

<b>Title</b>	<b>HUON VALLEY JOBS HUB</b>
<b>Agenda Number</b>	15.027/21*
<b>Strategic Plan Reference</b>	5
<b>File Reference</b>	07/67
<b>Author</b>	Manager Economic Development and Strategy
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Economic Development and Strategy
<b>Reporting Brief</b>	The Director Legal and Governance Services presenting a report from the Manager Economic Development and Strategy on the Huon Valley Jobs Hub
<b>Attachments</b>	A. Governance Structure Options Paper B. Huon Valley Jobs Hub Project and Business Plan

## Background

1. As part of its 2019-20 budget, the Council committed funding to undertake a workforce planning study to identify issues impacting upon the workforce in the municipal area, and to identify and develop strategies to address gaps in workforce planning and development.
2. The overall goal of the project was to develop a better understanding regarding workforce planning and development opportunities relevant to the Huon Valley enabling and supporting the current and projected growth opportunities across the region's primary and growth sectors.
3. Completed in July 2020, the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study identified 25 recommendations, of which several are aimed at meeting future workforce capacity and capability requirements and supporting and improving workforce participation and development overall across the Huon Valley. A copy of the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study is available [here](#).
4. Through the endorsement of this Study, Council provided commitment to pursue funding opportunities that would result in securing a dedicated resource to facilitate the connection of job seekers with employers and other employment facilitators. Work has since continued in pursuit of relevant funding opportunities.
5. In 2021, the Tasmanian Government announced a range of initiatives and funding to help Tasmanians into jobs through the *Delivering Local Jobs for Local People* agenda. These actions were in response to key recommendations 21-25 in the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee (PESRAC) report.

6. As part of its commitments made through the 2021 state election, the Government committed to establishing a network of local jobs hubs supported by a central point of contact within Government through the creation of Jobs Tasmania.
7. Jobs Tasmania has been formed to provide centralised support across all existing and newly established hubs statewide. The objectives of Jobs Tasmania are to:
  - Increase local employment outcomes
  - Increase workforce participation
  - Increase engagement with work and training
8. Jobs Tasmania is to provide backbone and central support to the Network, including the following:
  - Data
  - Linkages across and between other Hubs, service providers, industry, job actives and intermediaries
  - Evaluation
  - Communication support
  - Centralised Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system
  - Facilitation of the Jobs Hub Network – ‘Community of Practice’
9. The Jobs Tasmania Network will encompass both existing and establishment of new Hubs. Most of those Hubs focus on regional/rural locations and operate across local government boundaries.
10. The Government is committed to the establishment of a local jobs hub for the Huon Valley, with a physical presence being in Huonville. The local Hub will have responsibility for servicing the Huon Valley in its entirety, as well as the Channel and Bruny Island regions of Kingborough.
11. The Huon Valley now has a unique opportunity to utilise significant state government funding to ensure that the Huon Valley labour pool meets the needs of Huon Valley employers. The Tasmanian Government has indicated its strong desire to direct the responsibility for the establishment of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub to the Council (including the associated funding) for three years.
12. As a new Jobs Hub operating under the new Jobs Tasmania model, Council has the opportunity to take an innovative approach to the governance model for the Hub. Being Council led also provides the opportunity to ensure the Hub is setup with both longevity and sustainability in mind both now and into the future.
13. An allocation of \$1.625 million is available over three years to provide a localised, flexible approach to delivering employment services to the local community. It can also support industry to plan for future workforce demand and address workforce shortages.

14. The purpose of this Report is to seek Council's decision with respect to:
- Entering a Grant Deed with the State Government for the establishment of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub; and
  - Endorsement of an operating model for the establishment of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub.

### **Council Policy**

15. The Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2025 and Annual Plan 2020-21 supports both the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study, and subsequently the proposal to establish the Huon Valley Jobs Hub.
16. Additionally, the Huon Valley 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.*

17. The Huon Valley Health and Wellbeing Strategy also acknowledges the need for supporting and advocating for opportunities for the community, no matter what stage of life or level of learning value, to engage with and participate in lifelong learning.
18. The Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study was endorsed by Council in 2020, identifying a number of recommendations relevant to the notion of a local jobs hub. Through the approval of the Study and its recommendations, Council committed to continuing to pursue funding opportunities 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 South-East Regional Development Association (SERDA) group. This recommendation directly aligns with the intention of the newly formed Jobs Tasmania approach, and the State Government's interest in supporting the establishment of a jobs hub in Huonville.

### **Legislative Requirements**

19. There are no legislative requirements for Council to accept responsibility for establishment of the jobs hub on behalf of the Government.
20. Under the *Local Government Act 1993* there are several governance structure options available for Council's consideration – these being:
  - a. Council Committee
  - b. Special Committee of Council
  - c. Controlling Authority
  - d. Single or Joint Authorities
21. A copy of the Governance Structure Options Paper which considers possible governance models is included as Attachment A to this Report.
22. Based on the Governance Structure Options Paper, it is recommended that Council consider the establishment of a single authority under section 30 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

### **Risk Implications**

23. There are risks associated with Council's decision about whether to agree to accept the funding opportunity extended by the Tasmanian Government. The Government has identified Huon Valley Council as their preferred lead agency in taking charge with the establishment of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub. This has largely been attributed to Council's eagerness and interest in this topic – led by the work completed through the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study and its associated recommendations.

24. The announcement through the 2021 State election and subsequent funding commitment, has made public their intentions to establish a hub in Huonville. Whilst that announcement did not nominate that Council would be the responsible partner for the Hub's establishment, there are high expectations from within Government that this responsibility be placed with Council. Therefore, reputationally there are risks for Council if the decision is made to not progress this opportunity.
25. A total of \$1.625 million in Tasmanian Government funding has been offered to support the establishment of the Huonville Hub over a three-year period. The funding will be tied to a grant deed outlining key milestones that are aligned with Jobs Tasmania's overarching objectives. If Council agrees to undertake this responsibility, it is imperative that an appropriate governance structure is established from the beginning, to not only minimise any operational / administrative risk on Council, but also to manage expectations with the community in so far as the three-year commitment.
26. The single authority structure mentioned in the previous section allows for specific rules to be set, including the nomination of the period in which the structure would be in place for – the three years that the funding is available only. The rules can also provide further assurances for Council to help manage public expectations beyond the life of the funding period. The importance of succession planning is recognised to provide for a transition opportunity away from it being a Council-led and facilitated initiative, to something that is independent. The structure needs to be flexible if after the three years if further funding is made available by the Government.
27. The Tasmanian Government's policy agenda commits to the establishment of Jobs Tasmania and the network providing a level of assurance that any future commitment to support the delivery of the local service will be forthcoming. However, Council's governance arrangement will play an important role in providing avenues to access a broad range of funding sources through state or federal programs, or the not-for-profit sector that will allow the service(s) to carry on beyond the initial establishment.
28. The purpose of the Hub is to act as a neutral broker to support job seekers into employment pathways and provides a conduit for local employers seeking staff to access local job seekers. This activity is not in competition with other service providers as the Hub model requires partnerships and collaboration with those providers to achieve its purpose.
29. If Council agrees to progress this opportunity, additional risks regarding the establishment and operation of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub. These risks will be addressed within the Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan developed by the Regional Jobs Hub Board.

## Engagement

30. The Workforce Planning Study was completed in 2020 following engagement with a range of stakeholders including 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.
31. Since the completion of that work, several initiatives have been progressed allowing for further engagement to occur and understanding gained with respect to local needs and gaps in the services currently available. Such initiatives have included:
  - The Huon Valley Parents Matter initiative led by Council in conjunction with the University of Tasmania (UTAS).
  - Re-establishment of the Huon Valley Service Providers Network.
  - Collaboration with the Geeveston Community Centre (and its Get Picking Seasonal Worker program), UTAS, Migrant Resource Centre (MRC), Fruit Growers Tasmania (FGT) and Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST) to support and encourage locals to take up seasonal work opportunities for the 2020/21 season, and the delivery of seasonal worker transport scheme.
32. Following the announcement at the 2021 State election, Council Officers have undertaken further engagement with representatives from the newly formed Jobs Tasmania unit within the Department of State Growth to understand the jobs hub model and the role of the network. Relationships have been formed with representatives within Jobs Tasmania and has led to the receipt of a draft grant deed and Terms of Reference to help inform this Report, and the subsequent operating model for the local hub.
33. Council Officers have actively participated in two Community of Practice sessions facilitated by Jobs Tasmania. These opportunities have enabled relationships to be forged with key personnel across Government agencies and within the Jobs Tasmania Network, and also provided educational understanding with regard to stakeholder policies, programs and priorities.
34. Through this same opportunity Council Officers have had the advantage of engaging with other local hubs, in particular representatives from SERDA (Sorell), Southcentral Subregion (SCS) (Brighton) and the Glenorchy Jobs Hub. These opportunities have been particularly insightful as each have started using different funding sources and operate under alternative governance structures. Their approaches are vastly different, whilst offering services that are relevant to their local region's specific needs and opportunities.

35. Currently none of the existing Hubs in the Network operate within the new framework prescribed by Jobs Tasmania, however it is understood that those Hubs will be moving across to this framework as their current funding streams expire. The Huon Valley Jobs Hub is therefore in a unique position to be a true leader in establishing a robust and appropriate governance structure and suitable operating model for those Hubs being delivered through local government. Council can learn from existing Hubs to take advantage of learnings to do things differently, setting an example for how those involving Councils can be delivered effectively and efficiently.
36. A workshop was conducted with Councillors in September to specifically discuss the Jobs Hub opportunity. Background to the concept was outlined and discussed, and agreement made that further advice and information would be provided through this Report to Council.
37. Preliminary discussions have also taken place with representatives from Kingborough Council to ascertain their level of support and interest in this initiative. Those conversations have been fruitful thus far, with informal commitment provided to working collaboratively with Council in establishing this service. It has also been acknowledged and agreed that as part of the establishment work, a similar study to that of the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study would need to be completed for the Kingborough municipal area. The Study would provide the necessary detail and knowledge with regard to the local workforce participation and employment base particularly of the Channel and Bruny Island areas, and as an overarching piece, how the two compare so to identify themes for focus and priority.
38. Should Council's decision from this Report be favourable to its involvement in establishing a local jobs hub, it is acknowledged that further engagement will occur with a range of external stakeholders from the Huon Valley and Kingborough region, including:
- Local job actives, intermediaries, and providers.
  - Local businesses and industry representatives.
  - Huon Valley Trade Training Centre.
  - Community service providers.
  - Local secondary schools and training providers.
39. A Regional Jobs Hub Board will have management oversight (as the single authority) of the Hub, as well as provide ongoing engagement opportunities through member representation across a broad mix of stakeholders. Such linkages will be necessary to keep informed of local opportunities, make introductions for staff working out of the Hub, and to help inform service delivery and support. In addition to the Board, it is proposed that a Jobs Hub Reference Group be established to have an ongoing supporting role providing a flexible, broad means of engagement. The Group would provide a network through which information and knowledge sharing can occur, as well as making connections with and across service providers, job seekers and business contacts.

40. Engagement associated with this decision will be undertaken at Inform Level by inclusion within the Council meeting Minutes that will be available to the public on the Council's website and at the Customer Service Centre.

### **Human Resource and Financial Implications**

41. Since the endorsement of the Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study, Council Officers have remained active in pursuing avenues and opportunities through which to deliver outcomes associated with the Study's recommendations.
42. Attempts to attract grant funding for a dedicated resource to connect job seekers with employers and other employment facilitators have been made, however each has been unsuccessful. The new Tasmanian Government policy setting through Job Tasmania, means that the current funding commitment is the only form of funding available to deliver such opportunities.
43. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$1.625 million over three years for the establishment of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub. It is their intention to provide that funding to the Council to take the lead responsibility for undertaking this work. The funding will be provided to Council in instalments in accordance with a Deed and upon satisfaction of key milestones and deliverables over that period.
44. Consistent with Council's endorsed Huon Valley Workforce Planning Study, Council has extended considerable in-kind support (through the roles of the Manager Economic Development and Strategy, and Director Community Services) to progress this opportunity available on behalf of Council. Such work has involved extensive consultation and liaison with Jobs Tasmania representatives, engagement with existing Jobs Hub facilitators, and other network stakeholders to gain as much information and guidance in understanding the process and opportunity in detail.
45. Council Officers have also commenced work on the required supporting strategic documents to initiate Council entering a grant deed with the Tasmanian Government to release the available funding.
46. On signing the Grant Deed, Council is required to provide a high-level project plan that clearly articulates how the Jobs Hub will be designed and implemented to meet the objectives and outcomes of the jobs hub, including an appropriately detailed risk management plan, and a budget that accounts for all proposed expenditure. Council Officers have also started to prepare a detailed operational plan describing the work and activities that will deliver the agreed project outcomes. The start of this work has commenced and will form part of the Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan necessary for initiating the Grant Deed.
47. The work undertaken to date has been completed by Council Officers within current budget allocations and is attributed as in-kind support for the establishment of the Hub.



48. The Grant Deed will support these functions through providing funding for the following activities:
- The establishment of, and provision of secretariat service to a Regional Jobs Hub Board to oversight delivery and coordination of activity in the respective region that support the objective to increase employment, workforce participation or reengagement with formal education and training.
  - Active participation and input into the Jobs Tasmania convened Regional Jobs Network Community of Practice.
  - Active participation and input into the Jobs Tasmania Evaluation Project.
  - Delivery of project outcomes and reporting requirements as specified by the Deed.
49. All costs associated with the establishment and operation of the Jobs Hub over the three years, will be cost attributed back to the State's funding. Such costs include appropriate insurance coverage, audits, staffing costs, materials and resources, lease/rental, Information Communication Technology, equipment and services, operational expenditure, and communication/marketing expenses.
50. Under a single authority governance structure, all employees engaged to deliver the service will be employed by the Authority, and not Huon Valley Council. This will ensure clear delineation between the state funded program and Council's core service delivery, avoiding any confusion or conflict with Council's staffing portfolio and operational budget.

## **Discussion**

51. The Huon Valley community stand to significantly benefit through the establishment of a local jobs hub. Council is in an advantageous position given that the Huonville hub will be the first to be established under the new Jobs Tasmania model and therefore operate within the terms of the new structure.
52. With this in mind, Council has the unique opportunity to be innovative in its approach, and to establish the Hub with the specific purpose of not only meeting the objectives of Jobs Tasmania, but to also lead by example in terms of effective and appropriate governance arrangements that other existing Hubs are now having to retrofit their models to be consistent with the new approach.
53. Through the experiences of similar services in our regions, the local Hub will provide a localised, flexible approach to delivering employment services to the local community. It is designed to link local people with local jobs through providing job matching, coaching and referral services and can work with job seekers to address barriers to work, including skills and transport.

54. The Jobs Hub will act as a neutral broker to support job seekers into employment pathways and provides a conduit for local employers seeking staff to access local job seekers. It can also support industry to plan for future workforce demand and address workforce shortages.
55. The Hub is required to be governed by a Regional Jobs Hub Board which will hold responsibility overseeing the delivery and coordination of activities within the region that support the broader objectives of Jobs Tasmania. The role of the Board will be to:
- Represent the views of the employers, job seekers, different population groups within the community (i.e. Low SES, migrants, women, Aboriginal), business and government services on barriers to employment, workforce participation and education and training, and actions to address these.
  - Support the strategic direction, coordination and oversight of stakeholders and activity consistent with the objectives.
  - Be accountable for delivery and reporting on programs Jobs Tasmania funds through the Board.
  - Coordinate communications to the community on employment and training opportunities.
  - Provide advice to Jobs Tasmania and other State and Federal Government agencies on policies and programs aligned to the objectives.
56. Membership of the Regional Jobs Hub Board will be required to include a mix of individuals who can represent views of:
- Local employers and industry.
  - Community sector service providers.
  - Different population cohorts in the regions eg. Aboriginal, migrant, youth etc.
  - The different regions within the Board's geographical coverage.
  - The local education and training sector.
57. In support of the Board, it is also proposed to establish a Jobs Hub Reference Group whose role will be to network, connect, engage and share information across the sector, with job seekers, the Hub and each other. The Reference Group is envisaged to be an informal group, who will predominantly be a 'brains trust' of information and connections that will prove useful for the ongoing operation of the Hub. Membership is proposed to be open, with no capped numbers – thus ensuring accessibility and opportunity for the many stakeholders and representatives with a role to play in supporting the service delivery and vital information sharing of local services, opportunities and on ground connections.
58. Scoping work has commenced in identifying the major stakeholders across the service area, and what role and support they can provide to the delivery of functions and activity through the Hub.

59. Should Council agree to fulfil this role, work will continue to finalise the development of the following plans to initiate the grant deed and release subsequent payments:

a) Strategic Plan

A high-level project plan that clearly articulates how the Jobs Hub will be designed and implemented to meet the objectives and outcomes of Jobs Tasmania, and will include an appropriately detailed risk management plan, and a budget that accounts for all proposed expenditure.

The Project and Business Plan will form a substantial part of the Strategic Plan.

b) Implementation Plan

A detailed operational plan describing the work and activities that will deliver the agreed project outcomes. Jointly, Council and Jobs Tasmania will work to determine what is reasonably achievable in terms of the quantifiable outputs and targets for each reporting period. The Evaluation Program will inform the design of these metrics.

60. Entering a Grant Deed with the Tasmanian Government will commit the Council to facilitating the delivery of a regional jobs hub to service the job seekers and business in the Huon Valley, Channel and Bruny Island region for the purpose of:

a) Increasing the level of employment for residents of the region.

b) Increasing the labour force participation rate for residents of the region.

c) Increasing the level of engagement in formal education and training for residents of the region.

d) Supporting the residents of the region to be on pathway to (a), (b) or (c).

61. The endorsement of the recommendations will allow work to progress to the next stage of establishing the Huon Valley Jobs Hub. A further Council report will come back to Council to formalise the establishment of the single authority.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

62. Council has been advocating for opportunities to attract a dedicated resource to connect job seekers with employers and other employment facilitators, drawing on the experiences and lessons from others already providing similar services such as SERDA and SCS in Sorell and Brighton.

63. Council's own Workforce Planning Study has identified and recommended that this type of service will be able to help extend and collaborate across the existing services, programs and support available within the region, whilst enhancing those relationships and improving access to training and opportunities that would otherwise be limited.

64. An allocation of \$1.625 million is available to ascertain future employment trends and skill shortages and facilitate the delivery of relevant training to maximise the potential for future occupations to be filled by local workers.

65. The Huon Valley now has a unique opportunity to utilise significant Tasmanian Government funding to ensure that the Huon Valley labour pool meets the needs of Huon Valley employers.
66. It will be recommended that Council act as the lead agency for the Huon Valley Jobs Hub in accepting the grant funding from the Tasmanian Government and establishing a single authority to establish the Hub.
67. As discussed in paragraph 26. above it is considered important that the Council recognises that, in accepting the grant, there may be an expectation on Council to continue the Hub following the three year funding period which would need to be ratepayer funded. The recommendation is presented on the basis that a transition from a Council single authority to an independent body will be considered in the third year of the Authority. Should this transition not occur and funding has ceased then the single authority would be for a term of three years only. In the event further funding is made available from the Government beyond the three year period then there needs to be some flexibility for the single authority to continue for the term of that funding. It will be recommended that this be recognised in the Draft Rules that will be brought back before Council for the establishment of the single authority.

**15.027/21\***  
**RESOLVED**

**CR CLARK**

**CR O'MAY**

**That:**

- a) **The report on the Huon Valley Jobs Hub be received and noted.**
- b) **Council act as the lead agency in the establishment of the Huon Valley Jobs Hub in accordance with the Huon Valley Jobs Hub Project and Business Plan included as Attachment B to this Report and through a single authority to be established under section 30 of the *Local Government Act 1993* to support the establishment of the Hub.**
- c) **The General Manager is authorised to negotiate and undertake all necessary actions to enter into and execute a Grant Deed with Jobs Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government, and to develop a proposal for a single authority for Council consideration with the term of the single authority for the three year grant funding availability with flexibility for a further term subject only to receipt of further grant funding or transition to an independent body from the Council.**

*Councillors Enders, Doyle, Newell, Gibson, Campbell, O'May and Clark voted for the motion and no Councillors voted against the motion.*