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council • Department of Education and Communities (DEC) (NSW) • Department of Family and Community Services (NSW) • Department of Human Services (Centrelink) • Disability Employment Services (DES) providers • Early Childhood Australia NSW • ECEC providers • Gowrie NSW • Indigenous Community Volunteers • Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) panel members • Job Services Australia (JSA) providers • Local councils • Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation • RTOs • State Training Services (DEC) • TAFE Western • Western Student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DES • IEP • HECS-HELP • Inclusion and Professional Support Program • Indigenous Professional Support Unit • Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program • JSA • Long Day Care Capital funding Exceptional Circumstances Grant • National Workforce Development Fund • New Skills: Quality Care Training Strategy • Parental and Community Engagement Program • RPL Assessment Grant • School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships • Supplementary Recurrent Assistance Program • Structured Workplace Learning • TAFE Fee Waiver • WELL

<p>sector, thereby increasing early childhood education and care (ECEC) expertise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people currently working within the early childhood sector to gain formal qualifications and/or upgrade their skills in line with the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care through enrolling in training or applying for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment Grant. 	Connections	
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Issue 3 Providing meaningful and engaging educational pathways for young people to attain Year 12 certificate or equivalent.

Goal: *Support disengaged young people achieve Year 12 certificate or equivalent through continued development of alternative education pathways and programs.*

	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through membership of existing school/community partnership groups, contribute knowledge and promote programs which support developmentally vulnerable students in primary and secondary schools. Assist youth service providers to develop flexible and innovative alternative learning projects. Coordinate partnerships between the education sector, service providers and industry to maximise benefits for existing Trade Training Centres in Schools. Identify regional champions in educational excellence. Celebrate and share achievements and best practices across the region through networks and good news stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blacktown Youth College Inc. Broken Hill campus Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health Catholic Education Department of Education and Communities (DEC) (NSW) Job Services Australia (JSA) providers Robinson College School Business Community Partnership Brokers Schools State Training Services (DEC) TAFE Western Youth Connections providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health career academies Indigenous Youth Leadership Program JSA Links to Learning National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program School Business Community Partnership Brokers Trade Training Centres in Schools Youth Connections 	

Goal: <i>Increased school and industry awareness to encourage growth in the uptake of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships.</i>			
	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders		Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring key stakeholders together to identify industries with current and future skills needs in the region and work with stakeholders to develop education pathways. In partnership with Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and other key stakeholders, support vocation education and training forums within the region to bring together parents, students, education and industry to promote the benefits of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SbATs) and to increase the variety of industry areas to ensure that what is on offer is matched to students' interests and identified career paths and is relevant to local employment opportunities. Collaborate with Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program providers and DEEWR's Indigenous Education and Employment team to develop Indigenous SbATs projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Apprenticeships Centres Business DEC (NSW) Industry Industry Skills Councils School Business Community Partnership Brokers State Training Services (DEC) TAFE Western Western Student Connections Youth Connections providers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships School Business Community Partnership Brokers Structured Workplace Learning

Issue 4 Local options and pathways to tertiary and further education for people to study and work in the region.

Goal: *Promote to schools and the community the options/pathways to higher and tertiary education.*

	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link, promote and expand projects that focus on pathways to university. • Through membership of existing school and community partnership groups, contribute knowledge of programs that support higher education pathways, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for experienced workers. • Work collaboratively with Regional Development Australia (RDA) Far West and other stakeholders to maximise opportunities for new and expanded vocational education and training and tertiary courses offered in the region. • Support and work with key stakeholders on the development of student articulation pathways to employment from education. • Utilise existing resources to explore innovative pathways to higher education. • Liaise and work with the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program (IYMP) provider to promote the program and training, education and employment options to increase access by Indigenous youth from remote communities within the Far West region. • Work with key stakeholders to establish and implement a pilot program involving a local school and the mining industry to use a pipeline model to enable transition from education to employment in the mining sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken Hill University • Department of Rural Health • Catholic Education • Charles Sturt University • Department of Education and Communities (DEC) (NSW) • Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, Tertiary Education • IYMP providers • Local Government • RDA Far West • School Business Community Partnership Brokers • TAFE Western • University of New South Wales • University of Sydney 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Investment Fund • Health career pipeline and associated service learning programs • Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program • IYMP • School Business Community Partnership Brokers 	

Issue 5 A labour market with high youth and Indigenous unemployment and regional skill shortages, particularly in the mining and agriculture sectors.

- Goals:**
- *Develop strategies to provide training and employment pathways, particularly for Indigenous and young job seekers.*
 - *Promote employment and workforce development opportunities in the region.*

	School education	Tertiary education and training	Jobs, skills and workforce development
Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and participate in the planning and organisation of the inaugural Far West Education, Skills and Industry Forum to be held in 2012. • Support and add value to existing programs, projects and partnerships to increase access to and participation in study and work for people from low socioeconomic and culturally diverse backgrounds and youth. • Engage and participate in the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly Education, Training, Employment and Economic Development subgroup and support whole-of-government initiatives. • Keep a watching brief on the development of a regional National Broadband Network strategy for Regional Development Australia (RDA) Far West, to highlight and plan for employment opportunities. • Link Indigenous Employment Program projects in the region with the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) and the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (WELL) to support training and employment outcomes. • Collaborate with Job Services Australia (JSA) Providers, Disability Employment Services (DES) providers, Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) panel members and Indigenous organisations to increase the number of work-ready parents, early school leavers, Indigenous and mature-age clients. • Work with local stakeholders to prioritise the coordination and development of relevant education and training and support projects that can demonstrate the creation of new jobs in the region and will help to build a diverse multi-skilled workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Affairs (NSW) • Community training partnership • DEC (NSW) • Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, Tertiary Education • Department of Premier and Cabinet (NSW) • Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (NSW) • DES providers • Education and training advisers • Employers and industry groups • Enterprise Connect officers • IEP panel members • Industry Skills Councils • Infrastructure Australia • JSA providers • RDA Far West • Registered training organisations • School Business Community Partnership Brokers • State Training Services (DEC) • TAFE Western 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Government Skills Connect • DES • Education Investment Fund • IEP • JSA • LLNP • National Workforce Development Fund • New Careers for Aboriginal People • Productive Ageing Package • School Business Community Partnership Brokers • Skills for Sustainability • Trade Training Centres in Schools • Vocational Education and Training National Support • WELL 	

Strategies	Stakeholders	Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with all NSW RESJ Coordinators to establish a state-wide network of Industry Skills Councils, education and training advisers and Enterprise Connect officers to improve communication, coordination and delivery of Skills Connect in the region. • Arrange presentations by the Australian Government Skills Connect Team and/or relevant Industry Skills Councils to government, business and industry groups within the region to talk about the range of skills and workforce development programs and funding available, aiming to build productivity in areas of skills shortage. 		

APPENDICES

Appendix A — Stakeholders

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

Stakeholders involved in the RESJ Plan development	
Sector	Stakeholder
Local government	Broken Hill City Council; Central Darling Shire Council.
State government	Department of Education and Communities; Aboriginal Affairs; Department of Family and Communities; Health Far West Local Health Network; New South Wales Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services (NSW Trade & Investment); Department of Education and Communities – State Training Services.
Education	Department of Education and Communities; Western Student Connections; Wilcannia-Forbes Catholic Education Diocese.
Vocational Education and Training	Department of Education and Communities; TAFE Western; Robinson College; West State Training; Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health (University of Sydney).
Higher education	Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health (University of Sydney).
Youth	Youth Connections provider; Schools Business Community Partnership Brokers.
Employment and Industry	Broken Hill Business Enterprise Centre; Job Services Australia providers.
Indigenous organisations	Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation; Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs - Indigenous Coordination Centre; Broken Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council.
Regional development	Regional Development Australia Far West.

Appendix B — Existing related plans and strategies

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

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

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

Plan or strategy	Impact on RESJ Plan	How it can be used/linked/expanded
Regional Development Australia (RDA) Far West Regional Plan 2011–2021 Far West Digital Economy Strategy	The Far West Regional Plan identifies key economic, social and environmental activities within the region, and includes the following aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broaden the economic base • strengthen infrastructure capacity • develop creative industries • improve the quality of life • engage the community. 	The RDA Plan highlights current opportunities, challenges and significant regional projects for the region. This RESJ Plan supports shared priorities.
Local government community strategic plans Broken Hill City Council Integrated Strategic Plan: <i>A Sustainable Future for Broken Hill</i> 2010–2030 Central Darling Shire Council Social Plan 2006–2009	Both local governments within the region have or are in the process of drafting new strategic plans that cover community and economic development. Once new plans are drafted, the RESJ Plan will be updated to align with them.	This RESJ Plan supports the goals in these plans.
Localising NSW 2021 – Far West NSW	Education, skills and jobs priority actions of NSW 2021 are aligned with state and federally agreed goals outlined in the RESJ Plan.	The top priorities for Far West NSW align with this RESJ Plan.
Two Ways Together – NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan	The RESJ Plan supports the overall objectives of the Two Ways Together Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop committed partnerships between Aboriginal people and government • improve the social, economic and cultural and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people in NSW. 	The RESJ Plan supports the objectives of the Two Ways Together Plan.

Plan or strategy	Impact on RESJ Plan	How it can be used/linked/expanded
Wilcannia Local Implementation Plan	RESJ Plan to complement the formal local implementation plan negotiated between Wilcannia Aboriginal community and the state and federal governments.	This RESJ Plan supports the identified priorities of the Wilcannia Aboriginal community.
Murdi Paaki Regional Partnership Agreement (between federal and state governments and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly)	RESJ Plan to complement the Murdi Paaki Regional Partnership Agreement negotiated between federal and state governments and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly.	This RESJ Plan supports these goals.
Far West Aboriginal Child Development and Well-Being Management Group strategic framework document to improve child development and wellbeing for Aboriginal children in the Far West	The RESJ Plan supports the document's goals and strategies to improve the health, education and welfare of children in Far West NSW.	This RESJ Plan supports the goals and shared priorities of the Far West Aboriginal Child Development and Well-Being Management Group and the strategic framework document.
National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery	One of the 29 priority remote Indigenous communities that are targeted for improved government service delivery under this Agreement fall into the Far West NSW region, i.e. Wilcannia.	This RESJ Plan supports the objectives of governments to improve access and quality of service and better coordination of services to these remote Indigenous communities.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Term
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEDI	Australian Early Development Index
BH UDRH	Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health
DEC	Department of Education and Communities (NSW)
DES	Disability Employment Service
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
HCAP	Health Career Academy Program
IEP	Indigenous Employment Program
IYMP	Indigenous Youth Mobility Program
JSA	Job Services Australia
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
RESJ	Regional Education, Skills and Jobs
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered training organisation
SbATs	School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships
WELL	Workplace English Language and Literacy