

Local employment and skills development partnerships

Briefing Note

12 August 2020

ACOSS proposes that local employment and skills development partnerships and plans be established, led from the ground up by employers, people who are unemployed, community services and unions in cooperation with employment and training providers:

- To devise local strategies to reduce unemployment, enhance the skills and employment prospects of people disadvantaged in the labour market and support employers to meet their workforce needs;
- To improve coordination among employers, unemployed people and employment and training providers, and the sharing of intelligence on current and future job openings, skills requirements, resources and gaps; and
- To provide feedback to policy makers on local labour markets and skills and recommend improvements to national programs.

This brief outlines [why they are needed](#), [lessons from past and present initiatives of this kind](#), [what role they should play and how they can be established](#).

Key recommendations

Local employment and skills development partnerships and plans should be established across the country through a 3-5 year Australian government grants program with the aim of making them universal and permanent.

(1) Purpose

- To devise and implement local strategies to reduce unemployment, support employers to meet their workforce needs, and enhance the skills and employment prospects of people disadvantaged in the labour market; and
- To encourage and support enduring employer and community-led local partnerships for this purpose, both within and outside formal government programs.

(2) Scope

- Employment assistance and training for people who are unemployed:
 - With a focus on those more disadvantaged in the labour market;

- Local partnerships would guide and facilitate, rather than manage or provide, local employment and training services and programs.

(3) Location

- Based as far as possible on natural labour markets and local communities of interest within all cities and regions; and
- Begin with places where there is greatest interest and capacity among organisations expected to lead and sustain the initiative locally, with a view to gradually extending them across Australia.

(4) Establishment

- Establish national governance structures including a standing advisory body with stakeholders representing a similar range of interests and services to those expected to partner at the local level, and seek its advice before proceeding;
- Announce the local partnerships strategy and a program of grants (rather than competitive tender) to support their establishment and ongoing work; and
- Funding would generally only be available to a single auspicing agency or consortium based in each location or region where a partnership is established.

(5) Local employment and skills partnership bodies

- Are established for a fixed period (for example, for 3-5 years), with flexibility to alter their composition and scope as they engage with communities and service providers;
- Their first task would be to develop local employment/skills agreements or plans in consultation with the community; and
- While they are task-oriented rather than strictly representative, governing bodies for local partnerships would generally include:
 - Local service users (employers, unions, and a mechanism to incorporate the views and experiences of people who are unemployed);
 - Service providers (such as jobactive, Transition to Work and local TAFEs and not-for-profit community education providers); and
 - Local, state and territory departmental representation as appropriate.

(6) Auspicing agencies

- Auspicing agencies or consortia would receive and be accountable for funding under the program, and employ facilitators to support the partnerships and undertake projects, as directed by the partnership's governing body;
- Auspicing agencies could be a local government, a local community agency (not providing employment and training for people who are unemployed), or a local employer, union or business chamber.

(7) National supports for local partnerships

- The national governance structures, supported by a small secretariat or an independent facilitator, would:
 - Share learnings and promote best practice across regional partnerships through 'communities of practice';
 - Recommend changes to relevant policies and programs based on local feedback (including a process to extend partnerships to regions not yet covered);
 - Ensure a timely flow of useable labour market intelligence between national organisations such as the Careers Institute and local partnerships; and
 - Support skills development for local partners and facilitators.
- To facilitate this work, the national advisory body would establish working groups specialising in assistance for particular populations (e.g. young people) and different support roles (e.g. promoting and sharing best practice in local facilitation).

(8) Evaluation and review

- A key goal is to establish enduring local employment and skills partnerships that have a life beyond bodies established under the grants program; and
- With this in mind, the proposed partnership bodies would be funded for a fixed period initially (3-5 years), during which their effectiveness, and that of the grants program would be independently evaluated, and the results published promptly.

Why a local partnership approach is needed

Ensuring that national employment programs are responsive to the needs of individual unemployed people, local communities and employers has always been challenging, and in the present context all the more so.

Employment services must quickly scale up and adjust to the changed labour market conditions since COVID-19

Since the [Employment Services Expert Panel](#) reported on reform of employment services in 2019, three things have changed:

- Unemployment is now much higher, with a risk that elevated levels of long-term unemployment will become entrenched in one to two years' time;
- Sudden, large-scale changes in the structure of employment have occurred as we moved to a stay-at-home economy, with more change to follow as employers restructure their operations to survive and grow under more challenging economic conditions, and many workers will need to update and adjust their skills;
- A large increase in long-term unemployment can now be expected over the next two years.

This means that employment assistance and training must be scaled up rapidly, well beyond expectations at the time the Expert Panel reported.

Employment services also need to adjust from the previous 'work-first' and compliance-oriented approach to put greater emphasis on career guidance and skills. In turn, education and training providers need to adjust their service offer to take account of the emerging needs of employers and people who find themselves unemployed. This ranges from shorter courses to fill specific local skills gaps through to foundational skills (language, literacy, numeracy and digital) to improve people's future employment prospects in an environment where entry-level jobs are likely to be scarce. Employment services and education and training providers will need to work more closely together, and with employers.

Employers - especially small employers - face challenges of their own to adjust to sudden changes in consumer demand and economic conditions. They include COVID-19-related restrictions and protections, the severing of supply chains, acceleration of the shift to digital servicing, and declining demand for (many) exports. When recruiting, they will need to attract the right people with the right skills to grow their business or service under changed conditions. For the time being, employers have less access to temporary migrants to fill entry-level or more highly-skilled positions.

Many employers are struggling to survive in a highly uncertain business and service environment, and have limited capacity now to engage with government agencies and other local services. With a much greater number of unemployed people for each vacancy, employers have less capacity and incentive to engage with multiple local employment services, programs and initiatives. Streamlining and coordination will be vital, without losing sight of the diversity of need among unemployed people and employers.

We need to rapidly adjust and scale up national employment and training programs including career guidance, training and wage subsidies, while at the same time ensuring they are responsive to the local needs of employers and people searching for paid work.

This adjustment cannot be left to ‘employment services market’ mechanisms

For many years, mainstream employment programs such as jobactive have sought to resolve the tension between national programs and local needs through a combination of outcome-based funding and performance management (e.g. reallocation of ‘business shares’ among competing providers). The idea is that providers have flexibility to adjust services to need, yet are still held accountable for outcomes achieved.

This commissioning model has supported low-cost job search assistance and unemployment payment compliance, but has generally not supported patient investment in assistance for people more disadvantaged in the labour market, or sustained partnerships with employers.¹ For example, the jobactive Employment Fund established for that purpose is often underspent.

Competition among providers has reduced costs and encouraged a tight focus on outcomes, but this often comes at the expense of local cooperation, both with other providers and with employers and other stakeholders.²

Faced with higher levels of long-term unemployment, governments will need to scale up national work experience and training programs to support mainstream employment programs, as they have in the past. The challenge to ensure these schemes are responsive to the needs of unemployed people and employers in different parts of the country remains. Otherwise, public funds could be spent on programs that have little impact on people’s employment prospects.

Along with an overdue redesign of the way in which employment and training programs are commissioned, as recommended by the Expert Panel, local employment and skills partnerships could improve the responsiveness of these programs to local needs.

Reducing long-term unemployment and labour market disadvantage requires initiative and cooperation at the local level in our cities and regions

Local employment and skills partnerships can improve the flow of labour market information, coordination among service providers, and collaboration with employers. These are more important when the labour market is in flux and unemployment is high.

In labour markets that are changing rapidly, up-to-date information on vacancies, skills, and available training is crucial for employers and people seeking employment. With the

¹ Considine M, et al (2018) [Improving outcomes for disadvantaged jobseekers](#): The next generation of employment services – response to discussion paper. Melbourne: The Policy Lab, University of Melbourne.

² This is not an issue for other programs, such as Transition to Work, that operate on a single-provider model and where providers receive a greater share of their funding up-front.

establishment of the Careers Institute, this information should be more readily available at national level and online.³ The challenge here is to make effective use of this information through the relationships that are established between career counsellors and unemployed people, employers and employment services, and education and training providers and their potential students. Timely feedback from these local stakeholders is also needed to inform labour market and skills information and planning at national, state, and territory levels.

Employers are more likely to respond to referrals of people who are screened, trained, and supported by employment services.⁴ This is all the more important when vacancies are relatively scarce as they are now. Under these conditions, the pathway to paid work for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market will include training, paid work experience and mentoring and support in employment. This puts a premium on sustained local collaboration among employment services, education and training providers, and employers.

The most important benefits of local partnerships are the intangible benefits. Enduring partnerships between employers, services and community leaders can foster an environment of collaboration and trust in which solutions to hard problems such as prolonged unemployment and skills mismatch are more likely to be found. Often these were never envisaged when national programs and government initiatives were first announced.

We all know of examples of high-quality or innovative local practice, often led by a single individual or organisation. The challenge is to generalise this. This depends on local relationships and initiative, and how they are reinforced or undermined by government initiatives and programs. To work effectively, local partnerships need autonomy and a sense of common purpose, and should not be over-burdened with detailed centrally-imposed goals, targets, or administrative responsibilities. At the same time, they need the active support of decision-makers and networks beyond the local level, to consolidate the skills, information and resources they need to function and to learn from the experience of other regions.

³ National Skills Commission (2020), [A snapshot in time](#) - The Australian labour market and COVID19. Canberra.

⁴ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2012), [Good practice in Job Services Australia](#). Canberra.

Learning from past and present local employment and skills development schemes

Despite a long history of local employment initiatives, these have rarely been sustained in our relatively centralised employment services system. Previous schemes were generally established as pilots that were later abandoned, or were confined to a small number of communities or groups in need. In many cases, they were not properly evaluated, and lessons learned were not shared and recorded for future use.⁵

One reason for this is that employment services are a national government responsibility. This is sensible given the national character of labour markets and national responsibility for social security. However, we lack the enduring infrastructure required to promote and sustain local employment initiatives.

Another problem with local initiatives in social policy, especially in regions identified as 'disadvantaged' is that networks and programs proliferate and do not communicate with one another. This increases transaction costs (such as grant applications and reporting) for local communities and service providers, and leads to skepticism about government-led local employment and social policy interventions.

In the present labour market environment, where many people with diverse needs and barriers to employment are competing from a smaller pool of job vacancies, and employers have limited capacity to engage with multiple local services and stakeholders, it is best to avoid a proliferation of local employment development schemes with different goals and target groups. Any new local employment development scheme should aim to fill gaps in local coordination and streamline local networks rather than adding to transaction costs for all concerned.

Australia's three-tier government structure complicates matters, with social security and employment policy a national responsibility, other social policies shared between national and state and territory governments, and local government having a relatively diminished role compared with other OECD countries.⁶ There are no quick fixes for these challenges in inter-governmental relations. Attempts to restructure these inter-governmental roles and responsibilities now to improve local coordination in employment assistance are likely to get in the way of the timely collaboration among governments and local communities that is needed to help reduce unemployment.

⁵ A good example is the various 'place-based' employment initiatives of the Gillard government ('Building Australia's Future Workforce'), where learnings were not effectively shared across the communities and programs affected. These schemes were abandoned when Commonwealth budget expenditure was cut in 2014, along with a national evaluation that was under way.

⁶ This helps explain why New Zealand has a richer history of local cooperation in employment and social policy than Australia; and local employment services are better connected with other social services in countries like Denmark and the Netherlands (where local government plays a greater role) compared with the Anglophone countries. However, decentralisation of income support and employment assistance also has disadvantages, including equity and scalability.

The table below summarises typical features of national employment and skills programs and locally-based employment initiatives, which often come into tension.⁷

Some typical features of national and local employment programs

National employment & training programs	Local initiatives
Quickly scalable	Slow to bring to scale
Accountable to government, value for money, performance managed	Accountable to communities, local employers and jobseekers
Usually targets all jobseekers, especially disadvantaged (equity in targeting)	Often targets (smaller) specific groups (less equity in targeting)
Competition (jobactive model)	Collaboration
Transaction and compliance based	Relationship based
Standardised (even when funded to outcomes)	Varies according to interests and capacity of local institutions and actors
Permanent	Usually temporary or pilot schemes

Key lessons from past experience with local employment initiatives include the need to:

- Establish permanent local institutions or mechanisms and adjust them as required, rather than fund on a pilot or trial basis;
- Design the national framework collaboratively with national representative organisations, state and local governments, and organisations already involved in local initiatives of this kind, avoiding overlaps;
- Given the limited time available to respond to higher levels of unemployment and long-term unemployment, ensure that any programs or structures established are adaptable, both to local needs and the success or failure of local initiatives;
- Within a broadly-defined set of national goals and principles, leave as much room as possible for local initiative and leadership to set goals and establish networks and structures;
- Avoid excessive formalism and standardisation, such as requirements that any local bodies established as part of this initiative must have the same membership, follow standardised plans, or be auspiced in the same way (for example, as an arm or agency of local, state or national government);

⁷ This is a stylised comparison, rather than a description of particular programs in Australia. For a good summary of the tensions between national employment service contracting and local initiative and coordination, see Lindsay C & McQuaid R (2008), [Inter-agency Co-operation in Activation](#): Comparing experiences in three vanguard 'active' welfare states. *Social Policy & Society* Vol 7 No 3, pp 353–365.

- Avoid burdening local partnerships with the management or coordination of employment and training programs for which they would have to be accountable to government;
- Resource them properly, including seed funding to assess local needs and engage stakeholders, and for a modest complement of ongoing paid staff;
- Avoid a narrowing of their role to information-sharing, whether to or from the national level, or among local stakeholders;
- At the same time, their purpose and operating framework should be consistent with national employment policy goals to reduce unemployment and assist people disadvantaged in the labour market to secure employment, and their remit broad enough to include the range of people affected by unemployment locally and the range of industries present;
- Evaluation and accountability mechanisms should ensure that, as far as possible, local partnerships are not 'captured' by some interests to the exclusion of others, that lessons learned are captured and fed back, and the skills required to develop and sustain them are nurtured.

Establishing local employment and skills development partnerships

The following proposals are based on the considerations outlined above, and a synthesis of views expressed in discussions we have held on this topic including at an expert roundtable held in June 2020. They do not necessarily represent the full diversity of views. Clearly, there is no 'correct' way to resolve the tensions described above and build effective and enduring local employment and skills development partnerships.

The starting point is for the Australian government to:

- Establish national governance structures including an advisory body with stakeholders representing a similar range of interests and services to those expected to partner at the local level, and seek its advice before proceeding;
- Announce a regional partnerships strategy and a program of 3-5 year grants to support their establishment and work.

(1) Purpose

- To devise and implement local strategies to reduce unemployment, support employers to meet their workforce needs, and enhance the skills and employment prospects of people disadvantaged in the labour market;
- To encourage and support enduring local partnerships for this purpose;
- To support local initiative and innovation, both within and outside formal government programs;
- To improve coordination among employers, unemployed people and employment and training services, and the sharing of intelligence on current and future job openings, skills requirements, resources and gaps; and
- To provide feedback to policy makers on the state of local labour markets and skills, and recommend improvements in national programs.

(2) Scope

- Employment assistance and training for people who are unemployed, with a focus on those more disadvantaged in labour market;
- Education and skills development, to the extent that they contribute to improvements in present or future employment prospects; and
- Local partnerships would facilitate, rather than manage or provide, local employment and training services and programs.

(3) Location

- Based as far as possible on 'natural labour markets' and communities of interest;
- Partnerships would be established in localities within cities (rather than entire cities) as well as regional areas;
- Since communities of interest are more likely to be local and natural labour markets are likely to extend across (wider) regions, establish

mechanisms for local partnerships to collaborate within regions where they share common interests and goals; and

- Begin in places where there is greatest interest and capacity among organisations expected to lead and sustain the initiative locally, with a view to gradually extending them across Australia, especially in places with high or entrenched levels of unemployment.

(4) A national partnerships strategy and grants program

- Establish national governance structures including an advisory body with stakeholders representing a similar range of interests and services to those expected to partner at the local level, and seek its advice before proceeding;
- Announce a national regional partnerships strategy and a program of grants to support their establishment and work (rather than competitive tender);
- Before applications are sought or detailed guidelines are developed, either the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) and/or an independent facilitating organisation would undertake initial scoping work, including data analysis and visits to local communities to assess need and capacity⁸;
- Guidelines would be broad and flexible (taking account of findings from the 'scoping' phase), and incorporating the elements listed here (purpose, scope, auspicing, the establishment of standing local employment and skills development bodies and plans, accountabilities and evaluation);
- Funding would generally only be available to a single local organisation in each locality or region, whether as an auspicing agency or on behalf of a consortium⁹;
- It would meet the costs of establishing and sustaining local bodies and plans, together with seed funding for projects undertaken in accordance with those plans;
- Partnerships would be encouraged to seek funding (through their auspicing agencies) from other sources including philanthropic funds, though this would not be a general requirement;
- Applications would be sought across the country, and assessed locally, with sufficient flexibility to allow for adjustments as needed (for example to encourage local stakeholders to work together as consortia, to include additional stakeholders or ensure that the scope of the work undertaken is consistent with the purpose of the program);
- Assessment would be undertaken by people with experience in local facilitation;
- Approval would be subject to assessment that there is a reasonable prospect that applicants can achieve what they set out to do, and

⁸ To get this critical stage of the process right, a commitment of at least 3 months' time and staff with expertise in local facilitation who have the time and resources to visit 'test sites' in each state and territory are likely to be required. The design of the program and its guidelines would be iterative, based on experience in the test sites. Once developed, the program guidelines would apply nationally, including to applicants in test sites.

⁹ This is to avoid an outcome in which auspicing agencies that lack a local presence secure funding to establish local partnerships. Externally-imposed local partnerships are unlikely to work. Exceptions could be made where key networks extend beyond a given area, but nevertheless have strong local connections (for example Aboriginal Land Councils).

assurance that this is consistent with the purpose of the program and meets the guidelines. This could include a process of self-assessment by prospective partners; and

- This implies that not all regions would be covered in the first round, though the funding cycle could be repeated in areas where partnerships have not yet been established.

(5) Local employment and skills partnership bodies

- Would be established for a fixed period (for example 3 to 5 years), with some flexibility for them to alter their composition and scope as they commence work and engage with communities and service providers;
- Where relevant local networks and structures already exist, the new bodies would either be incorporated within them, or establish formal collaborative arrangements;
- They would be supported by auspicing agencies, as described in [\(6\)](#) below;
- The first task of partnership bodies would be to develop local employment/skills agreements or plans in consultation with the community (including employers, people who are unemployed, and local government).¹⁰ Plans would reflect local priorities, would vary in their scope and level of specificity, and be open to change subject to community consultation;
- Partnership bodies, rather than auspicing agencies, would lead the local partnership work. This would involve establishing enduring communication networks and relationships as much as specific projects to reduce unemployment;
- While they are task-oriented rather than strictly representative, governing bodies for local partnerships would generally include:
 - Local service users (employers, unions, and a mechanism to incorporate the views and experiences of people who are unemployed);
 - Service providers (such as jobactive, Transition to Work and local TAFEs and not-for-profit community education providers);
 - Local, state and territory departmental representation as appropriate; and
 - Local partnership bodies could establish working parties to undertake projects in respect of a particular group or industry.

(6) Auspicing agencies

- Auspicing agencies or consortia would receive and be accountable for funding under the program, and employ facilitators to support the partnerships and undertake projects, as directed by the partnership's governing body¹¹; and

¹⁰ This would typically take around 6 months.

¹¹ This work should be led by the partnership rather than the auspicing agency.

- Auspicing agencies could be local government, a local community agency (not providing employment and training for people who are unemployed), or a local employer, union or business chamber.

(7) National supports for local partnerships

- The national governance structures would broadly mirror the structure and membership of local partnerships:
 - They would include a national governing body, and working parties tasked with supporting the work of local partnerships with specific populations (e.g. young people) or specific support roles (e.g. promoting and sharing best practice).
- Supported by a small secretariat or an independent facilitating organisation, they would:
 - Develop and promote a methodology for establishment of local partnerships and plans;
 - Share learnings and promote best practice across local partnerships through 'communities of practice';
 - Recommend adjustments to this and other employment and training policies and programs based on local feedback (including a process to extend partnerships to regions not yet covered);
 - Ensure a timely flow of useable labour market intelligence between national organisations such as the Careers Institute and local partnerships;
 - Support skills development for local partners and coordinators/facilitators; and
 - Develop a process and set of benchmarks for evaluation of the scheme ([see \(8\) below](#)) and accreditation of partnerships and agencies bodies, to guide the scheme through its next iteration (beyond the first 3-5 years).
- Regular meetings would be held among partners within and between regions as appropriate (for example, national partnership conferences and cross-regional consultations where local partnerships find this useful).

(8) Evaluation and review

- A key goal is to encourage enduring local employment and skills partnerships that have a life beyond a single grants program;
- With this in mind, the proposed partnership bodies would be funded for a fixed period initially (e.g. 3-5 years), during which their effectiveness, and that of the grants program would be evaluated;
- The evaluation would take account of the views of local service users and stakeholders as well as measuring the impact of the grants program and partnerships on local employment and skills outcomes, the responsiveness of services to local needs, and the ability of communities to respond in a coordinated way to high unemployment and labour market disadvantage, and the workforce development needs of employers; and
- It would be independently conducted, and the results would be published promptly, before decisions are made about the next iteration of the scheme.

Attachment

The attachment briefly describes the purpose and structure of two local employment development initiatives currently operating in Australia:

1. The **National Youth Employment Body and local Community Investment Committees** established by the Brotherhood of St Laurence to assist young people who are unemployed; and
2. The **Regional and Community Job Deals** approach adopted by the Centre for Policy Development in collaboration with Wyndham Council, to assist refugees.

Relevant regional initiatives administered by the Department of Education Employment and Skills include:

- [Regional employment trials](#) for regions with high unemployment;
- [New Employment Services Trial](#) local and national reference groups; and
- [Employment Facilitators](#) for workers made redundant.

(1) The National Youth Employment Body initiated by the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL)

The purpose of the National Youth Employment Body is to develop policy, program and practice solutions to address youth unemployment at a local and national level.

The National Youth Employment Body aims to:

- Inform the National Government about place-based approaches to improving employment outcomes for young people in areas of sustained and persistent youth unemployment;
- Build the capacity of communities to drive and sustain local youth employment pathways that meet the needs of young people, business and communities;
- Embed community driven youth employment initiatives in place that better align supply with demand in local economies, through the following five key components:
 1. Local Community Investment Committees (CICs) provide a mechanism for key sectors in a community to collaborate on driving solutions to address youth unemployment;
 2. Activating employers to drive investment in the skills and capabilities of young people by co-designing entry-level work pathways that align aspirations and interests of young people with business needs;
 3. An enabling organisation (BSL), which provides facilitative leadership to build the capacity of local organisations and communities to collaborate;
 4. National governance groups to provide guidance, expertise and access to networks and opportunities that support CICs to deliver on community solutions and to strengthen approaches at a national level; and
 5. Youth participation platforms to enable young people to share their experiences in navigating employment systems and contribute to decision making at local and national levels to ensure actions and strategies are fit for purpose

Local Community Investment Committees (CICs)

- Harness local expertise and investments to develop community driven, place-based solutions;
- Led and driven by a local employer champion;
- Built on a comprehensive, real-time understanding of current and future job opportunities and pathways for young people in a community, to inform solutions;
- Leverages and aligns community efforts and expertise, government programs and investments;
- Provides a central, coordinating mechanism for youth employment in the region - a local, one-stop shop; and
- Strengthens local connections and links to the national agenda to inform programs and policy.

National Governance Groups

- National Advisory Group
- Community of Interest
- Working Groups
 - National Employer Reference Group
 - Skills and Training Advisory Group
 - Research, Evidence, Evaluation and Development Working Group
 - Youth Alliance

[Click here](#) for more information on BSL advocacy on youth employment and COVID-19.

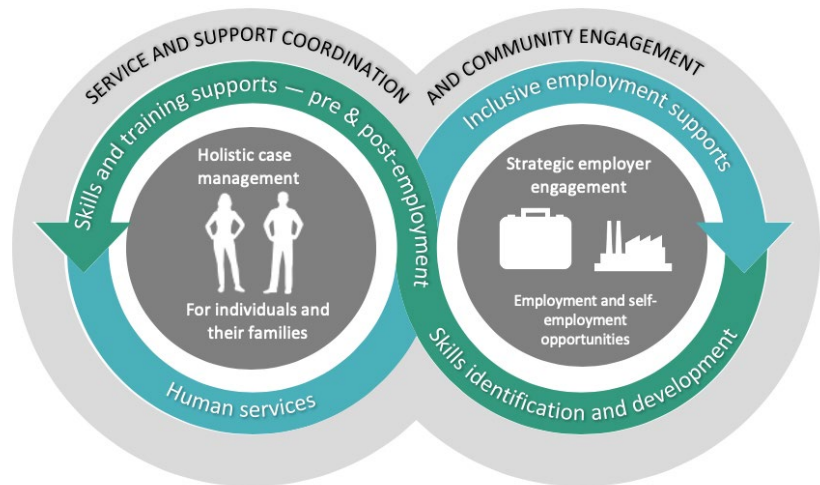
(2) Centre for Policy Development: Regional and Community Job Deals

Regional and Community Job Deals provide a blueprint for an effective response to the unemployment and underemployment crisis by facilitating locally and regionally coordinated and tailored approaches to employment and training assistance. They complement reforms underway to the national employment and training service systems, but allow for a scalable response now.

CPD's draft blueprint for Regional and Community Job Deals envisages up to 20 Regional Job Deals, each including a number of Community Deals. At full scale up it would enable up to 300 Community Deals, involving up to 300,000 participants, with a focus on people facing disadvantage.

Community Deals are a local place-based model to boost economic and social participation. They are a genuine partnership between government, business and community that allow consortia of local actors to adapt programming to achieve outcomes for their community.

Community Deals feature holistic, tailored services wrapped around a family and individual, and strategic engagement of employers and local industry. They harness sustained support from local, state and federal government, through vertical integration into service systems, as well as non-government and philanthropic resources.



Based on the Community Deals model, the Wyndham

Employment Trial on the urban fringe of Melbourne, run by Wyndham City Council and local partners, and supported by CPD, aims to boost economic participation for humanitarian migrants. When the trial commenced in mid-2019, there were 768 humanitarian migrants on the Werribee jobactive regional caseload, and they were on the caseload for an average of 80 weeks. As of 1 April 2020, 94 humanitarian migrants had been placed in employment as a result of the trial and 18 local employers were involved in providing information on vacancies and actively recruiting.

Regional and Community Job Deals involve national, regional and local governance and funding arrangements, and reforms to national employment and training services, including:

- **National Governance Body:** small, influential and responsible for setting and delivering mission and objectives;
- **National Pricing and Licensing Authority:** to control licensing/accrediting employment service providers and local partnerships, and pricing for activity-based funding arrangements;
- **Independent Impact Assessment and Good Practice Support:** to ensure evaluation, data informed practice, sharing of good practice across Job Deals, and transparency for outcomes;
- **Regional Governance Structure:** a grouping of local government, industry, employers, civil society and government and non-government funder representatives for detailed appraisal of labour market opportunities and tailoring of programs;
- **Local Taskforce:** a mix of funders, employers and civil society representatives to set the strategic direction for the initiative in line with national/regional objectives, and ensure appropriate engagement with local community and industry;
- **Backbone Organisation:** the engine room of local governance, to provide day-to-day executive leadership and implementation of strategy, support the local taskforce, and coordinate service delivery and employer engagement; and
- **Local Service Delivery Solutions Groups:** to drive collaborative local service delivery, including jobactive and specialist employment service providers, training providers, NGOs, and personal support service providers to specific cohorts.

Contributed by the Centre for Policy Development. Please [contact Annabel Brown](#) for more info