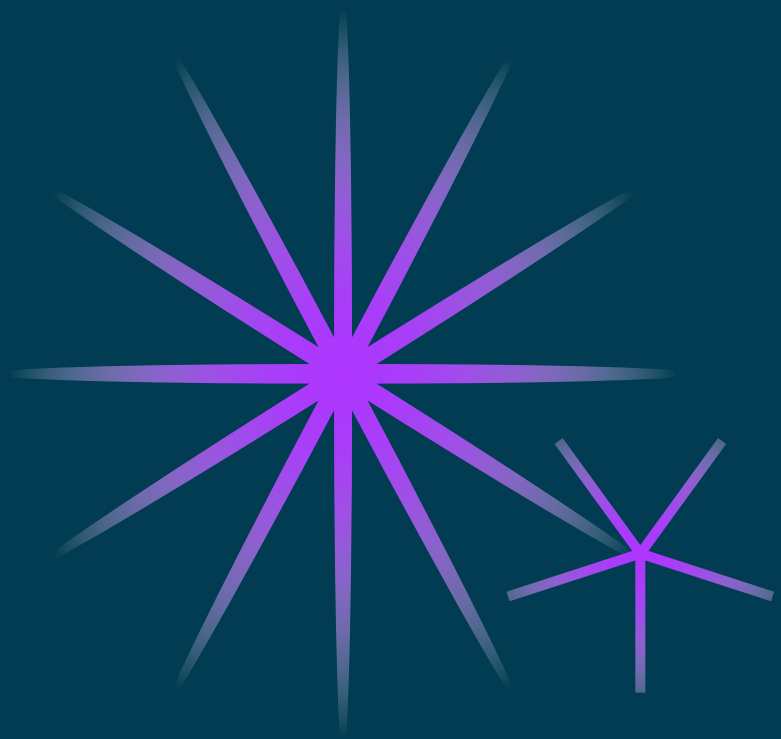
Shaping the future of employment services

Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs Network

Submission to DEWR 2026



West North West WORKING

NORTHERN EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS HUB BBAMZ

BEST Business & Employment Southeast Tasmania

SWN

SETN Southern Employment & Training Network

Jobs Hub GLENORCHY

Break O'Day Employment Connect.

Dorset Employment Connect.

The Regional Jobs Hub (RJH) Network is Tasmania's key regional workforce infrastructure.

Established in 2019, the Hubs connect employers, community members, training providers and community services to strengthen local employment, education and training outcomes.

Our mission is to provide meaningful and secure workforce outcomes for employers and jobseekers alike.

The Hubs:

Connect employers, jobseekers, training providers, and support services in one coordinated system.

Prevent long-term unemployment by engaging cohorts outside traditional services.

Have supported over 14,000 Tasmanians, with over 7000 job outcomes, 5000 training outcomes and engagement with over 9000 businesses.

Support regional industries by responding to skills shortages and business transitions.

Have been recognised nationally as a leading example of place-based employment infrastructure.



Introduction

The Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs Network welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the consultation on the future of Commonwealth employment services. Our submission provides advice on the design of future services, highlighting the essential complementary role of regional workforce gateways in delivering workforce solutions for individuals and employers in diverse labour markets.

In Tasmania, the Regional Jobs Hubs are a network of seven State-funded, place-based workforce services embedded across functional regional labour markets. They operate as local, trusted regional workforce gateways, providing voluntary and universal access for individuals and employers through workforce navigation, early intervention, employer engagement and locally coordinated solutions.

The Hubs were established in recognition that building and maintaining a vibrant, productive regional workforce requires local coordination, employer relationships and practical workforce navigation beyond what traditional employment services are designed to provide. The Hubs complement, rather than duplicate, Commonwealth employment services. Their role is to connect people, employers, education and training providers, community organisations and government services around regional workforce priorities, helping national services work more effectively in thin, dispersed and locally distinctive labour markets. They provide local labour market intelligence, identify practical barriers and opportunities, and help translate policy settings into pathways that make sense for people, employers and communities.

Practical work with small and medium enterprises is a key strength of the Hub model. Hubs assist local businesses to navigate workforce supports, connect with suitable candidates and resolve recruitment and retention issues through trusted local relationships.

While the Hubs collaborate with Commonwealth employment services to connect participants to local employment, education and training opportunities, their targeted work with individuals primarily focuses on people who are ineligible for, or not participating in, those services.

Design with a person-in-place lens

Current Commonwealth employment services are designed to provide nationally consistent service delivery to individual jobseekers, with little emphasis on how individuals' needs and opportunities are shaped by where they live. While aspiring to nationally consistent service provision, they do not provide equitable delivery across regions where service infrastructure is sparse, labour markets can be thin, and opportunities are limited.

A future Commonwealth employment services system should address this flaw by adopting a person-in-place lens. This approach ensures nationally consistent programs and practices attend to regional capability and infrastructure, recognising that employment outcomes are shaped not only

by individual skills and circumstances, but also by the local labour markets, services, relationships and practical conditions around people.

Designed through this lens, future Workforce Australia services should continue to perform and improve their core employment services role. This includes supporting eligible jobseekers into employment, providing placement and post-placement support, working with employers on suitable vacancies, and maintaining compliance with the social security system. These functions are important and should remain central to the national system.

Embed regional workforce gateways

Recommendation 1.0 Regional workforce gateways, including the Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, should be formally recognised in the design of Commonwealth employment services as essential complementary State workforce and community infrastructure that strengthens national services through local labour market intelligence, trusted networks and practical regional coordination.

There is a clear reform opportunity beyond refining business-as-usual practice. The future Commonwealth employment services system could improve how Workforce Australia services coordinate and integrate with regional and subregional workforce infrastructure, including Regional Jobs Hubs, to achieve better workforce solutions for individuals and employers, especially in regional contexts.

This regional workforce gateway function is broader than the core Workforce Australia service offer. Gateways such as the Hubs do not operate as a separate employment services system and do not replace Commonwealth-funded providers. Their value is in connecting and aligning employers, particularly SMEs and regional supply chains, service providers, education and training, industry, community services, local government and state workforce priorities so that national employment services work more effectively with people in place.

This model reflects a principle of subsidiarity where local intelligence, networks and relationships matter, and functions are performed or coordinated at the level closest to the people, employers and communities affected. In regional labour markets, organisations embedded in place are often best positioned to identify hidden vacancies, understand employer needs, map and align training pathways, recognise transport barriers and service gaps, track seasonal labour patterns and address the practical conditions that shape whether people can access and sustain work.

Gateway models are not new. There is a long history of innovative, State and philanthropically funded place-based regional gateway services, however, most report disconnection with Commonwealth employment services over

time.

The Commonwealth attempted to replicate a gateway model through the Local Jobs Program. While the program recognises the importance of local labour market coordination, it lacks the reach, capability, and long-term resourcing needed to become embedded as enduring workforce infrastructure within regional communities. Consequently, it has limited capacity to deliver sustained employment outcomes, particularly for SMEs. The program is not designed or funded to undertake the intensive relationship-building, coordination, technical, administrative and "whatever it takes" work needed to identify opportunities and align employers, training providers, and jobseekers. Nor is it equipped to systematically address workforce challenges across regions or at a statewide level.

Activate Commonwealth-State mechanisms for building and embedding regional coordination

Recommendation 2.0 The Commonwealth should establish a dedicated advisory body made up of state and local government representatives to inform the current reform process and ensure it is fit for purpose in local communities.

The Commonwealth is not well equipped to deliver deeply local coordination directly from the centre. It should instead incentivise, support and partner with the organisations and systems that already hold local relationships, including Regional Jobs Hubs, state governments, local government and community organisations.

Our submission therefore supports building a formal regional coordination layer into the design of the future Commonwealth employment services system. This should be done through partnerships with regional workforce gateways, including the Hubs, to create a stronger, more connected model that combines national and regional capability to deliver equitable servicing and better outcomes for individuals, employers and communities across regional Australia.

To support regional coordination, the Commonwealth should co-invest in regional workforce gateways, like Hubs, and set clear expectations that Commonwealth employment services work in partnership with them to better connect employment, training, employer engagement and support services across Commonwealth, state and local systems.

Such investment would not require the Commonwealth to take over the Hubs or alter the role of Workforce Australia providers. Rather, it would recognise the Commonwealth's interest in effective regional workforce infrastructure, given its contribution to improved employment outcomes, reduced federal welfare spending, and increased federal tax revenue through stronger workforce participation. It would also acknowledge the significant role states play in funding and supporting the training and

community service systems that help address barriers to employment.

Joint investment

Recommendation 3.0 The Commonwealth should jointly invest with the Tasmanian Government in Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and with state and territory governments in equivalent local workforce infrastructure across Australia through a federal funding agreement or similar partnership arrangement.

We understand that at Minister Rishworth's presentation to the Tasmanian community in Burnie on 16 July 2026, the Minister indicated the Commonwealth may face constitutional limitations in directly funding services such as Regional Jobs Hubs. The Hubs recognise these constraints. However, well established and commonly used mechanisms already exist through which the Commonwealth can invest in critical workforce infrastructure via partnership with state governments.

Well designed and funded regional coordination mechanisms are critical in the current social and economic context. Challenges including the transition to net zero, the growth of the care economy, regional population change, housing pressures and the impacts of artificial intelligence require more coordinated policy and service delivery across Commonwealth, state and local systems. Employment services reform should therefore be designed as part of a broader workforce and social support ecosystem, rather than solely as a Commonwealth-provider relationship.

Tasmania's Regional Jobs Hubs can support the reform

Recommendation 4.0 As an immediate next step, the Commonwealth should undertake dedicated consultation with Regional Jobs Hub leadership to draw on their experience and explore opportunities for stronger local integration within Workforce Australia.

Tasmania is well placed to help shape a more flexible, integrated and effective national employment service system. Through the Regional Jobs Hubs, Tasmania has developed practical experience in place-based workforce coordination that complements Commonwealth employment services and strengthens local employment, training and workforce outcomes.

The Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs can support the reform in three practical ways:

1 

Inform system design with local evidence.
Hubs can share labour market data, local intelligence and evidence from regional practice to help ensure the design, commissioning and implementation of Workforce Australia reflect real local conditions, employer needs and service gaps.

2 

Partner in regional integration.
Hubs can help the Commonwealth connect the future system with existing state networks, local services and place-based infrastructure. This would support more integrated and locally responsive implementation, while recognising Hubs as a regional coordination mechanism that Workforce Australia providers can connect with rather than replicate.

3 

Support targeted rollout and implementation.
Hubs can support targeted initiatives where delivery is best built through existing regional infrastructure. For example, the Hubs would welcome the opportunity to support the early rollout of Stream 3 services, enabling implementation to draw on Tasmania's evidence base, local relationships and practical regional experience.

The Regional Jobs Hubs look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth, the Tasmanian Government and local partners to support this reform. The objective should be a national employment services system that combines strong national stewardship with effective regional coordination, ensuring services are connected to the local relationships, intelligence and infrastructure needed to deliver better outcomes for individuals, employers and communities.

We have provided responses to DEWR specific consultation questions below.

Three service streams to respond to different needs

Quality initial assessments and triaging

What are the key factors that should place a person in online and brief intervention services versus targeted provider services versus intensive services?

Recommendation

5.1 Design a flexible, place-centred streaming model that allocates people to online, targeted or intensive services based primarily on their distance from the labour market, assessed using a person-in-place approach that combines structured evidence, professional judgement and local knowledge of jobs, training and supports.

5.2 Recognise and resource Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional workforce gateways as local intelligence partners that help validate how national assessment settings apply in each region.

Distance from the labour market should inform the intensity of response a person receives.

Taking a person-in-place lens, distance should be determined in two ways, by assessing:

1. individual skills, experience and personal circumstances
2. employment and training opportunities in place

This approach recognises that both individual and place (region and sub-region) characteristics shape the forms and intensity of support required by individuals to access opportunities to secure an employment outcome in diverse labour markets.

Available service infrastructure is critically important in this consideration. Opportunities include the local conditions (e.g., service access, transport and housing and employment, education and training networks) that support access to employment and training.

In Tasmania, this is where the Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs add value to Commonwealth employment service provision. As a regional workforce gateway, Hubs provide the complementary services and networks so critical for unlocking employment opportunities, including practical local intelligence and related networks about jobs, training access, employers, transport, services and community conditions.

Applied to streaming decisions in a future employment services system, the local knowledge provided by equivalent regional gateways in other jurisdictions can help ensure streaming decisions are not based solely on individual characteristics but also consider local labour market conditions. This includes whether the participant can realistically access work, training and supports in their region while identifying practical barriers to access.

What types of support should be offered under each of the service streams?

Recommendation 6.0 Provide a nationally consistent support offer across all streams, with clear minimum expectations for quality, access and progression, while requiring local tailoring through collaboration with regionally embedded community organisations and regional workforce gateways, including Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs. These partners can coordinate and connect the regional ecosystem so support in each stream connects people to real local opportunities.

All service streams should provide a nationally consistent support offer, with clear minimum expectations for quality, access and progression, while allowing service intensity and delivery to be tailored to regional labour market conditions and community contexts. Consistent with the evidence, this should include:

- *Online and brief intervention*: self-service tools, job matching, light-touch check-ins, digital career guidance and rapid referral pathways when needs escalate.
- *Targeted provider services*: personalised case management, career guidance, exploration and pathway planning, job search coaching, skills assessment, training course referrals aligned to employer /industry needs, employer brokerage and practical support such as transport or interview preparation, post-placement support.
- *Intensive services*: lower caseloads, career guidance, exploration and pathway planning, job search, employer connections and brokerage, whole-of-life wraparound support, coordinated referrals to health, housing and community services, specialist capability and in-work support after placement, foundational skills support, post-placement support for education, training and employment placements.
- All streams should include employment/employer connections, capabilities and skills building, culturally safe and inclusive practice, and clear pathways between streams.

The system should combine national consistency in rights, quality and accountability with local flexibility in delivery, partnerships and pathway design.

In this future system, Hubs or equivalent regional gateway services would have a distinct, recognised and funded role in helping providers connect each service stream to the regional ecosystem, including employers, schools, training providers, community services and place-based initiatives. This would ensure support is not only technically available but connected to real local opportunities.

Hubs would be particularly valuable where participants need support that sits between employment services, training, community support and employer engagement. Their role would be to coordinate and connect, not duplicate the work of providers.

What factors should be considered to support the development of a new, high-quality assessment and triaging process?

Recommendation

7.0 Design assessment and triage as a trust-building, trauma-informed and capabilities-based process that combines structured evidence with professional judgement and local validation through connection to regionally embedded providers, Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional workforce partners.

7.1 Ensure assessment decisions take account of current jobs, transport, training access, service gaps and community supports.

7.2 Include clear reassessment triggers and consent-based referral pathways so people can move to the right support as circumstances change.

Triage decisions must align individual aspirations with local conditions by adopting a capabilities-based, relational assessment approach that is locally validated, reflecting labour markets, service availability and referral pathways. It should also ensure those assessed as ineligible for Commonwealth services are referred to appropriate local supports so they do not fall through service gaps.

Local validation should sit alongside structured assessment, so national consistency is maintained while decisions remain grounded in local realities. Regional Jobs Hubs can support this by providing up-to-date intelligence of regional labour markets, referral pathways, training options, employer demand and service gaps. Hubs can also help providers understand which local supports are available and how people can be connected through warm referrals rather than generic referral lists.

What information should be collected during the assessment process to support better identification of barriers to employment and triaging to the right service?

Recommendation

8.0 Collect proportionate, consent-based information through a nationally consistent assessment framework that identifies strengths, barriers, goals and support needs, while also requiring local tailoring so assessment captures the regional context that shapes employment pathways.

8.1 Assessment should include local job demand, training options, transport, education and care (childcare), digital access and community services.

8.2 Use Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional workforce gateways as local intelligence partners so people are matched to the right support in a way that is fair, purposeful and grounded in the real opportunities and barriers in their community.

A national assessment process should collect enough information to identify strengths, barriers, work readiness, employment goals and the supports needed to move toward sustainable employment. From Hub experience, in Tasmania and regional Australia, assessment information needs to capture the local conditions that affect whether a participant can realistically access work or training.

This should include the participant's access to transport, digital connectivity, education and care (childcare), housing stability, training options, local job demand and relevant community services. Regional workforce gateways can help identify what local information matters in each region, because they understand the practical barriers and opportunities that shape employment pathways. With appropriate consent and privacy safeguards, providers should be able to use Hub intelligence to interpret assessment information in a way that is locally meaningful.

What factors or circumstances should result in a participant moving between service streams?

Recommendation

9.0 Enable movement between streams through transparent, participant-informed reassessment when needs, barriers, employment prospects or regional conditions change, including shifts in local job availability, employer demand, service capacity, seasonal work and new partnerships.

Recommendation

9.1 Reassessment triggers should be clear, timely and supported by local labour market intelligence from Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional workforce gateways so movement between streams is purposeful and fair.

A national service needs clear and transparent rules for movement between streams because people's circumstances, barriers and employment prospects change over time. However, those rules must also be responsive to local labour market and service conditions, including shifts in job availability, employer demand, seasonal work, transport, training access, service capacity and new partnerships.

People should not be parked in unsuitable services, over-serviced when lighter support is sufficient, or penalised when disengagement reflects unmet needs rather than unwillingness to participate. Regional Jobs Hubs can provide early signals when regional conditions change, such as a new employer demand, a training opportunity, a transport barrier, a seasonal recruitment cycle, business closures, or a service gap. This intelligence should inform reassessment and movement between streams.

Introducing an Employment Goal Plan

What elements will be important to capture in the Employment Goal Plan?

Recommendation

10.0 Establish the Employment Goal Plan as a co-produced, strengths-based roadmap jointly developed between the participant and provider.

10.1 Align the participant's goals, capabilities, aspirations and support needs with national service expectations and the opportunities available within their local community.

10.2 Include both participant actions and provider commitments, including warm referrals, employer brokerage, training pathway support, post-placement assistance and review points.

10.3 Incentivise providers to connect each participants' Employment Goal Plan with Regional Jobs Hubs, regional workforce priorities, local plans, employment and training pathways, community supports and relevant place-based partners to support sustainable participation and employment outcomes.

Realising employment goals requires attending to both person and place. The Employment Goal Plan should align the participant's goals, capabilities, aspirations and support needs with the real opportunities available in and beyond their local community.

At a minimum the plan should include participants':

- employment goals, aspirations and preferences
- strengths, capabilities, skills, and support need.

The plan should also specify agreed steps and actions, in relation to:

- skills development, education and training, work experience, employment opportunities, referrals.
- realistic milestones and time frames to progress towards goals, track progress and update the plan.

Importantly, the plan should outline the accountabilities of both the provider and the participant for plan development and implementation. It should record the actions the provider will do to support the participant, not only the activities expected of the participant.

Regional Jobs Hubs can support implementation and outcomes of Employment Goal Plans by helping connect participant goals to regional workforce priorities, local employer demand, training pathways, community

supports and place-based initiatives. This would help ensure the plan is not generic but is connected to practical opportunities in the participant's community.

How can the system encourage effective use of the Employment Goal Plan by participants and providers to ensure it is meaningful, timely and relevant?

Recommendation

11.0 Treat the Employment Goal Plan as a live, participant-owned working document that is regularly reviewed, linked to meaningful progress and supported by provider incentives to collaborate with Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional partners. This will help ensure actions remain relevant to local jobs, training availability, transport realities and community supports.

11.1 Structure the plan so that it includes both participant actions and provider commitments, supporting mutual accountability and ensuring it remains a practical pathway document rather than a compliance record.

A meaningful Employment Goal Plan needs to operate as a live, participant-owned working document that evolves as goals, skills and local opportunities change. To stay relevant, actions within the plan must be informed by real-time local labour market conditions, including job availability, training access, transport realities and community supports.

This requires providers to work with regional partners who hold this intelligence, including Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs. Without this connection, plans risk becoming static compliance tools rather than genuine progress roadmaps. Hubs can help providers keep Employment Goal Plans linked to real local pathways, employer needs, training opportunities and community supports.

A new approach to mutual obligations

How do we change the way that providers and participants engage with mutual obligations to focus on positive engagement that helps people move towards employment?

Recommendation

12.0 Administer mutual obligations as mutual accountability focused on participation, capability building and progress toward sustainable employment, applied consistently at the national level while allowing obligations and activities to be tailored to regional labour market conditions, local opportunities and the supports realistically available in each community.

12.1 Use the Employment Goal Plan as a tool to structure conversations around how the provider and participant are upholding their respective offers, with Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional workforce gateways helping to identify meaningful local activities, supports and pathways.

Reframe the administration of mutual obligations in practice as mutual accountability between the participant and the provider, with the Employment Goal Plan as the primary mechanism for embedding this in design and practice.

Embedding mutual accountability in the Employment Goal Plan ensures it operates as a shared offer that both parties are responsible for, shaped by the participant's capacity, aspirations, local opportunities and personal circumstances. The plan should clearly set out the supports the provider will deliver and be regularly revisited as goals evolve and progress is made, reinforcing that accountability applies to both sides.

Regional Jobs Hubs can support this shift by helping ensure activities are meaningful, practical locally realistic and connected to genuine pathways. Participants should not be obliged to complete activities that are disconnected from local jobs, training access, transport realities or available supports.

New approach to employer engagement

How can employment services best partner with industry and large employers?

Recommendation 13.0 Build stronger employer and industry partnerships by establishing formal partnerships with regionally embedded workforce organisations, Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, and industry partners that understand local workforce demand, recruitment cycles, skills gaps, and employment pathways. These partnerships should be used to strengthen employer engagement, improve job matching and workforce planning, and create a more coordinated, place-based employment system that delivers better outcomes for employers, jobseekers, and regional economies.

Under current employment services arrangements, employer engagement with industry and large employers can be constrained by time, capability, employer networks and incentives, and disconnected from person-facing staff who understand jobseekers and their needs. Engagement is often short term, and instrumental, focused on matching individual jobseekers to an immediate job opportunity rather than building the foundations for mutually beneficial and strategic approaches to workforce recruitment.

Evidence-informed employer and industry engagement is both strategic and practical, focused on supporting workforce recruitment and development needs over time. It is founded on trusted, long-term relationships with employers and industries. Trust is established by meeting practical needs of employers and doing whatever it takes to provide timely solutions to local, systemic barriers to recruitment. While this can be supported by digital job-matching platforms and access to real-time labour market intelligence, there is no substitute for practical and helpful relationships and networks.

Enduring, anchor gateway organisations in regions and communities are best placed to do this work. They invest in developing, embedding and co-ordinating the local knowledge networks and relationships so critical for achieving positive short, medium and long-term workforce outcomes.

In our view, this is beyond the scope, capability and capacity of current and future employment services. The future employment services system could achieve stronger employment outcomes with and for large employers and industry by linking to regional organisations who coordinate the employer, industry and education and training ecosystem. For industry and large employers, this also means connecting workforce planning, skills pipelines and coordinated recruitment pathways to the real supply, training and support infrastructure in each region.

Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs currently play this role. Hubs work as

regional connectors across employers, training providers, industry and community services. They can help translate industry demand into practical recruitment pathways and connect large employer opportunities to local jobseekers and training pipelines.

How can employment services best support small to medium enterprises?

Recommendation

14.0 Support SMEs through simple, relationship-based recruitment assistance, practical onboarding support and responsive post-placement problem solving that is nationally consistent in quality but locally delivered through trusted regional relationships.

14.1 Recognise Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional workforce gateways as partners that understand small business conditions, seasonal pressures and practical workforce needs, and can help SMEs engage with the employment services system in a low-burden way.

SMEs need a timely and consistent service offer that is low-burden and responsive, delivered through trusted local relationships. Tasmania has a high proportion of SMEs, and many small businesses do not have dedicated human resources capacity. They rely on practical, relationship-based support from local organisations that understand their business, workforce needs, operating context and local labour market conditions.

This is one of the areas where Regional Jobs Hubs operate most strongly. Hubs work with SMEs and regional supply chains every day to understand workforce needs, identify suitable candidates, navigate available employment and training supports, and resolve practical recruitment and retention issues. This work is built over time through consistent local presence, responsiveness and follow-through.

Under current arrangements, Workforce Australia employer engagement officers can be constrained by time, capability, local employer networks and incentives, and are not always well positioned to provide this locally tailored SME support. Workforce Australia services should therefore be designed to connect with Hubs and other regional workforce gateways, so SMEs can access a low-burden service offer that combines national employment services with trusted local relationships.

Regional Jobs Hubs add value by building and maintaining trusted local relationships with SMEs. We have built this critical role over time through consistent engagement, responsiveness and following through on helping SMEs navigate employment supports, connect with suitable candidates and troubleshooting practical issues before and after placement.

What is the value of having a government job-matching platform? How can we increase this value?

Recommendation

15.0 Develop a government job-matching platform that complements, rather than replaces, trusted local employer relationships and real-time community labour market intelligence.

15.1 Strengthen its practical value by ensuring it has access to regional intelligence from Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, local providers, employers, training organisations and community partners, so listed opportunities reflect real local demand and are connected to practical pathways for jobseekers.

A government job-matching platform on its own cannot capture real-time local labour market intelligence or industry-level demand. Much of the hidden job market is not visible on formal vacancy platforms, and effective job matching requires interpretation to align supply with demand, especially for groups needing more support.

Platforms are most useful when vacancy visibility is combined with timely local labour market intelligence, strong employer relationships and practical knowledge of how recruitment actually works in each region.

Regional Jobs Hubs can strengthen the value of a platform by feeding in local intelligence, identifying hidden vacancies, helping employers articulate workforce needs and connecting listed opportunities to local training and support pathways.

What supports do employers need to recruit and retain people?

Recommendation

16.0 Develop a nationally consistent employer support service offer for employers that sets clear expectations for good-fit candidates, inclusive hiring advice, onboarding assistance, workplace adjustments and early post-placement support.

16.1 Incentivise and support providers to offer this practical, relational business assistance to employers, delivered through local relationships where possible.

16.2 Where relevant, link employers to Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional ecosystem coordination roles that can provide the tailored support needed to overcome barriers to hiring and retention.

Current incentives and funding settings do not always enable providers to offer the practical business support employers need to take on candidates. Without this support, conversations often end when employers identify barriers they cannot address, rather than being helped to solve them.

When providers cannot resource this support themselves, they need clear pathways to link employers to community infrastructure, such as regional workforce gateways and Hubs, that can coordinate the local ecosystem and provide the tailored assistance employers require. Hubs can help employers with practical recruitment pathways, warm connections to providers and training, onboarding support and problem solving where workplace barriers emerge.

The national role should define the quality standards, service expectations, funding settings and information about federal employment and training subsidies. The regional role should translate those settings into practical support that makes sense for local employers.

Delivery of high-quality services

What qualifications and experience should be expected of frontline staff within each stream?

Recommendation

17.0 Train frontline staff to combine employment expertise, local labour market knowledge, coaching capability, trauma-informed practice, cultural awareness and safety, disability awareness and skills in capabilities-based practice, and be supported to apply national practice standards in ways that reflect regional labour markets, local cultures, community service networks and place-based partnerships.

17.1 Recruit staff who hold local labour market expertise themselves or can build formal connections to roles that do, such as Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs.

17.2 Ensure frontline staff connections to roles with labour market knowledge and expertise operate at an organisational level rather than relying on ad hoc referrals for individual jobseekers.

A national employment service needs consistent expectations for frontline workforce capability so participants receive high-quality, inclusive, ethical and effective support across all streams. Frontline practice also needs to be locally grounded, with staff who understand the labour market, employers, services, cultures and community relationships that shape how support works in Tasmania and regional Australia.

By connecting with community-embedded organisations and Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs that have deep knowledge of their communities and trusted networks across employers, training providers, community services and local government, frontline staff gain real-time intelligence on labour market conditions, workforce demand and regional skills priorities. This enables them to deliver support that is locally relevant and responsive.

Baseline capability should include employment services experience, coaching, trauma-informed practice, cultural awareness and safety, disability awareness, youth practice where relevant, employer engagement, local labour market literacy and supervised reflective practice.

How could the future service accommodate the needs of diverse cohorts, including better linkages to other services?

Recommendation 18.0 Design services around flexibility, cultural safety, lived experience, specialist partnerships and strong linkages to integrate whole-of-life supports, with national service settings that incentivise regional collaboration with Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, specialist services, community-controlled and local organisations.

18.1 Tailor support for diverse cohorts to local cultures, service systems and lived realities. Linkages should include warm referrals, shared practice arrangements and clear local pathways rather than relying only on generic referral lists.

National providers need up-to-date information about the local service infrastructure that supports diverse cohorts, and systems that embed this knowledge across their organisations. Providers require organisation-level awareness of the local ecosystem, including specialist, community-controlled and culturally grounded services, so they can link participants to the right supports and integrate whole-of-life assistance. Without this, services risk being generic and disconnected from lived realities.

Regional Jobs Hubs can help by connecting providers to local specialist services, community-controlled organisations, culturally grounded supports, youth services, housing and homelessness supports, training providers and employers. Hubs can also help identify where there are service gaps and where flexible local pathways are needed for different cohorts.

How can a nationally consistent service respond to local circumstances?

Recommendation 19.0 Set national standards for quality, accountability and participant rights while allowing local flexibility in delivery, partnerships and responses to labour market conditions.

19.1 Actively connect the national system with Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, regional governance, local workforce planning and place-based initiatives so services are shaped with regions, not just delivered in them.

A nationally consistent service is needed to set quality standards and ensure minimum service expectations across Australia, but consistency must sit alongside flexible delivery. A national system requires local flexibility, governance and alignment to workforce plans, including local government regional economic development plans and state and industry workforce plans.

Regional and remote communities face distinct challenges that differ from

metropolitan areas. Community-embedded organisations and regional workforce gateways, including Regional Jobs Hubs, provide the coordination and connection between Commonwealth, state and local government, industry, training providers and community services. This regional coordination is particularly important in thin, dispersed and fragmented labour markets.

A national employment service system must incentivise collaboration with regional community-embedded organisations that coordinate and connect employers, training providers, employment services and community organisations to create a more responsive workforce ecosystem. Hubs are the practical mechanism through which national consistency can be translated into local delivery.

Redesigned system incentives for service providers

How should providers be incentivised to support participants into suitable, sustainable jobs, not just any job across both provider-led service streams?

Recommendation

20.0 Use grant-style or blended funding and incentives that reward quality, sustainability, capability building and suitable employment outcomes rather than rapid placement alone, while recognising collaboration and regional tailoring through partnerships with Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, local employers, training providers, community services and initiatives that respond to local labour market conditions.

20.1 Rebalance funding so providers are not solely driven by short-term placement outcomes and include incentives for high-quality adaptive planning, collaboration, capability building and sustained, suitable employment.

Current incentives and funding settings do not always enable providers to support participants into suitable, sustainable jobs. Payment-by-outcome models can drive short-termism, competition and transactional practice, rewarding rapid placement rather than quality, capability building or long-term employment.

A future system needs incentives that value adaptive planning, collaboration and sustained progress toward suitable work. Grant-style or blended funding would allow providers to focus on quality, sustainability and partnership-based approaches rather than chasing quick outcomes.

The system should also recognise that suitable, sustainable employment often depends on regional collaboration. Providers should be incentivised to work with Regional Jobs Hubs and other regional partners to connect participants with local employers, training pathways, community supports and post-placement assistance.

How should employment outcomes and progress towards employment be measured? How should this differ between targeted provider services and intensive services?

Recommendation

21.0 Measure progression to real opportunity in ways that consider participant aspirations and local labour market conditions.

Recommendation

21.1 Outcome measures should account for regional context and reward providers for connecting participants to local pathways, collaborating with Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs and responding to local employment conditions.

21.2 Measures should include sustained employment at 13, 26 and 52 weeks; quality of job match; participant progress toward work; completion of training or licences linked to local demand; employer satisfaction and retention; strength of regional partnerships; and appropriate adjustment for thin or volatile labour markets.

21.3 Measures should differ between targeted and intensive services by weighting rapid labour market connection more strongly for targeted services and capability-building, stabilisation and staged progress more strongly for intensive services.

A national performance framework needs to create a consistent definition of success that values sustainable employment, education and training outcomes, participant progress, service quality and recognises shared regional workforce outcomes that encourage collaboration rather than competition between organisations. It must also account for local labour market conditions and participant complexity so providers working in thin or volatile labour markets are not penalised for factors outside their control.

Local tailoring is not about weakening national consistency; it is about making national standards meaningful in practice by applying them to local labour market conditions, service capacity, employer demand and community infrastructure.

Regional Jobs Hubs can contribute to this by helping interpret whether outcomes are connected to real local opportunities, whether pathways are sustainable and whether providers are collaborating with the regional ecosystem rather than working in isolation.

Improved commissioning and contracting

What commissioning approaches will best support increased provider diversity?

Recommendation

22.0 Enable collaboration and value local expertise through commissioning

22.1 Commission for provider diversity by valuing embedded community organisations, local knowledge, collaboration, cultural safety and service quality.

22.2 Require evidence of regional collaboration with place-based workforce and community infrastructure such as the Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs as well as local employers, schools, training providers, community organisations and place-based initiatives that tailor national services to local needs. Commissioning should fund collaboration time, shared learning and local coordination rather than treating these as optional extras.

Commissioning should enable collaboration and value local expertise, with incentives that reward quality and collaboration over competition. Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs contracts show how commissioning can build practice capability, data capability and system-advocacy capacity by requiring participation in a statewide learning network.

Block or grant funding tempers competition over resources, which otherwise gets in the way of collaboration and resource sharing. Commissioning should therefore create conditions where collaboration and local expertise are central to service delivery, including by funding the time and infrastructure required for genuine regional partnerships.

Hubs should be visible in commissioning because they demonstrate the kind of regional capability the future system needs: embedded local knowledge, employer relationships, workforce planning, coordination across services and participation in shared learning.

Driving continuous improvement

How can employment services foster continuous improvement? For example, what strategies would improve the sharing of best practice?

Recommendation

23.0 Build continuous improvement into the system through shared learning, timely data, diverse expertise and voice, evaluation and learning networks, including communities of practice.

23.1 Include regional learning loops involving Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs or gateway organisations so national policy and practice are informed by local evidence, employer feedback, participant experience and collaboration across local service systems.

Employment services can foster continuous improvement by ensuring it is not just a principle but built into governance, commissioning and funding. This will be enabled by access to data, feedback loops and learning networks (regional and national), training and resources that build practice and data capability.

Regional Jobs Hub contracting provides an example of how learning networks, data capability and system-advocacy capacity can be built into commissioning arrangements. The Hubs are aligned under a shared, specified model that is intentionally flexible and adaptive to place. Model and practice development have been formally supported through ongoing developmental evaluation and an enduring Community of Practice/Learning Development Network that meets at least three times per year to share strategy, data, and learning. Hubs have developed informal relationships with one another to share and advance practice and resources.

While Hubs themselves have their own mechanisms for advancing continuous improvement, many also support continuous improvement in and across the regional employment, education, training and personal support ecosystem. They create regional learning loops by bringing together employer feedback, participant experience, provider practice, local service intelligence and labour market data.

This role could be further developed and systematically embedded alongside the employment service system. This would allow national policy and practice to be informed by what is happening in communities, not only by central performance data. It would also foster aligned and coordinated efforts across the ecosystem, deepening the capability of employment service providers to develop system networking and coordination skills.

Open feedback

Please provide any additional feedback or ideas for the new employment service below.

Recommendation 24 Build a formal regional coordination layer into the future employment services system, recognising and resourcing regional workforce gateways, including Regional Jobs Hubs, to provide local labour market intelligence, connect providers to employers and services, support regional workforce planning and ensure national employment services are shaped with regions, not just delivered in them.

The new employment service should explicitly recognise regional workforce gateways, including Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs, as essential and complementary infrastructure that helps a national system work in place. Hubs are not a replacement for employment service providers. Their value is in coordinating the ecosystem around providers, employers, training organisations, industry, community services and local workforce planning so national settings can be translated into practical regional pathways.

This is particularly important in regional communities where labour markets are thin, service systems are dispersed and employers often need practical support to recruit and retain people. A national employment services system cannot rely only on standardised service models, digital platforms or individual provider performance settings. It also needs regional infrastructure that can hold local relationships, interpret labour market intelligence and connect the system around real opportunities.

Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs already demonstrate this role. They connect employers, providers, training, industry and community services; support regional workforce planning; identify local barriers and opportunities; and help translate policy settings into practical pathways for people and employers. Recognising this role would strengthen, not duplicate, the national employment services system.

Appendix A

WFA and RJHs complementary roles at a glance

WFA focuses on individualised employment support for eligible jobseekers, while RJHs provide the regional gateway and coordination function that connects people, employers, training and services.

	Workforce Australia	Tasmanian Regional Jobs Hubs
Cohort	Supports eligible jobseeker through individualised employment services.	Supports the broader workforce and community by providing an open-access workforce gateway for people who are not eligible for Workforce Australia Around 15–20 per cent of Hub clients may also be eligible Workforce Australia jobseekers.
Provision	Conducts participant assessment and develops individual employment pathways.	Provides real-time regional intelligence of labour markets, referral pathways, training options, transport, and community supports. Also provides practical workforce navigation, assessment of a broader cohort of people in the workforce, pathway planning and support to connect people with jobs, training, education, employment services and other local supports.
	Provides individualised case management and Employment Goal Plans.	Coordinates the regional workforce ecosystem to create connections and pathways between employment services, training providers, employers, and community supports.
Employers	Engages employers to identify opportunities for eligible participants.	Builds long-term employer and industry relationships to understand workforce needs and create workforce opportunities. Supports SMEs and regional supply chains with practical workforce solutions, recruitment support and connection to employment services and suitable candidates.
Outcomes	Jobseeker outcomes-delivers employment outcomes for eligible participants.	Provides regional workforce planning and skills forecasting to inform service delivery and regional investment. Also delivers employment, education and training outcomes for Hub clients, including people not eligible for Workforce Australia and those who need support to navigate local pathways.