

Title	HUON VALLEY WORKFORCE PLANNING STUDY
Agenda Number	15.011/20*
Strategic Plan Reference	5
File Reference	07/28
Author	Manager Economic Development
Responsible Officer	Manager Economic Development
Reporting Brief	The Acting Director Legal and Governance Services presenting a report from the Manager Economic Development on the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study
Attachments	A. Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study

Background

1. The Huon Valley continues to see population growth resulting in industry growth and increasing demands on services. This increasing growth and demand on services places a strain on the available workforce and requires skilled employees.
2. Similar to studies conducted elsewhere, Council committed funding from the 2019-20 budget to undertake a workforce planning study to identify issues impacting upon the workforce within the municipal area, and to identify and develop strategies to address gaps in workforce planning and development.
3. The overall goal of the project was to develop a better understanding regarding workforce planning and development opportunities relevant to the Huon Valley, which enables and supports current and projected growth opportunities across the region's primary and growth sectors.
4. The project was conducted over several months, concluding in July 2020. The final report is tabled as part of this Report seeking Council's endorsement for public release.

Council Policy

5. The Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2025 and Annual Plan 2019-21 supports the Workforce Planning Study.
6. Additionally, the Council's Economic Development Strategy recognises the following key strategies that relate to workforce planning matters in the Huon Valley:

- Direction 3O** *Encourage employers within the Huon Valley to implement skill development programs within their workforces by offering:*
- *Apprenticeships*
 - *Traineeships*
 - *And other training opportunities*
- Direction 5D** *Continue to lobby and advocate the State and Commonwealth Governments for improvements and commitment to ensuring suitably practical educational opportunities are available in the Huon Valley.*
- Direction 5E** *Investigate opportunities for establishing a Huon Valley focused training strategy in conjunction with key stakeholders such as local businesses, Huon LINC, Huon Valley Trade Training Centre, Tas TAFE, University of Tasmania and local district high schools.*
- Direction 5F** *Continue to encourage a range of adult literacy programs to be provided to the community.*
- Direction 5G** *Retain regular communication and dissemination of training opportunities between local training providers and industry.*
- Direction 5H** *Encourage employees to utilise and support the opportunities offered through local training institutions such as the Huon Valley Trade Training Centre.*

Legislative Requirements

7. There are no legislative requirements.

Risk Implications

8. The Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study comes at a critical time for the Huon Valley. In particular, the Study helps to understand the current (and predicted) skilled labour and workforce gaps that are (and are likely to) impact upon local businesses both now and in the future. Understanding these impacts will help to identify and implement strategies and initiatives that can be used to address and minimise their impacts, whilst also encouraging and enabling workforce participation in the area.
9. The Study has largely been conducted over a most uncertain period – during the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Given the impacts that this unprecedented event has had on communities globally, these too had to be considered in the context of the Huon Valley's economic situation through this Study.

10. Focusing on the region's key growth industries (in both the primary and non-primary sectors) has ensured the Study remains relevant and practical, and directly beneficial to Huon Valley businesses.

Engagement

11. To support and oversee the Study throughout its duration, a Workforce Planning Steering Committee was convened bringing together representatives from the Huon Valley Council, the University of Tasmania, the Huon Valley Trade Training Centre and Skills Tasmania. Meetings were held with the Committee at key project milestone points.
12. Supporting the Steering Committee, a smaller Working Group consisting of Council's Director Community Services, Manager Economic Development and the University of Tasmania's Associate Director, Industry Engagement and Short Course Unit Manager was also engaged. The Working Group met frequently, and provided the Project consultants, KPMG with direct advice and feedback to enable the successful completion of each milestone.
13. Given the nature of the Study, the engagement conducted focused on skills, education and training agencies and institutions, as well as employment intermediaries and apprenticeship providers. Furthermore, industry sectors that are prominent in the region and those identified as strategic growth industries in both the primary and non-primary sectors, were also included. Many of these industries already had their own sector workforce development plans, and these were also reviewed as part of the Study.
14. The range of stakeholders included growth industries such as health and aged care, disability support, building and construction, tourism and hospitality, and manufacturing and processing. Further engagement also occurred with those representatives of key primary growth industries including fruit and vegetables, wine, salmon and seafood, and forestry.
15. The engagement period coincided with the height of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in modification to the way in which consultation was undertaken. It was not possible to hold any workshop style conversations which had been part of the original Stakeholder Engagement Plan. All conversations took place via teleconference and/or phone calls and took a lot longer to complete due to limited availability and accessibility of those identified to participate. These changes limited the scope of feedback to purely individual discussions compared with what could have been obtained via broader group or sectoral conversations.
16. The project timeline and final report presentation was also extended allowing additional time to conduct the stakeholder engagement.

Human Resource and Financial Implications

17. The Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study was managed by Council's Economic Development Unit with appropriate human and financial resources committed under the 2019/20 budget allocations.

Discussion

18. The Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study model was based upon work previously conducted for and on behalf of the South East Regional Development Association (SERDA), and Southern Central Sub-region of Councils (SCS) industry groups in 2016-17.
19. In accordance with Council's procurement process consulting group, KPMG was engaged to undertake the Study. KPMG had previous involvement in the other studies mentioned, and subsequently had an appreciation for what would be required and accepted by Skills Tasmania and other stakeholders in relation to the desired outcomes relevant to the Study.
20. Generically based upon the *Standing Council for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE)* model, the Study sought answers to the first two of a three step process:

Step 1: Regional Workforce Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the region's current workforce capability and capacity?• What workforce capability and capacity is required to meet the future needs of the region?
Step 2: Regional Workforce Development Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What workforce development activities are needed to address the workforce capability and capacity gap?
Step 3: Regional Workforce Development Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation initiatives that aim to better meet workforce development needs by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing attraction and retention of skilled labour• Increasing participation of local people• Increasing qualifications and skills

21. The Study concluded the following key points:

- The Huon Valley has a sound educational foundation in terms of facilities and the outcomes being achieved.
- The Huon Valley has in place a range of providers and programs that aim to link job seekers with employers, but not all are working well, and so creating a need for something more.
- The Huon Valley has seen favourable trends on many key socio-economic indicators – population growth, production and housing.
- Jobs have grown in the expanding sectors of accommodation and food services, agriculture and aquaculture, along with business/administration, healthcare and social services.
- Jobs growth is expected to continue in those key sectors over the next five years and beyond, all else being equal, which could put existing education, training and support systems under pressure.
- Skills gaps in the Huon Valley now will require some adjustments to be made to existing education and training systems and models to meet the needs of industry going forward.

22. The Report details a series of recommendations in response to its key findings and identified opportunities. These recommendations are broken down against their relevant stakeholder groups in terms of responsibility – ‘Council and Skills Tasmania’, ‘Educators and Trainers’, and ‘Job Facilitators and Industry’.

23. The Report recommendations aim to meet future workforce capacity and capability requirements, and support and improve overall workforce participation and development in the Huon Valley.

24. Recommendations are outlined as follows:

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
Council and Skills Tasmania	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an overarching governance arrangement to take carriage of considering the findings, issues, opportunities and recommendations set out in this Study. 2. Council to continue to pursue funding for a dedicated resource to connect job seekers with employers and other employment facilitators, drawing on the lessons of the role now being undertaken for the SERDA group. 3. Rejuvenate the Huon Valley Service Providers Network as a structured forum to ensure strengthened connections between the sectors – education, training, job facilitation and employers groups.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Consider leading and/or supporting specific local initiatives such as industry events, jobs fairs, school and Trade Training Centre showcase events to amplify the linkages between education and employment and the job opportunities and skill needs in the Huon Valley. 5. Continue to amplify Council's vision to strengthen local appropriately skilled employment as part of its broader Economic Development Strategy. 6. Develop an 'open for business' mindset in the consideration of developments that will stimulate growth and jobs in the region, while balancing environmental and social responsibilities. 7. Continue to maintain and invest in local infrastructure and amenity that aims to make the Huon Valley an attractive place to visit, live and work within, in order to maximise expenditure in the region. 8. Promote and expand Skills Tasmania's targeted industry and employment programs in the region. 9. Develop specific awareness of the COVID-19 related skills and employment initiatives and work with other stakeholders to promulgate those through the Huon Valley regional networks. 10. Develop an appreciation and monitor the evolution of Industry 4.0 and the funding and incentives available that could impact on, and support the transformation of jobs, skills needs and industries in the Huon Valley.
Educators and Trainers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to strengthen the profile of the Trade Training Centre as a significant community asset, through initiatives such as, but not limited to, broader community engagement, some independence from the Huonville High School in terms of website presence and autonomy. 2. Look to strengthen the prominence of Tasmania's leading post-secondary institutions – UTAS and TasTAFE – in the Huon Valley, amplifying and making plain, the pathways from high school through further education and training to jobs in the Huon Valley region and beyond. 3. Increase the profile and takeup of Australian School Based Apprenticeships as a legitimate pathway for students to gain hands-on work

	<p>experience while remaining engaged with school through to Year 12.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Continue to work on programs that develop core employability skills such as foundational literacy/numeracy, personal presentation, punctuality, customer service, client care. 5. Continue to promote the role and services being provided by the Libraries in the region, in areas that support literacy development, preparation for work and social engagement for longer term unemployed workers.
Job Facilitators and Industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the Department of Education and the high schools in the region to promote and implement Australian School Based Apprenticeships as an accepted pathway for students in years 9 to 12. 2. Promote and refine as required, other traineeships and work experience initiatives to allow students to get a 'taste' of careers at an early age and develop on the job skills in parallel to completing their studies at school through to year 12. 3. Raise the profile of industry employment hubs, such as those in place for the aged care and fisheries industries. 4. Embrace the possibility of additional resources, along the lines of that now in place at SERDA, to provide improved capability to match job seekers and employers in the region. 5. Participate enthusiastically in any Council and/or Government led initiatives in the region that aim to stimulate awareness and interest in jobs and careers in the Huon Valley.

25. With respect to the recommendations most relevant to Council, these are consistent with those previously identified within a variety of Council's strategic documents including the Council's *Strategic Plan*, and *Economic Development and Health and Wellbeing Strategies*.
26. A number of initiatives are already in progress, which through the endorsement of this Report, will enable the continuation of these activities. Examples include ongoing dialogue with the Huon Valley Service Providers Network to rejuvenate the Network, progressing the University of Tasmania's (UTAS) Key Influencers Project – Parents Matter program, progressing the Huon Valley Brand Marketing Strategy to support an 'open for business' approach when considering developments that will stimulate

growth and jobs in the region, and to promote the region as an attractive place to visit, live and work within. Council has also been active in seeking funding to support the appointment of an employment facilitator as a dedicated resource to connect job seekers with employers and employment intermediaries. Unfortunately to date, funding bids in this regard have been unsuccessful, however conversations are ongoing and suitable funding avenues continue to be explored.

27. A copy of the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study is included in the Attachments to the Report.
28. Upon endorsement of the Report by Council, the Report will be released for public information.

Conclusion and Recommendation

29. The Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study provides a range of issues and opportunities that have been drawn from expertise, best practice, consultation with industry and relevant stakeholders, and in consideration of the most current and valid economic data and information that is available.
30. While the recommendations are broad and varied, the Report clearly outlines responsibilities and key actions for each of the relevant stakeholder groups who will play a vital role in delivering the desired outcomes recognised through the Study.
31. It is therefore recommended that the Council endorse the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study.

15.011/20*

RESOLVED

CR NEWELL

CR GIBSON

That:

- a) **The report on the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study be received and noted.**
- b) **A copy of the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study be placed on the Council's website and copies be made available for inspection at and free of charge from Council's Customer Service Centre.**
- c) **Council endorses to continue to progress the recommendations entailed within the Study as budget and external funding opportunities become available.**
- d) **A media release be prepared to promote the release of the Study, and copies be distributed to all participating stakeholders and relevant interested parties.**

Councillor Campbell left the meeting due to technical issues at 7.48pm

Councillors Enders, Doyle, Newell, Gibson, Wilson, Prince, Lovell and O'May voted for the motion and no Councillors voted against the motion.