

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
15 February 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Regional Skills Shortages

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator McKenzie

QUESTION No.: AI-46

What is the department doing to address regional skill shortages in non-mining areas? For example, there are no tertiary education options in the Buloke Shire in Victoria, and they are now in a situation where many younger people have left to pursue educational opportunities and the average age of local farmers is 59.

ANSWER

The Australian Government has a number of initiatives to support businesses in addressing skills shortages that they may be experiencing and to provide opportunities for workers and young people to undertake training.

Through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) will provide \$558 million funding over four years to support training of existing and new workers in areas of need. Projects that aim to increase the skills and participation of individuals living in regional areas are encouraged.

Through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Australian Government provides funding for 34 education, skills and jobs coordinators in regional communities across the country. These coordinators work with local stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia offices, to develop Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans to improve participation and outcomes. A co-ordinator for the Loddon Mallee region, in which Buloke Shire sits, is based in Mildura.

A recent initiative funded by the Australian Government through DEEWR is the commitment of nearly \$7 million dollars for the establishment of the North Central Trade Training Centre which will be based in Charlton in Buloke Shire.

The Trade Training Centre project includes the construction of a commercial kitchen, hairdressing facility, allied health facility, automotive workshop, construction workshop and engineering workshop, the refurbishment of six existing facilities and also the provision of equipment across seven sites within the cluster. It will deliver Certificate I, II and III qualifications in aged care, agriculture, allied health, automotive, construction, engineering, hairdressing and hospitality to address skills shortages in agriculture, in occupations in local demand in aged care and allied health and in the trades of carpenter, cook, fitter, hairdresser, metal machinist, motor mechanic, refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanic and toolmaker.

Through DEEWR, the Australian Government funds the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program. The program is designed to foster a strategic, whole-of-community approach to improving education and transition outcomes for all young people. The Partnership Brokers program builds partnerships that harness resources and build local infrastructure to support communities to share responsibility for young people's learning and development.

Since 1 January 2010, the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program in Victoria has been delivered through the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN). The LLEN is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, an agreement between the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

LLENs have operated since 2002 to connect employers, education and training providers, government groups, agencies and individuals to help turn business and community needs and ideas into new and innovative programs for young people.

There are 31 local learning and employment networks in Victoria and this includes the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network which includes areas in the Buloke Shire.