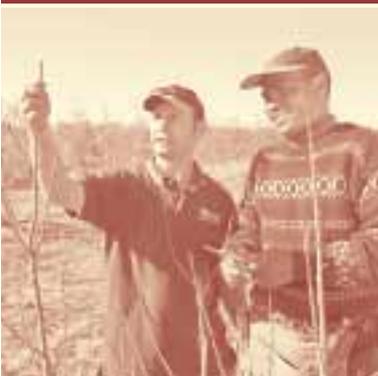
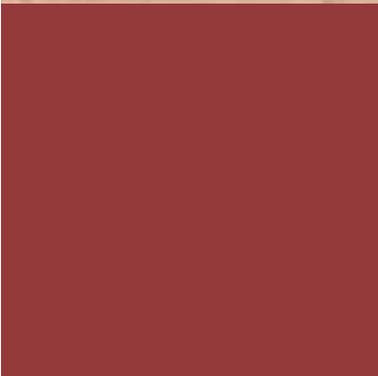


# Attracting & retaining skilled people in regional Australia: A practitioner's guide

FEBRUARY 2004



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*Attracting and retaining professional and skilled people in regional Australia: A practitioner's guide* was prepared for the Standing Committee on Regional Development by a working group drawn from representatives of the Australian Government, the States and Territories of Australia and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The working group was chaired by a representative of the Western Australian Department of Local Government and Regional Development, which has compiled the publication. The working group would also like to acknowledge assistance of Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs for their contributions.

The Standing Committee on Regional Development is the committee of senior officials that supports the Regional Development Council a Ministerial Council comprising Australian Government, State and Territory ministers, and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

The Regional Development Council aims to provide leadership to all areas of government, industry and the community in working collaboratively to achieve sustainable regional development. It provides a forum for Commonwealth Government, State and Territory government ministers and local government to consider and facilitate national strategic approaches to sustainable regional development.

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**Northern Territory Government**



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Government  
of South Australia



Tasmania



Government of  
Western  
Australia

# INTRODUCTION

## **A major challenge**

**Professional and skilled workers support communities living in regional Australia**

Attracting and retaining professional and skilled people to live and work within regional communities is one of the major challenges in building sustainable regions. A community that can also offer the services supplied by professional and skilled workers supports the people who are living in regional communities and the businesses operating there. This provides the foundation stone for attracting new residents and businesses. In summary, this issue is critical to sustaining regional communities as viable entities into the future – communities that are self-sufficient in terms of professionals and tradespeople are more likely to retain their residents and attract new ones.

**Different communities... different needs**

Different regional communities have differing needs, varying levels of community resources to draw upon and a range of options available to address their concerns. The options and resources available to small regional communities are different from those available for larger regional centres. In a similar manner, inland communities face a different set of circumstances and constraints from those that coastal communities experience.

**No single causal factor for determining success in attracting/retaining skilled professionals**

The diversity of regional communities and the particular circumstances surrounding those communities precludes generic strategies and programs. There is no single causal factor for determining success in attracting and retaining professional and skilled people in regional areas.

Generally, the problem, and thus the solution, is multi-dimensional with many linked issues needing to be addressed. A generic “one size fits all” approach to resolving the difficulties faced by regional communities is unlikely to be successful.

Local communities are often best placed to generate creative, yet practical, solutions. Nevertheless, they generally require support and guidance in implementing these solutions. Such support can and is provided by local, State, Territory or Australian governments, or some combination of these three spheres of government. A wide range of Australian, State, Territory and Local Government strategies and programs are in place to address different dimensions of this issue.

**Coordinated approach by all three levels of government**

A coordinated approach by all three levels of government, each bringing to bear its particular strengths, is in most cases a superior method of addressing the issue of attracting and retaining professional and skilled people. A coordinated approach has greater potential to achieve the desired outcome than each sphere of government operating independently.

No single agency or jurisdiction will have a complete package to address all aspects of this issue. Coordination and integration by all spheres of government gives communities the ability to select, mix and match various support programs and initiatives, and this is likely to enable them to achieve desired outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

1

# INTRODUCTION

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**Small and remote communities may be unable to sustain full-time services**

**Strategy may be to provide regular access to services**

**Demonstrations of innovative solutions**

Some regional communities, particularly those in remote areas, may not have the necessary resources to attract and retain skilled and professional people. Communities with a small population may not be able to sustain the services of a full time professional, particularly those working in a highly specialised field.

Therefore, it may be appropriate for such communities to consider alternative means to gain access to the services of a skilled person or professional. For example, the School of the Air and the Royal Flying Doctor Service are two services created because it is often not possible or practical to attract and retain teachers and doctors in small, remote communities. These alternatives mean that small, remote communities do not have to operate without the services of these professionals.

Some other ways that communities access skills and professional services include locum services, short-term exchange programs, regular travelling services from major centres, telephone, video-conference, or Internet-based services.

This guide presents a number of case studies collected from across Australia. They illustrate and promote the programs and options available to community and public sector practitioners that have been used successfully to partly or fully address issues of attraction and retention.

The contact points for a range of government programs targeted to assist in dealing with the challenge of attraction and retention are listed at Appendix 1.

## AIMS OF APPROACH

The approach taken in this guide aims to:

**Demonstrate** the range of solutions and options that regional communities have successfully employed to address attraction and retention issues. By seeing how others successfully coped with this difficult issue, regional communities are shown new and possibly novel options and strategies or ways in which existing strategies can be adapted.

**Inform** communities and practitioners, namely those involved in sustainable regional development, particularly in the area of attracting and retaining skilled employees, about government programs and initiatives that may be relevant, practicable and effective in meeting the needs of different regional communities.

**Encourage and inspire** communities and practitioners to be active and forward-looking by providing examples of where communities facing similar problems or facing similar constraints were wholly or partially successful.

2

**Grouped under key representatives**

**Useful reference resource**

**Illustrate coordination of various programs and resources**

3

**CASE STUDIES**

The case studies in this guide are drawn from all jurisdictions and are grouped under a number of key imperatives associated with the attraction and retention of professional and skilled people. These imperatives are highlighted in Figure 1 below.

The case studies aim to provide a useful reference resource and assist communities, government agencies and practitioners to identify methodologies, strategies and programs that have been used to successfully tackle this issue and are appropriate for a particular region or community.

The case studies also highlight ways in which the different programs offered by the three spheres of government can improve and coordinate program and service delivery for greater effectiveness.

**Key Imperatives**

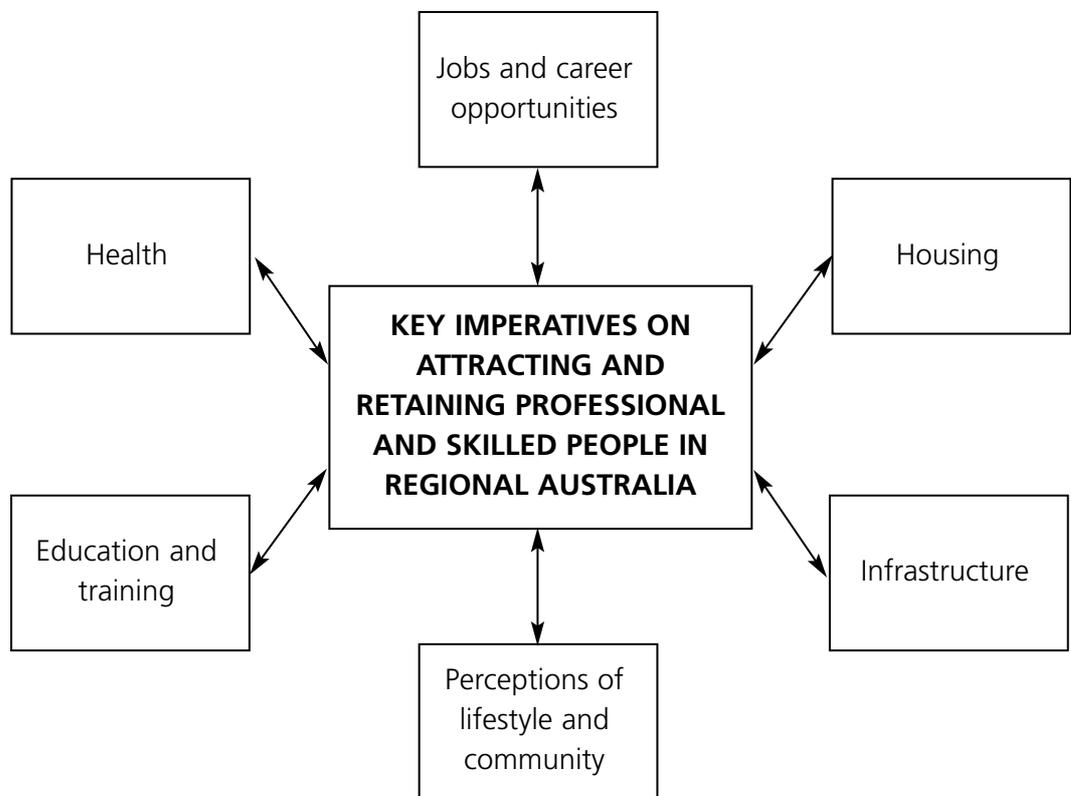


Figure 1

# HOUSING

## Emotional factors

The emotional impact of living in and coming home to a place where you feel comfortable is highly significant, particularly if a spouse or partner spends considerable time in the home.

## Boom-bust cycle can cause oversupply

Housing issues vary between regional areas. For instance, in regions which are rapidly developing, or where industries are expanding, housing shortages may be a problem. While accommodation could be built, the boom/bust cycle associated with many resource developments in regional areas makes the supply of additional accommodation of questionable economic benefit.

## Problems with both rental accommodation and purchase

Other housing issues include high private sector rents, lack of purchase opportunities and the perceived poor quality of housing stock, particularly in smaller inland communities. It can be difficult to find builders and tradespeople locally. Where there are properties for sale, many newcomers are reluctant to purchase because of perceived difficulties and costs associated with selling them if and when they move.

## Potential for private rental sector to increase availability of housing in regional areas

The supply of low cost rental private housing has declined across Australia, and this may result in unmet demand for public housing rising in regional areas in the future. However, it is unlikely that public sector programs alone could provide sufficient workforce accommodation for current and future demand. Potentially, the private rental sector can make a significant contribution to the supply of housing in regional areas. However, this sector must overcome a number of hurdles, such as lower capital gains in regional areas, limited awareness among investors of opportunities in regional Australia and planning constraints.

## CASE STUDIES

### COLAC HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (VICTORIA)

#### Background

Colac is the key industrial, commercial and service centre for the Colac Otway Shire and surrounding region, with a population of 12,000, located within two hours west of Melbourne.

The Colac economy is robust, with strong primary production, food processing, timber and tourism sectors. However, there is a shortage of owner-occupied and rental properties, creating concern that the limited availability of accommodation will negatively impact the ability of Colac to attract skilled workers and cater for increasing business.

## Town is centre of commerce and trade in region

## Shortage of property discouraged skilled workers from coming to area



*Town of Colac (Printed with the permission of Colac Otway Shire)*

### What led to the change?

In May 2002, the Colac Otway Shire adopted a *Colac Housing and Accommodation Strategy* and an *Action Plan*. The Strategy was developed in consultation with a range of people in different sectors of the Colac community, including Council, real estate agents, lawyers, major businesses, business advisors, developers from within and outside Colac, retailers, public housing agencies and community leaders.

The *Action Plan* was developed to provide a realistic basis for dealing with immediate accommodation issues and a medium and long-term way of adding value to Colac housing, improving the range of housing options, promoting quality and responsible development and improving the economic prosperity of the city.

### Outcomes

Council aims to continue to encourage innovative housing development with a diversity of site and housing options, such as smaller apartments and residential units, through its *Housing and Accommodation Strategy*.

Guidelines and example sheets were distributed to encourage landowners to redevelop sites for multi-unit development and dual occupancy arrangements, and to offer information about subdivision processes.

A partnership approach with developers has been explored to promote innovative development, instead of a traditional approach to subdivision. Outside builders have been encouraged to undertake building in Colac by calling tenders for the land with a view to forming a partnership with a developer. Council also met with State

# HOUSING

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Government representatives to discuss innovative approaches to public housing, and a *Neighbourhood Renewal Program* is reviewing all public housing stock in Colac.

Meetings were held with the regional water authority to discuss the possibility of deferring service charges on newly created lots until the lots were sold. A *Lake Colac Management Plan* has been developed, and recommends 10 years of capital works improvements with the intention of redeveloping the under-utilised lake and surrounds as a pivotal part of future development.

A number of development groups were established to encourage the pooling of the Colac business community's resources to minimise risk for larger accommodation developments in the city.

## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Action plan developed***

An action plan was jointly developed, with local and regional stakeholders taking responsibility for implementation, and drawing on the State Government where necessary. Providing and showcasing a diversity of accommodation styles and site options, including redevelopment of existing housing areas, was the key focus.

### ***Community consultation***

The strategy recognised that local investment would be the keystone of future development in the city, and there was an ongoing commitment to keep the community informed.

### ***Council support***

The shire initiated action through its strategic planning and by encouraging development.

### ***Development groups created***

Local investors formed a number of informal development groups that both managed the development and shared the risk.

### ***Informative materials produced***

Information, giving practical encouragement, was provided to landowners.

### ***Partnership approach***

Partners included developers, builders and State Government representatives, and Council negotiated with utilities to defer charges during construction.

### ***Redevelopment and revitalisation of town***

The aim of the plan was to promote quality housing developments that would improve the economic prosperity of the city.

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## Contact

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7

# HEALTH

## Majority of skill shortages in health sector

A survey conducted by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in Queensland in March 2003 found that 52 per cent of all skill shortages described were in the health sector. Doctors comprised 34 per cent of the shortages, and represented the largest group in that sector. While this was a small survey, it showed the importance of health services to communities.

## Lack of health care professionals discourages other professional and skilled workers from working in a region

The difficulty in recruiting and retaining health care professionals in regional communities creates two problems: firstly, there are fewer health care professionals to take care of the medical needs of the communities and secondly, professional and other skilled people, especially those with families, are not interested in living and working in small regional communities if there is no easy local access to health care. Other difficulties in attracting and retaining health care professionals include the fact that a single doctor will be on-call 24-hours, seven days a week, usually has a lack of locum support and has high levels of individual responsibility.

## Constant demands on time

The problem feeds upon itself as, without a population catchment capable of supporting a medical practice, small communities are finding it difficult to attract doctors and other health care providers.

## Strategies to increase number of GPs in regional Australia

The Australian, State and Territory, and Local Governments have adopted a number of strategies to increase the number of general practitioners in regional Australia and to improve access to specialists and allied health professionals.

## Regional medical practitioners require support

Regional practice requires supporting infrastructure and professional development services. Professional isolation and fewer opportunities to further develop skills are major impediments. Thus, opportunities for networking, professional development and further skill development and training are key components in strategies to attract health care providers to smaller regional communities.

## CASE STUDIES

### RETAINING A MEDICAL PRACTICE IN URANA (NEW SOUTH WALES)

#### Background

The township of Urana in New South Wales has a population of approximately 450 people. It is situated in the Urana Shire Council, which has a population of around 1,500, and includes the four towns of Oaklands, Rand, Morundah and Boree Creek. Urana is predominantly a farming area producing sheep, wheat, cattle, rice and canola.



**Retirement of doctor would lead to 1500 people being without medical services**

The existing doctor in the town of Urana was considering retirement, and without a replacement doctor, the 1500-strong community of Urana was facing the prospect of having no medical services.

**Medical practice facilities required upgrading**

The existing facilities in the town's medical practice required substantial upgrading, and Urana Council considered that it was more economically viable to provide new upgraded facilities rather than repair the existing facilities. It was certainly clear that unless upgraded medical facilities were available, the town could have considerable difficulty attracting and retaining a new doctor, considered very important in assisting with the long-term viability of the town.

**Risk of losing acute care facility**

Council felt that the town would be a less attractive place to live if it had no medical practitioner. It would have significant impact on the hospital, as with no doctor, the hospital's acute care facility would probably not be able to function, resulting in a significant loss to the community.

### **What led to the change?**

**Consultation with community**

Council began consulting with the community when it established that retaining and upgrading the existing doctor's surgery was not viable. The consultation period extended over 12 months and aimed to identify the best location for a new facility.

Council had sufficient funds for over half of the project budget, and had originally proposed to borrow the remainder of the funds.

**Regional Solutions Programme funding**

However, Council successfully obtained funding through the Australian Government's *Regional Solutions Programme*, thereby avoiding the costs associated with taking out a loan for the development of the facilities.

Council established a new surgery and a doctor's residence, and both were offered at a subsidised rental rate.

The local doctor and his wife were consulted throughout the project, and Council believed this helped to avoid mistakes and cost over-runs. The new surgery was opened in September 2001.

The doctor announced his retirement in March 2002, and Council received assistance from the Border Division of General Practice in attracting a new doctor.

**Rural Doctors Network provide financial assistance**

The Border Division of General Practice provided interested doctors with detailed background information on Urana, and a new doctor was found. The Division also assisted the incoming doctor with accessing financial assistance from the NSW Rural Doctors Network.

**Council assistance**

The new doctor now owns the practice, and received further substantial assistance from Council, who purchased equipment on behalf of the practice.

## Other financial assistance

Council continues to assist in maintaining the practice by working with the Border Division of General Practice on the practice's accreditation. When the practice becomes accredited, it will be eligible for a range of financial assistance from the Australian Government that will help its future viability.

### Outcomes

Council's efforts have resulted in the continuing presence of a local doctor for a community with an ageing profile. The current doctor has been in Urana since September 2002.

The acute care facility at the local hospital has been maintained.

### Key Success Factors

#### ***Assistance from professional association***

The services of the Border Division of General Practice were used to secure a new doctor.

#### ***Community consultation***

Over a 12-month period, community members were consulted to identify the best location for new premises.

#### ***Funding obtained***

Funding from the Australian Government's *Regional Solutions Programme* eliminated the need for a loan. Funding assistance to the new doctor was obtained from the NSW Rural Doctors Network.

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Encouragement for skilled migrants to settle in regional or low-growth metropolitan areas of Australia

Three major initiatives used

Nurses in high demand

Shortage of nurses with theatre skills

Previous experience with skilled employee from overseas

## REGISTERED NURSE, ROYAL DARWIN HOSPITAL (NORTHERN TERRITORY)

### Background

After extensive consultation between the Australian and State and Territory Governments, a range of initiatives have been developed to achieve a more balanced distribution of skilled migrants by encouraging settlement in regional or low population growth metropolitan areas of Australia. These initiatives provide direct economic benefits to regional Australia by addressing skill shortages and encouraging business development and expansion.

Three initiatives that are particularly relevant to employers in regional Australia are:

- the *Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme*, which has been designed to assist employers in regional Australia to fill vacancies that cannot be filled by the existing labour market;
- the *Business (Long Stay) Visa* that allows skilled workers to enter Australia to work for up to four years; and
- the *Skill Matching Database*, which gives employers access to a registered pool of qualified overseas workers. The database contains the occupational, educational and personal details of skilled migration applicants who have qualifications that meet Australian standards.

Nurses are currently in high demand in Australia as a whole and particularly in regional Australia. A number of different options have been developed to facilitate the entry of nurses to Australia, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

### What led to the change?

Royal Darwin Hospital, like many in Australia, was experiencing a shortage of nurses – particularly those with operating theatre skills. They regularly recruit from interstate, so looking overseas was a logical next step.

Four years ago, the hospital sponsored a nurse from Germany on a *Business (Long Stay) visa*, and found they were able to get expertise currently in short supply in many regional hospitals. As one of the hospital's nurse educators said: "Bringing staff from overseas fills gaps in the labour force and brings a bit of a difference to the workplace".



*Nurse with patient at Darwin hospital (Printed with the permission of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs)*

## **Outcomes**

The nurse has since received permanent residency with the assistance of the Northern Territory Health Authority under the *Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme*. He has settled in Darwin and remains employed by Royal Darwin Hospital.

Recruiting from overseas allowed Royal Darwin Hospital to fill a gap within its workforce in an area where expertise is scarce within Australia. The nurse has brought expertise in theatre and anaesthetics to the hospital, and is now training to be a senior nurse. His enthusiasm, motivated by a genuine desire to be part of the hospital community, is infectious and his new work practices from Germany have greatly assisted his employer.

## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Skilled Migration Program***

The package of State-specific and regional migration initiatives enabled a qualified specialist to work in a hospital that had a shortage of such skills.

More information about the initiatives can be found under *Key Success Indicators* in this guide.

### ***State/Australian Government assistance***

Advisory programs ensured the nurse was given accurate information to assist in planning his migration.

## Contact

For further information please refer to [www.immi.gov.au/migration/regional/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/regional/index.htm)

## KINGAROY AND SOUTH BURNETT MEDICAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY (QUEENSLAND)

### Background

In 1999, Kingaroy was faced with a crisis in its health and medical services as the number of health professionals dwindled. Kingaroy, the major regional centre of the South Burnett region, is located two hours north-west of Brisbane and has a district population of around 35,000.

### What led to the change?

In September 1999, residents, facing trips of around seven-hours to access medical services in Brisbane due to declining local services, raised the issue as a serious concern in the local media. Council was quick to support their concerns and seek action.

Kingaroy Shire Mayor, Cr Roger Nunn, met with doctors and other health professionals to discuss what could and should be done. There was a groundswell of community support from South Burnett citizens, service clubs, medical professionals, the Australian Medical Association and State politicians.

In November 1999, a Queensland Community Cabinet was held in Kingaroy, providing the perfect opportunity for the community to explain its medical service crisis. Following this meeting, the Health Minister provided the services of the Medical Advisor for Rural Health Services to assist the Kingaroy community in facilitating the development of a strategy to overcome the medical shortage.

A community workshop was held to chart a course of action, and the Medical Advisor drafted a strategic plan from this meeting. A further workshop was held to gain community acceptance of the strategic plan, and achieve a sense of community ownership. At this second community meeting, the plan was approved, strategies prioritised and tasks allocated.

The Mayor formed and chaired a *Medical Services Committee* reporting to Council. The committee was made up of community members, shire councillors, business leaders, health service providers and members of the nursing and allied health professions. The committee acted on each of the strategies developed by the community workshop, according to priority.

**Health services declined**

**Community raised concerns in media**

**Council support**

**Matter raised at Community Cabinet and pursued by Health Minister**

**Community workshop resulted in development of strategic plan**

**Mayor formed a Medical Services Committee**

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**Council purchased and re-opened a community hospital**

**Professional managers recruited**

**Start-up funds obtained from an Australian Government grant**

**Families of new medical professionals welcomed and supported**

**Visit by medical students arranged**

The key strategy was related to the private hospital that closed in 2001. The Council purchased and opened the South Burnett Community Private Hospital in April 2002 in response to the previous closure. The Council formed a limited liability company to operate the hospital, with a Board of Directors, comprising three Council staff and three community members, who meet monthly. Professional managers were recruited from Community Private Healthcare, a Queensland company that manages several hospitals within Australia. Start-up funds were sourced from an Australian Government grant scheme, with a second grant funding the second stage to upgrade and re-open the operating theatre (completed September 2003).

The Kingaroy community is very progressive and places a strong emphasis on supporting the families of medical professionals who are attracted to Kingaroy. The community is conscious that the first few weeks of a family's stay in a community are important to their decisions on whether to remain there. Support includes, for example, holding a large community event for medical families and encouraging integration with the community at a level the family finds comfortable.

Kingaroy also welcomed a group of medical students from Towards Rural and Outback Health Professionals In Queensland (TROHPIQ), University of Queensland, a rural health club founded in 1994. The club has a mission statement to increase the number of health students at Queensland Universities choosing to practice in rural and remote areas of Queensland, and to better prepare future health professionals for practice in these areas.

## Outcomes

The community is now almost at capacity for the number of practising doctors, and the Shire Council owns and operates the successful South Burnett Community Private Hospital.

As a direct result of hosting students for a weekend, one of the visiting nursing students has chosen to locate to Kingaroy permanently.

The community is working at solving other medical and health service issues on an ongoing basis, buoyed by its success in reversing the decline of medical services.

Kingaroy Shire Council received two of the inaugural *Minister's Awards for Excellence in Local Government* at the 2003 Local Government Association of Queensland Annual Conference in Cairns. The first was the award for *Overall Award for Excellence in Local Government*, and the second was the *Award for Excellence in a State/Local Government Partnership Project* category.

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The planning model for the Kingaroy and South Burnett Medical Workforce Strategy has been documented to ensure that the model can be transferred to other local government bodies and rural health services, if other communities want to undertake a similar exercise. The Mayor stresses the importance of appropriate adaptation and community ownership of any methodology to deliver equally successful results.

### **Key Success Factors**

#### ***Action plan developed***

Workshop discussions and a subsequent action plan ensured acceptance and ownership by the community.

#### ***Community commitment***

The community raised awareness of the problem and made a decision to solve it.

#### ***Council support***

A Medical Services Committee was formed to enable Council to address community concern over medical services.

#### ***Promotion of benefits of lifestyle***

The community made an effort to make the rural lifestyle appeal to new families.

#### ***Publicity***

Residents raised the issue in the local media.

#### ***Recruitment consultant used***

Professional managers for the hospital were recruited through a specialised agency.

#### ***State Government assistance***

The problem was raised at a Queensland Community Cabinet. The seriousness of the problem was recognised by the Health Minister and the matter was pursued.

#### ***Strategic plan developed***

A strategic plan was developed to determine priorities.

#### ***Students targeted***

Medical and nursing students were encouraged to visit the hospital with a view to taking up new employment.

#### ***Support to new families***

The Kingaroy community placed a strong emphasis on supporting the families of those medical professionals who were attracted to Kingaroy.

## Contacts

For further information, see the Kingaroy Shire Council website at [www.kingaroy.qld.gov.au](http://www.kingaroy.qld.gov.au)

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For information on Towards Rural and Outback Health Professionals In Queensland (TROHPIQ) see [www.trohpiq.org](http://www.trohpiq.org)

## MEDICAL CENTRE COMES TO TASMAN (TASMANIA)

### Need for a doctor

The Tasman Peninsula, on the south east coast of Tasmania, has one of the lowest average incomes of municipal areas in Australia. The population of the Tasman municipality is around 2,200, and it is a tourist and holiday area that enjoys a large influx of visitors during the summer months. The municipality runs an aged care facility and a small acute bed hospital is attached. The surgery is attached to the hospital and owned by the municipality.

### Medical practice financially marginalLack of suitable accommodation

The attraction and retention of a doctor was proving difficult for the municipality, as the existing private medical practice was considered financially marginal. In the past, the practice had struggled to attract a locum to allow the doctor to take time off.

There was a lack of quality rental accommodation, and what was available generally was insufficient as most doctors required four bedrooms, using one room as an office.

### What led to the change?

### Council unsuccessful in advertising for a doctor

The existing doctor resigned and left the municipality, and the other resident doctor did not wish to take on the practice. The local council advertised for a replacement doctor unsuccessfully for a considerable time.

### Doctor recruitment service used

The municipality then engaged Rivers Medical Services of Western Australia, an international doctor recruitment service, to provide a doctor for the practice. Further, an attraction package was developed where the Tasmanian Government provided \$20,000 assistance to Council for the salary of the doctor. An additional \$30,000 was

**Attraction package offered**

provided by the State Government for supply of on-call services and emergency services for the municipality and nursing home.

The local council also pays Rivers a fee of \$10,000, subsidises the rental of a home to accommodate the doctor (\$7,000), provides a vehicle (\$5,000), and provides a fully serviced surgery (\$5,000).

**Outcomes**

A doctor was engaged and the medical practice has operated successfully under this arrangement for the past five years.

Rivers Medical Services provides cover for periods of leave and special arrangements are made for a locum relief.

**Key Success Factors*****Attraction package offered***

An attraction package was underwritten by the local and State Governments.

***Funding obtained from State Government***

The Tasmanian government assisted with the doctor's salary and on-call and emergency services.

***Recruitment consultant***

The use of an international doctor recruitment service, Rivers Medical Services, was fundamental in searching for a doctor.

**Contacts**

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PO Box 1539  
Fremantle, Western Australia 6959  
Email: [recruitment@rivermedicial.com.au](mailto:recruitment@rivermedicial.com.au)

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## ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A MEDICAL PRACTICE IN SOUTH HEDLAND (WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

### Background

The town of South Hedland is within the Town of Port Hedland in the Pilbara region, Western Australia. South Hedland has a population of approximately 8,000, making it one of the largest regional towns. The iron ore mining sector largely drives the viability of the town, providing valuable employment through its activities and flow-on benefits to small business operators.

Nearly four years ago, a three-doctor practice servicing the community made a business decision to close its doors. Consequently, for nearly two years, the town had no doctor. Despite every effort by Council to recruit doctors, none could be attracted to the town. It has been suggested that that Australian doctors perceive that working in regional Western Australia stunts their professional and career growth.

### What led to the change?

It was unacceptable for South Hedland to be without doctors, and the problem was recognised as a total community responsibility. In these circumstances, the Town of Port Hedland took on the challenge of working through all possible options in the short and long-term, for the betterment of the community.

Two mining companies, BHP Billiton and Dampier Salt, had strong interests in attracting a doctor to the town. The recruitment of professionals to the mines relied heavily on the provision of good medical services for the families of employees.

As the first stage in responding to the problem, a working group was established to develop strategies to attract general practitioners to the town. The group consisted of representatives from:

- East Pilbara Health Services
- BHP Billiton
- Dampier Salt
- Town of Port Hedland.

The group's priority was to find a quick fix solution to provide some medical care for the community. This was achieved with the supply of a 22-seater bus by the Town of Port Hedland with a driver from the *Community Development Employment Program*. The bus transported patients 20 kilometres to the nearest regional hospital.

While this was a positive step, people were reluctant to travel that distance for medical care. This resulted in lower primary health care levels and this impacted on the community as a whole.

Australian doctors not attracted to the area

Unacceptable situation

Working group established with representatives from community and industry

Initial temporary solution

Local medical service preferred by community

**Council and employer contributed to upgrade of medical practice**

During this short-term measure, the Town of Port Hedland and BHP Billiton jointly invested \$45,000 to upgrade the existing medical practice as part of the ongoing effort to recruit doctors. In addition, BHP Billiton made a commitment to supply housing and vehicles as part of an employment package for doctors.

**Outcomes**

Gemini Medical Services were attracted to the region and now operate the practice with three general practitioners recruited from overseas. With a kick-start of \$45,000 to upgrade the practice and provide employee benefits, the practice is self-reliant and operating well. The practice has been operating for two years, raising the level of primary health care in the community. The practice is now a permanent part of the community and there seems to be no expectation that it will close.



*Upgraded health centre (Printed with the permission of the Pilbara Regional Development Commission)*

It has recently been announced that a new \$11 million residential aged care facility for about 50 Pilbara residents will be built adjacent to the health centre, and it is anticipated that a health precinct will eventually be developed in partnership with the community, the Town of Port Hedland and health service providers. The precinct will include the relocation of the regional hospital and other health services.

## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Attraction package offered***

The advertised package included housing, vehicles and other employee benefits.

### ***Community commitment***

The community took the matter into its own hands and formed a working group.

### ***Council support***

The Town of Port Hedland invested in an upgrade of the practice.

### ***Industry/employer support***

BHP Billiton invested in an upgrade of the practice and provided housing and vehicles.

### ***Partnership approach***

A working group was formed comprising representatives of council, major employers and health services.

## **Contact**

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# JOB AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

**Jobs must be available**

**Conditions may need to be equivalent to or better than those in metropolitan areas**

**Need for professional development opportunities and suitable employment for family**

**Emigration expo held in UK**

**Skilled visa application in train**

**Specific skills that are in short supply enable migrants to apply for a visa that offers priority processing**

**Applicant and family granted permanent residence visas**

For many professionals in private and public sector positions, working in a regional area can offer a challenging and exciting work environment, with opportunities to become part of the local community. However, the crucial element is that a job opportunity exists in a regional area in the first place.

Further, if a job is available, the conditions associated with the position may need to be equivalent or better than a similar position in a metropolitan area. For instance, a South Australian Government Report noted that special conditions could be negotiated for the employment of public servants in regional areas, such as guaranteed return to the capital city at regular intervals. However, such offers are rarely made.

Other issues associated with jobs and career opportunities include greater difficulties for professional development. In some cases, being isolated from fellow professionals and the benefits that such contact can bring is a concern, along with the lack of suitable work for a partner or other family members.

## CASE STUDIES

### MIGRATION CHAIN (TASMANIA)

#### Background

In March 2003, Ray Winstone, a general plumber, and his family attended *Emigrate 2003*, an emigration expo in the United Kingdom (UK). Here, they met with an officer from the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development at a stall promoting Tasmania.

Mr Winstone and his family intended to settle in Tasmania, and had applied for a skilled visa to Australia. However, there is at least a one-year processing time for such visa applications. There was a shortage of plumbers in the Tasmanian labour market, and the Department officer noted that there was scope for Mr Winstone to apply for a *State/Territory Nominated Independent (STNI)* visa. This type of visa is designed to encourage skilled migration to regional Australia and forms a part of the suite of State-specific migration mechanisms available.

On returning to Tasmania, the officer confirmed with the Australian Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) that there was strong labour market demand for plumbers in the State.

Mr Winstone formally applied for State Government nomination through the STNI scheme and, after supplying information about his family, occupational skills and capacity to settle in Tasmania, was nominated for a visa in May 2003. The then Minister for Immigration had previously directed his Department to give STNI visa nominees

# JOBS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

**Friend heard of skilled migrant visas**

**Business skills provided qualification for business skills visas**

**Priority processing, subject to submission of acceptable business proposal**

**Potential for another skilled migrant to come to Tasmania**

**Proactive strategy to encourage migration**

**One migrant's positive experience encouraged another**

“priority processing”, and in June 2003, Mr Winstone and his family were granted permanent residence. After settling their affairs in the UK, they moved to Hobart in November 2003.

Mr Winstone had a good friend, Johnny Wilkinson, who was concerned that the quality of life in the UK was deteriorating and that his children would be growing up in a less than ideal environment. After hearing about Tasmania from Mr Winstone, and the possibility of State Government supported visas, he contacted the Department of Economic Development by email. At the time, Mr Wilkinson and his wife owned and operated a thriving newsagency, although he had spent most of his working life as a bank manager. While they did not meet the requirements for skilled migration to Australia, their recent experience as business owners made them ideal candidates for *Business Skills* visas.

State Government sponsored business visa applicants who wish to settle in Tasmania to operate a business and are able to submit a well-researched business proposal are subject to less stringent visa criteria and (as with STNI) their visas are given priority processing. After a series of communications with the Department of Economic Development, Mr Wilkinson visited Tasmania in November 2003. He is currently examining retail businesses either for sale or seeking investment and, when he has finished his commercial research, will be meeting with the Department to discuss sponsorship conditions and a subsequent *Business Skills* visa application.

## What led to the change?

The State Government's proactive strategy of attracting migrants with specific job skills facilitated Mr Winstone's initial migration to Tasmania. This process included the Department of Economic Development having a presence at the emigration expo in the UK, being aware of specific skill shortages and assisting with Mr Winstone's visa application process.

The positive experience enjoyed by Mr Winstone led to Mr Wilkinson's interest in the State.

## Outcomes

Mr Winstone was able to fill a skill shortage in the Tasmanian labour market. The addition of human capital with Mr Winstone's business and technical expertise has benefited the State's economy.

The Department of Economic Development continues to liaise with Mr Wilkinson in relation to business opportunities and the visa application process.

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Mr Wilkinson has the ability to benefit the economy of Tasmania through financial investment and revenue generation. The flow-on effects in terms of Gross State Product and employment generation will also be considerable.

### **Key Success Factors**

#### ***Skilled migration program***

Tasmania uses a number of strategies to attract skilled migrants:

- the Australian Government Migrant *Skill Matching Database*;
- seminars in relevant countries;
- trade shows in relevant countries;
- newspaper advertising;
- migration agents locally and overseas; and
- exhibitions in relevant countries.

#### ***State Government assistance***

Through the marketing of business migration assistance programs, prospective skilled and business immigrants are made aware of the benefits of choosing Tasmania as a destination, and how to receive assistance in this process

Once migrants have relocated to Tasmania, strong after-services are available through the Business and Skilled Migration Unit and other units in the Department of Economic Development.

The Department of Economic Development was able to inform Mr Winstone and Mr Wilkinson of the requirements and processes in applying for a Government sponsored visa. This included:

- advice on providing evidence of business success;
- guidance on commercial research;
- introductions to relevant parties in areas of interest;
- establishing a business in the State; and
- applying to the Department of Immigration, and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA).

### **Contacts**

Business and Skilled Migration Unit  
 Department of Economic Development  
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 Hobart, Tasmania 7001  
 Tel: (03) 6233 5580  
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 Website: <http://www.development.tas.gov.au/whytas.html>

# JOBS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

## NHILL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (VICTORIA)

### Background

**Industry established in area**

The processed food sector has a significant role in the economy of Nhill, in the Wimmera Mallee region of Victoria. Nhill has several large employers, including Luv-A-Duck, which supplies value-added duck products and employs 130 people, and Lowan Whole Foods, a cereal and bakery-based product manufacturer employing 60 people.

**Shortage of skilled labour**

Local food processors are contending with skills shortages from two perspectives: the region has found it increasingly difficult to retain skilled workers, and attracting appropriately skilled people has become a major issue for the food industry in general.

**Regional employment not favoured**

It was known that there was a tendency for students to disregard employment options in the rural sector because of concerns about accommodation, cost of living, lifestyle and 'fitting in'.

**Study tour organised to showcase work and lifestyle opportunities**

Study tours were organised by RMIT University and Wimmera 2020, a committee of the *Wimmera Catchment Management Authority*, in September 2002 and September 2003. The purpose of the tours was to highlight regional Victoria as a food industry career opportunity and a vibrant place to live, encouraging students to consider a career in the rural sector. Staff and final year Consumer Science students at RMIT University visited local food and agribusiness organisations.

**State assistance through regional development agency**

Food Victoria has initiated a pilot project involving the placement of two experienced teachers to promote food industry careers through the *Teacher Release to Industry Program* (TRIP). Food Victoria is part of Regional Development Victoria, a statutory body attached to the Victorian State Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. It provides a framework for government and industry to work together to improve the international competitiveness of the Victorian food sector and to remove impediments to the sustainable growth of the industry.

**Industry placements for teachers to promote careers to students**

One teacher is developing specific information on careers available in the local food industry and the skills and qualifications required. This person will coordinate the development of a careers promotion program, and facilitate relationships between students, teachers, parents, training institutes and food companies in the region. The other will be a joint placement between Luv-A-Duck and Lowan Whole Foods, also identifying and promoting careers in the food industry.

**Employer offered work to students**

Luv-A-Duck also offers weekend employment opportunities to local high school students, and invites tertiary students studying away from the region to return and work with the company over their summer study break. Education and training are important to the business, and employees gain nationally accredited qualifications through on-site training in conjunction with the University of Ballarat.



*Students on a factory tour (Printed with the permission and support of Wimmera 2020 and Luv-A-Duck)*

**Work opportunities and lifestyle promoted to prospective employees**

Prospective employees from outside the region are encouraged to bring partners and children to Nhill during the interview process to experience the local lifestyle and to identify job opportunities for family members. In recent years, Luv-A-Duck has also brought workers to Australia through the *Skilled Migration Program* in select cases where candidates with specific skills could not be found locally.

**Outcomes**

While it is difficult to assess the scale of the impact of the tour experience, an evaluation of the 2002 tour showed that the study tour had broken down some barriers and helped students to make more informed decisions about working in the rural sector. The loss of direct contact with family and friendship groups became less of a concern when students learnt about the lifestyle and the close rural community.

Sixteen of the 21 students claimed that they would definitely consider a job in the rural sector; none of the remaining five would dismiss the possibility entirely, but were guarded in their responses.

The comments suggested that, while they would not actively seek work in the country, they would consider a position if it was offered, which appeared not to have been the case before the study tour.

**Skilled migrants employed**

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# JOBS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Employer support***

An employer provided job and work experience opportunities to retain local people and attract skilled workers to the company.

### ***Informative materials produced***

Specific information has been developed on careers in the food industry.

### ***Partnership approach***

It was acknowledged that government and industry must link with educators and students, and take the lead in identifying and promoting the full range of skilled career paths they offer to a wide range of interests.

### ***Promotion of benefits of regional lifestyle***

Examples of social opportunities for newcomers were given to reduce concerns of isolation, and information about regional cost of living and accommodation was provided.

### ***Students targeted***

The strategy included aiming for the retention of those students already in the region, attracting those who had left to return, and attracting young people to build careers in the region.

### ***Support to new families***

All family members need to feel comfortable with the opportunities and lifestyle available, and this was acknowledged in the attraction program.

### ***University support***

RMIT encouraged students to participate in study tours.

## **Contact**

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## PANDA RANCH STONE FRUIT FARM, WOOD WOOD (VICTORIA)

### Background

Wood Wood is an area in the rural city of Swan Hill and is located approximately 35km north west of the town of Swan Hill. The town of Swan Hill is situated on the Murray River, about 340km north west of Melbourne. It has a population of about 9,800 and services a large rural hinterland.

Swan Hill covers an area of 6,100 square kilometres. It has a diverse agricultural base ranging from a large wheat-sheep belt to irrigated viticulture and horticulture along the Murray River.

During the past few years, the Rural City of Swan Hill has experienced significant skill shortages in a large number of industries, particularly agriculture. Low unemployment led to the need to find new, skilled labour to move into the region.

Panda Ranch is a stone fruit farm in Wood Wood, and owner Peter Lamb was seeking to employ someone at the middle management level.

### What led to the change?

Following an extensive but unrewarding search of the local labour market, Mr Lamb contacted the Victorian Government's Skilled Migration Unit.

### Outcomes

The Skilled Migration Unit presented Mr Lamb with several resumes. One was from Mr Dumisani Mhlanga, a farm manager in Zimbabwe, who had responded to an advertisement in a local farming magazine regarding positions available in Victoria for skilled farmers.

With his extensive knowledge of agriculture and unique knowledge of pluots (plums crossed with apricots) - skills highly regarded by his prospective employers – Mr Mhlanga was the ideal candidate for Panda Ranch. After matching his skills with Panda Ranch's needs, the Skilled Migration Unit provided information and services to help bring the two together, enabling Mr Mhlanga to acquire a *Temporary Residency* visa.

**Agricultural area**

**Skill shortages in region**

**Middle management staff required on fruit farm**

**Failure to find a suitable local employer led to consideration of skilled migrants**

## JOBS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES



*Mr Mhlanga at work on the farm  
(Printed with the permission of Skilled Migration Programs, Victoria)*

Almost one year later, Mr Mhlanga and his family, now permanent residents, are firmly entrenched in the community and both parties are extremely satisfied with the results.

"The benefits of having Dumisani with us have been numerous," Mr Lamb said. "He brought with him a great ability to work with staff from his experience ... and his background in horticulture has matched the philosophy we're working with here. Our company spends a lot of resources investigating different growing methods around the world, and here we have Dumi bringing the Zimbabwean perspective to our doorstep."

Mr Mhlana agreed. "The challenges ... call for my experience and this makes the whole thing more interesting for my career. I, too, learn some interesting farming principles from the local community, and, blending that with my experience, this makes for the best I could provide for the Victorians and Australia as a whole."

Overall, he feels that he is settling in quite well. "As a family, the best things we like about Wood Wood and Swan Hill are the schools and the level of education they are providing," he said. "The sporting facilities are excellent for us and our children, and best of all is the community around us."

### **Key Success Factors**

#### ***Skilled migration program/State Government assistance***

An initiative of the Victorian State Government, the Skilled Migration Unit (SMU) helps link Victorian employers, industries and regions to experienced overseas-qualified

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professionals and tradespeople, while helping migrants with skills in demand and their families settle in Victoria, Australia.

The SMU assisted Mr Lamb in finding a suitably skilled employee from overseas.

### **Contact**

Skilled Migration Unit

Department for Victorian Communities

Level 8 / 1 Spring Street

Melbourne, Victoria 3000

Tel: (03) 9208 3368 or 1800 110 109 (within Victoria)

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Website: [www.migration.vic.gov.au](http://www.migration.vic.gov.au)

# INFRASTRUCTURE

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**The importance of infrastructure**

**Infrastructure requirements may vary from one location to another**

**Lack of local services**

**Community identified new business needs  
Land sold at nominal prices**

**Business start-up costs high**

**Factory workshop and residence packages**

Reliable, accessible and affordable transport and telecommunication infrastructure and services are essential to maintaining family, social, and professional links. They reduce perceptions of isolation and remoteness, and can have a significant impact on individual and family decisions to live and work in regional areas.

Of course, these and other infrastructure issues will vary between places and have different consequences for people in different circumstances. For instance, a regional town may provide sufficient infrastructure for a business to operate at a base level, but this infrastructure may be insufficient to support the expansion of the business in a way that would occur in a metropolitan centre.

## CASE STUDIES

### CARNAMAH FACTORY UNITS (WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

#### Background

The town of Carnamah has a population of 360 and is situated in the northern midlands of Western Australia, 308km north of Perth and around 100km from the coast. Like many small towns, a lack of locally provided services and a dwindling population are issues faced by Carnamah.

#### What led to the change?

A community forum held in Carnamah in 1990 identified a range of new business needs, including attracting light industry to the town. As one means of attracting skilled tradespeople to set up business in Carnamah, the Council obtained approval to sell a number of residential and industrial lots in 1993, by private treaty for a nominal sum per lot.

Interest was expressed in this initiative by many skilled tradespeople considering setting up a business in Carnamah. However, hurdles still existed, such as:

- cost of developing business premises;
- start-up costs; and
- suitable housing for many of these tradespeople.

As a result, the Shire of Carnamah developed a proposal to construct three factory workshops and residences, and offered them as packages to attract skilled tradespeople to the town of Carnamah. Applications for the workshop and house packages were considered from tradespeople who would not compete with existing businesses in

Carnamah. Workshop and house packages were let at subsidised rates for an initial 12 month period, with the tenants having the option of continuing to rent at market rates or purchasing, with the proceeds to be used for further similar developments.



*New residence – part of an attraction package (Printed with the permission of Carnamah Shire Council)*

**Funding from  
Australian and  
State Government  
agencies**

The Shire of Carnamah successfully sought funding from the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services and Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business to build the three factory units with adjoining offices. Funding was received from Western Australia's Country Housing Authority, North Midlands Business Enterprise Centre, and the Mid West Development Commission to assist in the building of the three houses.

### **Outcomes**

Since the completion of construction of the three factory workshops and houses in 1999/2000, two workshop and house packages have successfully been let, attracting two new skilled tradespeople to Carnamah – a mechanic and an electrician.

The mechanic specialises in repairs and manufacturing for the agricultural industry. In the two years since commencement, the size of the workshop has doubled, a new office has been added, and an apprentice employed. The electrician specialises in refrigeration and air conditioning, and also employs an apprentice.

There has been an expression of interest in the third factory unit and house package by a plumber.

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# INFRASTRUCTURE

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*One of the three new factory workshops  
(Printed with the permission of Carnamah Shire Council)*

## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Attraction package***

Factory workshops and residences were offered as a package.

### ***Community consultation***

A community forum was held

### ***Council support***

Council was instrumental in the provision of an attraction package.

### ***Funding obtained***

Council obtained funds from a variety of sources to facilitate the project.

### ***Regional Development Organisation support***

The Mid West Development Commission strongly supported this initiative and provided assistance.

### ***State Government assistance***

The State Government provided support and expertise in the development of the proposal.

**Town changing from mineral and agricultural economy**

**IT sector now a significant industry**

**Ballarat becoming a knowledge centre**

**Vision of IT City**

**Technology park established at University – strategic initiative of University and City**

**IBM's South East Asian headquarters established**

**IT business incubator set up**

**Contact**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT – IBM REGIONAL SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS CENTRE (VICTORIA)**

**Background**

The City of Ballarat is located approximately 110km north-west of Melbourne. It has a population of about 85,000, with most living in the town of Ballarat, which is a regional service provider. Traditionally the City prospered on mineral and agricultural-based resources, but today, retail trade, manufacturing, health and community services, and education are the key industries. Tourism also plays an important part in the local economy.

Over the last decade, the information technology sector has emerged as a significant industry within the region, and today the municipality hosts a modern communications network that provides easy data exchange worldwide.

Strategic partnerships with the locally growing information technology sector and tertiary institutions are also adding to Ballarat's increasing importance as a *knowledge centre* within Victoria.

The City of Ballarat had a vision of becoming an 'IT City' and in 1995, established IT 2010 - a strategy for IT development. A key part of this strategy was the establishment of a technology park on the Mount Helen Campus of the University of Ballarat. Officially launched in February 1995, the Ballarat Technology Park, a joint venture between the university and the City of Ballarat, was the first step towards implementing a strategic initiative for the region to promote and develop information technologies.

The establishment of the headquarters of IBM's computing services for South East Asia was the first major coup for the Park, and IBM now employs more than 260 people at this facility. Over the subsequent years, the Park has also become home to the Greenhill Enterprise Centre, an IT-focussed business incubator. Its tenants include Oztrak, which has grown to a multi-million dollar company in three years, businesses started by

# INFRASTRUCTURE

**IBM established a development centre**

**Partnership between IBM and University of Ballarat**

university students and graduates, and the Victorian Government's State Revenue Office.

## What led to the change?

In 2002, IBM decided to extend its level of operation on the Ballarat Technology Park by establishing an additional Centre for Application Software Development in order to export a range of development and support services to its Asia Pacific base of client companies.

The proposal also included the development of an *Earn as you Learn* initiative jointly developed by IBM and the University of Ballarat. It allows up to 25 university students during the commencing year to undertake a course that incorporates a full year of work experience with IBM over the four-year course duration. Beginning at the second year of the course, students are able to combine their IBM work experience with their studies.

## Outcomes

Since 1995, IBM has offered over 40 positions to University of Ballarat graduates.

The 2002 project has resulted in new knowledge-based economy jobs in a regional location, thereby increasing the wealth generation capacity of the area. This will contribute to the growth of the local economy and community.

It was agreed between all stakeholders that the new Centre would be set up in a refurbished building on the university campus. The new Centre is expected to create up to 300 IT jobs in Ballarat and it is estimated that it will inject up to \$84 million per annum into the Victorian economy.



*Premier Stephen Bracks opening the IBM Regional Software Solutions Centre in Ballarat (Printed with the permission of Regional Development Victoria)*

The Victorian Government provided \$1.5 million from its Regional Infrastructure Development Fund and the University of Ballarat contributed \$500,000 towards the refurbishment. The Australian Government (DETYA) *Capital Development Pool* also provided \$500,000 to support the *Earn as you Learn* program.

The new IBM Regional Software Solutions Centre opened in July 2003 and has further cemented Ballarat's Information Technology reputation.

The University of Ballarat has been allocated 60 new places in IT courses, with the *Earn as you Learn* initiative providing excellent education and 'on the job' training and employment opportunities for prospective students. This will also enable them to remain in the region at the completion of their course, and IBM has indicated that they will offer ongoing employment to graduates.

The new Centre is an important link in the continued development of the Ballarat Technology Park, and will contribute substantially to developing a critical mass of IT expertise in the Ballarat region. This, in turn, has the potential to become a magnet to attract other IT businesses and professionals.

### **Key Success Factors**

#### ***Action/Strategic Plan developed***

The City of Ballarat had a vision of becoming an *IT City* and in 1995, established a strategy for IT development called *IT 2010*. In addition, the University of Ballarat was also strongly committed to the establishment of a Technology Park on its campus.

#### ***Attraction package offered***

To secure the new IBM Centre, the Victorian Government offered financial support for the refurbishment of a building on the university campus.

#### ***Council support***

The City of Ballarat worked with the University of Ballarat and IBM to facilitate the project.

#### ***Funding obtained***

The Government of Victoria and the Australian Government contributed significantly to the capital required for the venture.

#### ***Industry/employer support***

Undergraduate students are employed by IBM and receive 'on the job' training.

#### ***Partnership approach***

The University of Ballarat, IBM, the City of Ballarat, the State Government and the Australian Government worked together on this project.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

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## ***State Government assistance***

The Victorian Government was supportive in obtaining funding.

## ***Students targeted***

Students were the focus of this project, tracking their study and then remaining in the region to work.

## ***University support***

The University of Ballarat and IBM created a joint initiative to include work experience in a degree course.

## **Contact**

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Email: [diana.tremigliozi@dsrd.vic.gov.au](mailto:diana.tremigliozi@dsrd.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [www.business.vic.gov.au/ridf](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/ridf)

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Post-compulsory and tertiary education opportunities are increasing in regional areas

Limited access to midwifery training

External courses available. Most placements at city or regional hospitals

Online courses developed

In many parts of regional Australia, tertiary educational institutions have an increasingly stronger presence, offering more student places.

Many regions see the location of university and TAFE campuses as being both a vital source of future skilled employees and as a means of retaining young people within their regions. The number and funding basis of tertiary places in regional Australia is a key issue.

## CASE STUDIES

### ONLINE MIDWIFERY COURSES (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)

#### Background

A nationwide shortage of midwives resulted in limited access to midwifery education for people in rural South Australia.

The University of South Australia (UniSA) had been offering a Bachelor of Midwifery externally for some time. Study guides and books were available, and midwifery lecturers were accessible via teleconferencing facilities. External students were required to attend the Underdale Campus of UniSA and carry out most placements at city or regional hospitals. Rural hospitals had expressed a desire to be more involved in placements for midwifery students in order to retain and attract employees and improve midwifery resources in their hospitals.

#### What led to the change?

Dr Heather Hancock, Senior Lecturer in Midwifery at UniSA, undertook a year-long project to write four new midwifery courses for the Bachelor of Midwifery. The courses were designed to be presented in a fully interactive contemporary online format that used problem-based learning.

These online courses commenced in 2002. Registered nurses can complete the Bachelor of Midwifery full-time over one year or part-time over two years. The online courses contain explicit and detailed problem-based learning material available under secure access. Students learn and work within a *practice model* for each of the four courses, moving from continuity of care, through team midwifery, case load midwifery to community midwifery with real women in their pre-, intra and post-natal experiences. The online courses involve individual and group-based chat rooms and discussion forums as well as access to library resources 24 hours a day.

Midwifery students in the registered nurse component of the Bachelor of Midwifery must attend one week on campus at the beginning of the program, as well as some

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Rural students reimbursed for travel**

**More field placements in rural and regional hospitals**

**Continuity with patients**

**More rural placements for both rural and metropolitan students**

workshops after field placements, and a week at the end of the program. The program attracted funding to reimburse rural midwifery students for expenses such as travel, and for metropolitan midwifery students who wished to undertake rural placements.

The program has tried to facilitate field placement accessibility wherever students are located. This has increased as rural facilities have recognised the need for local support for students, making more placements available. The courses offer greater flexibility, transparency, depth and breadth in learning for remote students compared with traditional external learning packages.

One successful example of best practice in field placement has been Loxton Hospital, where midwifery students have had continuity with pregnant women in the Riverland community to the advantage of women and midwifery students alike. The Whyalla campus of UniSA has encouraged local midwifery students to undertake placements at northern hospitals by supporting them in various ways, such as travel reimbursement, assistance with HECS, textbooks and/or paid leave from their current positions. More metropolitan midwifery students have involved themselves in rural midwifery placements, increasing the likelihood of them returning to these areas for future employment.

## **Outcomes**

The online delivery program has played a key role in attracting more students to the Bachelor of Midwifery program, as well as accessing regional hospitals for field experience and employment and increasing awareness of the possibilities for midwifery field experience in rural settings.

Students have been encouraged to stay in their local areas, as they have not had to go to the metropolitan area for education and placements.

Two-day *Midwifery Facilitator Workshops* are conducted at Underdale campus for midwives working with midwifery students to promote their knowledge and understanding of the program, support learning and development in their particular environments, and gain facilitation skills to enhance their experiential education.

## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Employer support***

Hospital supported students in terms of reimbursing travel costs, assisting with HECS and/or providing text books.

### ***Industry support***

Field placements located in rural areas.

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**Unable to attract professionals**

**Little capacity to train and to retain skilled people**

**Community forged link with university**

**University established a regional campus**

### ***Online course materials developed***

Real, practice focused problem-based learning course materials developed in online format.

### ***Students targeted***

Students were a focus of this project which enabled them to study and gain work placements in regional locations.

### **Contact**

Dr Heather Hancock  
Senior Lecturer in Midwifery  
University of South Australia, Underdale Campus  
Underdale, South Australia 5032  
Tel: (08) 8302 6494

## **ATTRACTING PROFESSIONALS TO SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS (VICTORIA)**

### **Background**

The Southern Grampians Shire experienced a significant economic downturn in the early 1990s, resulting in a general loss of confidence. Contributing factors included low rural commodity prices and the population drift to the capital cities and larger regional centres.

The inability to attract professionals to the region meant existing industries and organisations were in danger of not being able to maintain their viability.

Although the region had excellent infrastructure, there was little capacity to train and retain skilled young people.

### **What led to the change?**

Some members of the local community forged a link with RMIT University in Melbourne. The relationship resulted in an intercultural exchange with international students, which helped open up the local community to new ideas, possibilities and cultures.

The University has now established a campus in Hamilton. Construction of the campus was funded through a grant from the Victorian State Government, together with financial assistance from the Australian Government, a substantial donation from local philanthropists and some funding from RMIT itself.

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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## **Graduate Attraction Program**

The development of RMIT Hamilton was driven by twin concerns: stemming the tide of young people moving to metropolitan centres, and raising participation rates in post-compulsory education in regional areas.

The campus allows flexible education and actively encourages and nurtures a range of partnerships in the district.

The Southern Grampians *Graduate Attraction Program* is one program run from the campus where RMIT is the facilitator and a local businessman is the Chair. A *Young Graduates Social Network* is one outcome, which provides an 'antidote' to the professional and social isolation many young professionals experience. The Network has surveyed local businesses to seek out underlying issues and concerns, and is establishing a strategy to address them.

## **Professional Development Centre**

RMIT has a Professional Development Centre at the campus. This will support continuing training and education, thereby assisting to attract and retain professionals, and also enhance professional and social opportunities for local people.

### **Outcomes**

Few networks and partnerships can exist without support. RMIT has considered it a priority to foster such links, but it takes a considerable amount of resources – both financial and people.

While the University is a logical and well-placed facilitator, offering access to further education, professional development, research and external links and perspectives, there is no capacity under the current funding system to recognise an urban university operating in this positive way in a regional setting. The campus could only be set up using grants and other funding.

The delivery of education services and infrastructure – hard and soft – is critical to where skilled workers and professionals choose to work and live in the regions. RMIT Hamilton is a model of how this can be done.

The campus now injects more than \$3 million a year into the western district community of Hamilton. Moreover, the 24 inaugural graduate nurses secured employment, with 90 per cent finding jobs in the local area.

The RMIT *International Community Exchange Program* (RICE) was recently recognised for its contribution to the region by winning the inaugural *Can Do Community Award* for Victoria.

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## **Key Success Factors**

### ***Funding obtained***

Funding was obtained from both the Victorian and Australian Governments.

### ***Partnership approach***

Members of the local community forged a link with a metropolitan university.

### ***University support***

The University established a local campus which included a Centre for Regional and Rural Development.

A Professional Development Centre was set up and a *Graduate Attraction Program* developed.

## **Contact**

Dr Margaret Skene  
Head, RMIT Hamilton  
Glenelg Highway  
Hamilton, Victoria 3300  
Tel: (03) 5572 0511  
Email: [margaret.skene@rmit.edu.au](mailto:margaret.skene@rmit.edu.au)

# LIFESTYLE

**Perceptions of lifestyle in regional Australia are often unfair**

**Need to promote positive features of regional lifestyle**

**Occupational therapist and physiotherapist not available locally**

**Needs analysis showed community wanted local service**

**Community promoted region as good place to work and live**

Perceptions of lifestyle and community in the regions may be important in attracting professional and skilled people. Most city people, often unfairly, perceive regional Australia as 'second rate' in relation to access to services, lifestyle and financial wellbeing. Some expect to 'do their time' and then return to the more familiar surroundings of the city.

There is a need to inform potential and newly-arrived professionals and skilled workers of what information and services are available in regional areas. Much more can be done to dispel negative myths and promote the very many positive features of living in a regional area.

## CASE STUDIES

### AYR–HOME HILL (QUEENSLAND)

#### Background

Residents of Ayr and Home Hill, twin towns separated by the Burdekin River in the Lower Burdekin District, found themselves travelling approximately 80km north to Townsville to access the services of occupational therapists and physiotherapists. The area is the largest sugar-producing region in Australia, has an abundance of natural wildlife, and an estimated 19,000 residents living in the Burdekin district – with around 8,600 in Ayr and 3,000 in Home Hill.

#### What led to the change?

At the beginning of 2002, the Ayr Chamber of Commerce and a range of community and other organisations designed and carried out a survey on the economic diversification of the community. The community identified that residents were travelling a significant distance to Townsville to see an occupational therapist, as there was no such service in their own community.

The local community publicised the situation, encouraging occupational therapists and physiotherapists to visit Ayr. Ayr was promoted as offering a relaxed lifestyle and environment, and being a good place to live and work.

#### Outcome

The community was able to arrange for three occupational therapists/ physiotherapists to visit the Burdekin district twice a week. This led to an occupational therapist from Townsville relocating permanently to the Burdekin, providing a successful case of a community working together to attract and retain a skilled professional.

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## Key Success Factors

### **Community consultation**

A survey on the economic diversification of the community was designed and conducted by the Chamber of Commerce, and a range of community and other organisations to identify community needs.

### **Promotion of benefits of regional lifestyle**

The community promoted the region as good place to work and live.

### **Publicity**

The local community publicised the situation and occupational therapists and physiotherapists were encouraged to visit the town.

## Contacts and Links

Burdekin Community Association Inc  
130 Queen St  
Ayr, Queensland 4807  
Tel: (07) 4783 3744  
Website: [www.thesupportcentre.org](http://www.thesupportcentre.org)

Burdekin Shire Council  
PO Box 974  
Ayr, Queensland 4807  
Tel: (07) 4783 9800  
Email: [burdekinc@burdekin.qld.gov.au](mailto:burdekinc@burdekin.qld.gov.au)  
Website: [www.burdekin.qld.gov.au](http://www.burdekin.qld.gov.au)

## CUMMINS ON TRACK (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)

*2002 National Can Do Community Award Winner (FaCS)*

### **Background**

By the late 1980s, the community of Cummins on Eyre Peninsula, South Australia was facing a crisis. The three banks and main street businesses had closed, sporting clubs were amalgamated, service depots closed, transport services stopped and a front page article in the State's major daily described the town as 'dying'.

Town said to  
be dying

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## Enterprise committee formed

### What led to the change?

Following groundwork by the Cummins Area School Council, the Cummins and District Enterprise Committee was formed in 1997 to initiate a major commercial and community revitalisation campaign - the *Cummins on Track* program.

The committee looked to the future by celebrating the past. Cummins was built originally as a railway town, and the railway became the focus of a range of projects and initiatives.

### Outcomes

The major event produced by the committee is the *Cummins IGA Kalamazoo*, now in its sixth year. Kalamazoos are hand-operated rail carts used by rail workers to travel up and down the line to work and carry goods. The dual railway tracks that pass through the centre of town are used for the annual race event that attracts around 4,000 people to the town.

The history of the railway is also celebrated through the Railway Cafe, Railway Triangle Park and Cummins Community Caravan Park Carriages. A Railway Interpretive Centre will be established in a guard's van in the near future.

The economic impact of the *Cummins on Track* project includes the expansion of the Cummins Milling Company to export abalone feed both inter and intrastate, and to New Zealand, and the opening of the Cummins Community Bank, which recently announced profits in its second year of operation.

A specialist furniture and wood restoration business and a commercial cut flower shop also opened up in the town, resulting in no empty business premises.

Cummins Area School is maintaining student numbers and has recorded zero unemployment for school-leavers for three consecutive years. The school has no difficulty attracting and retaining high quality teachers.

Cummins Medical Centre has expanded, attracting additional visiting specialists, and is an accredited surgery for doctor training. The local hospital has established a cadetship for enrolled nurses and provides support for the training of registered nurses.

By working on its strengths to re-establish growth, Cummins has become a prosperous and thriving place that attracts and retains high quality professionals.

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## **Key Success Factors**

### ***An Enterprise Committee was formed***

This initiated a major commercial and community revitalisation campaign.

### ***Redevelopment and revitalisation of town***

The town's historic past was promoted through refurbishment and community events to improve services and lifestyle.

## **Contact**

Ms Michelle Mahoney

Coordinator

Cummins and District Enterprise Committee

Cummins, South Australia 5631

Tel: (08) 8676 2106 or 0428 877 470

# KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

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The strategies and methodologies used in the case studies have been grouped under each of the key imperatives as key success factors in attracting and retaining skilled people in regional Australia.

## HOUSING

### Strategies

- Action/strategic plan developed
- Community consultation
- Community commitment
- Council support
- Development groups created
- Informative materials produced
- Partnership approach
- Publicity
- Redevelopment and revitalisation of town

### Methodologies

- Development Group managed development and shared the risk
- Innovative approach to land subdivision and housing development
- Practical encouragement with information for landowners
- Various accommodation styles developed to encourage people to take up residence in the town

## HEALTH

### Strategies

- Action/strategic plan developed
- Assistance from professional health organisation
- Attraction package offered
- Community consultation
- Community commitment
- Council support
- Funding obtained
- Employer support fund
- Partnership approach
- Promotion of benefits of lifestyle
- Publicity

- Recruitment consultant used
- Skilled migration program
- State Government assistance
- Support to new families
- Students targeted

### **Methodologies**

- Community workshops held to chart a course of action
- Community actively encouraged integration of families with the community through welcome events and personal contact
- Council assisted in purchase of equipment and maintenance of practice
- New Medical Services Committee formed by Council
- Rental subsidy from local government
- Salary assistance from local government
- Short-term interim solution provided to maintain service

## **JOBS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Strategies**

- Industry/employer support
- Informative materials produced and distributed
- Partnership approach
- Promotion of benefits of regional lifestyle
- Skilled migration program
- State/Australian Government assistance
- Support to new families
- Students targeted
- University support

### **Methodologies**

- Industry identified and promoted skilled career paths
- Jobs and work experience advertised outside local area
- Partnership of government, businesses and educational institutions
- Prospective employees given examples of social opportunities, to reduce concerns of isolation
- Prospective employees given information about regional cost of living and accommodation

# KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

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## INFRASTRUCTURE

### Strategies

- Action/strategic plan developed
- Attraction package offered
- Community consultation
- Council support
- Funding obtained
- Industry/employer support
- Partnership approach
- Regional Development Organisation Support
- State Government assistance
- Students targeted
- University support

### Methodologies

- Establishment of technology park
- Former mineral/agricultural based area looked to the IT industry as an area of employment
- Factory workshops and residences built and offered as a package
- Loan terms made attractive
- Residential and industrial lots sold for a nominal sum
- University-industry link
- Work experience offered to students

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Strategies

- Employer support
- Industry support
- Online course materials developed
- Partnership approach
- Students targeted
- University support

### Methodologies

- Course work developed in online format
- Employer support – books, travel, HECS, leave

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- Members of the local community forged a link with a metropolitan university
- Professional Development Centre established
- University developed *Graduate Attraction Program*
- University established a local campus – Centre for Regional and Rural Development
- Work placement opportunities made available

## LIFESTYLE

### Strategies

- Community consultation
- Community commitment
- Enterprise Committee created
- Promotion of benefits of regional lifestyle
- Publicity
- Redevelopment, revitalisation of town to improve services and lifestyle

### Methodologies

- Community promoted the region to skilled professionals as good place to work and live
- Community publicised its need for occupational therapists and physiotherapists and visits arranged
- Publicity used to attract visitors and future residents
- Survey on the economic diversification of the community
- Town's historic past promoted through refurbishment and events

## SUMMARY OF KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The key success factors that have been reported are not definitive – some important factors may have been overlooked or not reported.

The key success factors reported in the case studies have been grouped in the table on the next page, showing which have been successful for the various key imperatives.

# KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

**TABLE OF KEY SUCCESS FACTORS**

STRATEGIES/ METHODOLOGIES	IMPERATIVES					
	Housing	Health	Jobs and Career Opportunities	Infrastructure	Education & Training	Lifestyle
Action/strategic plan developed	●	●		●		
Advertisements for jobs/work experience placed outside local area						
Assistance from professional organisation/association						
Attraction package offered (salary/ premises/ land discounts)	●	●		●		
Community consultation/ workshops/needs surveys	●	●		●		●
Community commitment	●	●				●
Council support – active endorsement, contribution		●		●		
Council support – salary/housing/land/business premises subsidy	●	●		●		●
Development/Enterprise Group created	●					
Funding obtained from State/Australian Government/other programs		●		●		
Industry/employer support - funding		●		●		
Industry/employer support - HECS, books, leave					●	
Industry/employer support - weekend/vacation work/work placement opportunities for students, training, qualifications			●		●	
Industry/employer support - relocation to area						
Informative materials produced	●		●			
Online study course/study materials developed					●	
Partnership approach – e.g. government, business, education	●	●	●	●	●	
Promotion of benefits of regional lifestyle (promotional materials/ arrangement of visits)		●	●			●
Publicity		●				●
Recruitment consultant		●				
Redevelopment and revitalisation of town				●		●
Regional Development Organisation Support	●					●
Skilled migration program			●			
State Government assistance (excluding funding program)		●	●	●		
Support to new families		●	●			
Students targeted		●	●	●		●
University support		●	●	●	●	●

# KEY SUCCESS INDICATORS

There is no formula for attracting skilled people to regional Australia – strategies and methodologies are as individual as the communities themselves.

A number of the reported key success factors are common to several case studies. Those listed below frequently appear to contribute to the success of initiatives in a variety of key imperative areas. For this reason, they have been grouped as key success indicators.

## **Assistance from professional associations and other service providers**

Making use of professional associations, such as Urana's assistance from the Border Division of General Practice and Tasman's use of a medical recruitment agency, has offered positive outcomes. The existence of such organisations is not always readily known, but obtaining this information from industry and professional associations would appear to be worthwhile.

## **Community commitment**

Examples of community commitment include organising community consultation, developing an action plan, holding workshops to develop solutions, and formalising an action group such as a Development Group or an Enterprise Committee.

## **Community revitalisation**

A far greater recognition is now given to the potential for cultural tourism to generate jobs in a sustainable way.

Arts and cultural development can stimulate economic activity and operate as an effective tool in regional development. A culturally rich environment has great appeal to residents, tourist, business leaders and investors.

*Art and cultural experiences can provide points of attraction in ... regional centres, create new products in the market place, add value to others, assist in trade, corporate and customer relations and help create quality environments and desirable base locations from which business can operate.<sup>1</sup>*

The resurgence of Cummins, based on its heritage past, is an excellent example of revitalisation through the endeavours of the community. Using the historic railway as a focus for activities and events, the town came alive, a demand for services was created, and medical, teaching and banking services were retained.

## **Council support**

The local council is a powerful link from the community to outside services. Local government has structured links with both State and Australian Governments and

<sup>1</sup> *Hope for the future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy p.253*

## KEY SUCCESS INDICATORS

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represents a voice of the community for industry and service providers. The visible endorsement of council lends weight to a community proposal. The State Government intervention following a Community Cabinet Meeting in Kingaroy, where the Council coordinated support for improved medical service, and the assistance to Carnamah Council from State and Australian Government programs is indicative of this.

Council may be persuaded that the matter is so significant that a budget allocation may be provided. This was exemplified in both the underwriting of the doctor's salary package by the Tasman Council and the State Government, and in the purchase of the South Burnett Community Private Hospital by the Kingaroy Shire.

### **Employer/industry support**

Employers can assist in both retaining local residents who would otherwise go to metropolitan centres and attracting new employees. The food processing industries in Nhill, for example, enabled workers to receive accreditation for training, paid for HECS, and contributed to books and travel expenses of students. Work placements featured in the Hamilton study, and IBM worked with the University of Ballarat to provide students with work experience and graduates with jobs.

### **Funding assistance**

Funding from grants is sometimes, although not always, a solution. A variety of programs are set in place from time to time by local, State and Australian Governments. Any list would quickly become out of date and lose its usefulness. Contact details of central agencies are provided in Appendix 1.

### **Incentives**

Incentives can provide both an attraction to work for an employer, and a strategy for retention. Employers providing money and allowing leave for study, as illustrated by the South Australian Online Midwifery Course case study, assist in attracting and retaining professional staff. This is also shown by the provision of subsidised housing for a doctor, nominal prices for the purchase of land and a workshop/house package for tradespeople in Carnamah.

### **Partnerships and collaboration**

Partnership formation and collaboration is another valuable strategy, ensuring commitment from stakeholders other than community members, and bringing a force greater than the sum of its parts to an initiative. This was well illustrated by the partnership arrangements for the provision of housing in the Colac Otway Shire, the

collaboration of government, industry and education providers in Nhill, the linkage of the Southern Grampians community with the University of Melbourne and the development of the IBM Regional Software Solutions Centre at Ballarat.

### **Promotion of region and its lifestyle**

Promoting the attractiveness of living in the region was used to attract skilled people in several of the case studies. Each community has its own distinctive appeal, best identified by those who love to live in it. The communities of Ayr/Home Hill and Nhill successfully used visits and work experience to enable people to see for themselves what life in regional Australia offers.

### **Regional development organisation support**

Regional development organisations, located in regions and having a good understanding of local issues, are well positioned to assist both in the practical sense, and to act as conduits to both State and Australian Governments and the programs and funding they provide. The Mid West Regional Development Commission is an example of successful regional support in the Carnamah Factory Units case study.

### **Skilled migration program**

#### ***State-Specific and Regional Migration***

A number of State-specific and regional migration (SSRM) initiatives have been introduced, in consultation with State and Territory governments and regional authorities. The people targeted under these initiatives are skilled and generally under 45 years of age with good English skills.

Australian businesses may be eligible to sponsor skilled workers, for positions which cannot be filled by the local labour market, under a number of temporary and permanent skilled migration programs.

The three initiatives that are particularly relevant to employers are the *Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme*, the *Skill Matching Database* and the *Business (Long Stay) Visa*.

#### ***Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme***

Under the *Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme* (RSMS) employers may nominate people from overseas, or temporary residents already in Australia, to fill skilled vacancies that are full-time and available for a minimum of two years. Successful nominees are able to migrate permanently to Australia.

## KEY SUCCESS INDICATORS

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The RSMS covers all areas of Australia except Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong, Melbourne and Perth. Further information on the scheme can be found at [www.immi.gov.au/migration/employers/rsms.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/employers/rsms.htm)

### ***Skill Matching Database***

A supporting initiative is the *Skill Matching Database* (SMD). This database contains the occupational, educational and personal details of over 7,000 potential migrants whose qualifications meet Australian standards. Employers can use the SMD to locate potential employees to sponsor under RSMS.

Updated each month, the SMD is distributed to all State and Territory governments and to a network of regional development authorities. An abridged version of the database is also available on the DIMIA website at [www.immi.gov.au/skills](http://www.immi.gov.au/skills)

### ***Sponsored Business (Long Stay) Visa***

Employers may also be able to recruit workers from overseas under the *Sponsored Business (Long Stay) Visa* on a temporary basis for up to four years. Detailed information can be found at <http://www.immi.gov.au/allforms/booklets/1154.pdf>

For more information about State Sponsored Regional Migration initiatives, see the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs website at [www.immi.gov.au/migration/regional/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/regional/index.htm)

Examples of successful skilled migration are given in the Migration Chain case study from Tasmania; the Registered Nurse, Royal Darwin Hospital from the Northern Territory; the Nhill Employment Opportunities and the Panda Ranch Stone Fruit Farm from Victoria.

### **Use of technology**

Using technology to overcome the barriers of distance, as exemplified in the development of the Online Midwifery Course, is a worthwhile consideration. Online course material can be used in both the initial training and the continuous learning of skilled and professional people who wish to stay within their communities. Keeping abreast of information technology and telecommunications, in order to capitalise on the opportunities, provides for skilled work in the community, as illustrated by the University of Ballarat – IBM Regional Software Solutions Centre case study.

### **University support**

The support of universities was instrumental in the success of the Nhill Employment Opportunities case study; The Online Midwifery Course production; the partnership of The University of Ballarat and IBM and the assistance of RMIT in attracting professionals to the Southern Grampians.

# CONCLUSION

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The case studies demonstrate that many communities in regional Australia are taking charge of the future and finding a variety of ways to attract and retain skilled and professional workers in order to assure the continued existence of these communities. Some strategies are suitable for certain imperatives – the use of virtual materials, for example, while ideal for education and training, will not necessarily suit the housing imperative. The *Table of Key Success Factors* shows, however, that several strategies have been used for a number of imperatives.

It is hoped that the descriptions of the case studies, and the key success factors that they have revealed, will assist and inspire those looking for ways of assuring the viability of their communities when services and facilities are diminishing.

It is evident that the golden principle is for purposeful action and commitment from as many sectors of the community as possible. This, perhaps more than anything else, separates successful communities from those that fail to thrive.

# APPENDIX 1

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## STATE AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS, CONTACTS AND USEFUL LINKS

### Australian Government

Area Consultative Committees: [www.acc.gov.au/index.htm](http://www.acc.gov.au/index.htm)

Regional Partnerships Programme: [www.regionalpartnerships.gov.au](http://www.regionalpartnerships.gov.au)

Australian Regional Information Services: [www.regionalaustralia.gov.au](http://www.regionalaustralia.gov.au)

Grantslink: [www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au)

State specific and regional migration initiatives:  
[www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled/index.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled/index.htm)

Regional Health Strategy: [www.ruralhealth.gov.au](http://www.ruralhealth.gov.au)

New Apprenticeships: [www.newapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.newapprenticeships.gov.au)

### Australian Capital Territory

[www.cmd.act.gov.au/community/mau.htm](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/community/mau.htm)

### New South Wales

Business migration: [www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au](http://www.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au)

Regional communities: [www.regionalcommunities.nsw.gov.au](http://www.regionalcommunities.nsw.gov.au)

### Northern Territory

Northern Territory Department of Business Industry and Resource Development Skilled migration program: [www.migration.nt.gov.au](http://www.migration.nt.gov.au)

### Queensland

Queensland Government Skilled and Business Migration program:  
[www.sd.qld.gov.au/migration](http://www.sd.qld.gov.au/migration)

Ministerial Regional Community Forums: [www.premiers.qld.gov.au/regional](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/regional)

The Office of Regional Development, Department of State Development:  
[www.sd.qld.gov.au/dsdweb/htdocs/global/content.cfm?id=538#office](http://www.sd.qld.gov.au/dsdweb/htdocs/global/content.cfm?id=538#office)

Access Queensland:

[http://iie01.govnet.qld.gov.au/Access\\_Queensland/aq\\_resources/appb.htm](http://iie01.govnet.qld.gov.au/Access_Queensland/aq_resources/appb.htm)

Department of Employment and Training: [www.det.qld.gov.au](http://www.det.qld.gov.au)

Queensland Grant Schemes:

[www.premiers.qld.gov.au/Business\\_and\\_industry/grants/funding](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/Business_and_industry/grants/funding)

## South Australia

South Australian Government Skilled and Business Migration program:  
[www.immigration.sa.gov.au](http://www.immigration.sa.gov.au)

Business Gateway: [http://www.southaustralia.biz/home\\_page.htm](http://www.southaustralia.biz/home_page.htm)

Regional Funding and Grants Register: [www.grants.ord.sa.gov.au](http://www.grants.ord.sa.gov.au)

## Tasmania

For general information on regional development, migration and investment:

Business and Skilled Migration

Department of Economic Development

GPO Box 646

Hobart, Tasmania 7001

Tel: (03) 6233 5580

Email: [skilledmigration@development.tas.gov.au](mailto:skilledmigration@development.tas.gov.au)

Website: [www.development.tas.gov.au/whytas.html](http://www.development.tas.gov.au/whytas.html)

International Education

Department of Economic Development

GPO Box 646

Hobart, Tasmania 7001

Tel: (03) 6233 5763

Email: [inter.ed@development.tas.gov.au](mailto:inter.ed@development.tas.gov.au)

Website: [www.studyintasmania.tas.gov.au](http://www.studyintasmania.tas.gov.au)

Multicultural Tasmania

Department of Premier and Cabinet

GPO Box 123

Hobart, Tasmania 7001

Tel: (03) 6233 3439

Email: [multitas@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:multitas@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Website: [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/multitas](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/multitas)

IRIS (Infrastructure and Resources Information Service) Tasmania

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

GPO Box 936

Hobart, Tasmania 7001

Tel: (03) 6233 5168

Email: [iris@dier.tas.gov.au](mailto:iris@dier.tas.gov.au)

Website: [www.iris.tas.gov.au](http://www.iris.tas.gov.au)

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For information on individual regional areas:

Business Enterprise Centres  
Department of Economic Development  
GPO Box 646  
Hobart, Tasmania 7001  
Tel: 1800 440 026  
Email: [businesspoint@development.tas.gov.au](mailto:businesspoint@development.tas.gov.au)  
Website: [www.development.tas.gov.au/ECcontact.html](http://www.development.tas.gov.au/ECcontact.html)

Cradle Coast Authority  
PO Box 338  
Burnie, Tasmania 7320  
Tel: (03) 6431 6285  
Email: [admin@cradlecoast.com](mailto:admin@cradlecoast.com)  
Website: [www.cradlecoast.com](http://www.cradlecoast.com)

West Coast Business Development Inc  
PO Box 146  
Queenstown, Tasmania 7467  
Tel: (03) 6471 5881  
Email: [eo@tasmaniawestcoast.com.au](mailto:eo@tasmaniawestcoast.com.au)  
Website: [www.tasmaniawestcoast.com.au](http://www.tasmaniawestcoast.com.au)

Region North  
PO Box 603  
Launceston, Tasmania 7250  
Tel: (03) 6331 3988  
Email: [info@regionnorth.com.au](mailto:info@regionnorth.com.au)  
Website: [www.businessnorth.com.au](http://www.businessnorth.com.au)

South East Region Development Association Inc.  
c/- PO Box 96  
Rosny Park, Tasmania 7018  
Tel: (03) 6245 8629  
Email: [gwalker@ccc.tas.gov.au](mailto:gwalker@ccc.tas.gov.au)

## Victoria

### Regional Development Victoria (RDV)

RDV is a dedicated body that facilitates the coordinated delivery of government programs, services and resources in rural and regional Victoria.

Information on RDV programs and services can be obtained from the Victorian Business Line:

Tel: 13 22 15

Website: [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au)

For information on skilled migration assistance: [www.migration.vic.gov.au](http://www.migration.vic.gov.au)

## Western Australia

For general information on regional development and investment:

### Department of Local Government and Regional Development

GPO Box R1250

West Perth, Western Australia 6005

Tel: (08) 9217 1500 Fax: (08) 9217 1555

Email: [info@dlgrd.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@dlgrd.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au](http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au)

### Department of Industry and Resources

100 Plain Street

East Perth, Western Australia 6004

Tel: (08) 9222 3333 Fax: (08) 9222 3862

Email: [webmaster@doir.wa.gov.au](mailto:webmaster@doir.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.doir.wa.gov.au](http://www.doir.wa.gov.au)

### Small Business Development Corporation

(also provides information on the Migration Program)

553 Hay Street (Cnr Pier Street)

Perth, Western Australia 6000

Tel: (08) 9220 0222 Fax: (08) 9325 3981

Country freecall hotline: 1800 199 125

Email: [info@sbdc.com.au](mailto:info@sbdc.com.au)

Website: [www.sbdc.com.au](http://www.sbdc.com.au)

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For information on individual regional areas:

## **Gascoyne Development Commission**

PO Box 781

Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701

Tel: (08) 9941 1803 Fax: (08) 9941 2576

Email: [info@gdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@gdc.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.gdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gdc.wa.gov.au)

## **Goldfields Esperance Development Commission**

PO Box 751

Kalgoorlie, Western Australia 6430

Tel: (08) 9091 1166 Fax: (08) 9021 7941

Email: [gedckal@gcdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:gedckal@gcdc.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.gcdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gcdc.wa.gov.au)

## **Great Southern Development Commission**

Pymont House

110 Serpentine Road

Albany, Western Australia 6330

Tel: (08) 9842 4888 Fax: (08) 9842 4828

Email: [gfdc@gfdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:gfdc@gfdc.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.gfdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gfdc.wa.gov.au)

## **Kimberley Development Commission**

PO Box 620

Kununurra, Western Australia 6743

Tel: (08) 9168 1044 Fax: (08) 9168 1473

Email: [info@kdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@kdc.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.kdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.kdc.wa.gov.au)

## **Mid West Development Commission**

PO Box 238

Geraldton, Western Australia 6531

Tel: (08) 9921 0701 Fax: (08) 9921 0707

Email: [info@mwdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@mwdc.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.mwdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.mwdc.wa.gov.au)

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**Peel Development Commission**

PO Box 543

Mandurah, Western Australia 6210

Tel: (08) 9535 0000 Fax: (08) 9535 2119

Email: [pdc@peel.wa.gov.au](mailto:pdc@peel.wa.gov.au)Website: [www.peel.wa.gov.au](http://www.peel.wa.gov.au)**Pilbara Development Commission**

PO Box 544

Port Hedland, Western Australia 6721

Tel: (08) 9173 8400 Fax: (08) 9173 1881

Email: [info@pdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@pdc.wa.gov.au)

Country freecall hotline: 1800 024 474

Website: [www.pdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.pdc.wa.gov.au)**South West Development Commission**

9th Floor, Bunbury Tower

61 Victoria Street

Bunbury, Western Australia 6230

Tel: (08) 9792 2000 Fax: (08) 9791 3223

Email: [swdc@gateway.net.au](mailto:swdc@gateway.net.au)Website: [www.swdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.swdc.wa.gov.au)**Wheatbelt Development Commission**

PO Box 250

Northam, Western Australia 6401

Tel: (08) 9622 7222 Fax: (08) 9622 7406

Email: [info@wheatbelt.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@wheatbelt.wa.gov.au)Website: [www.wheatbelt.wa.gov.au](http://www.wheatbelt.wa.gov.au)

## APPENDIX 2

### MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF CASE STUDIES





