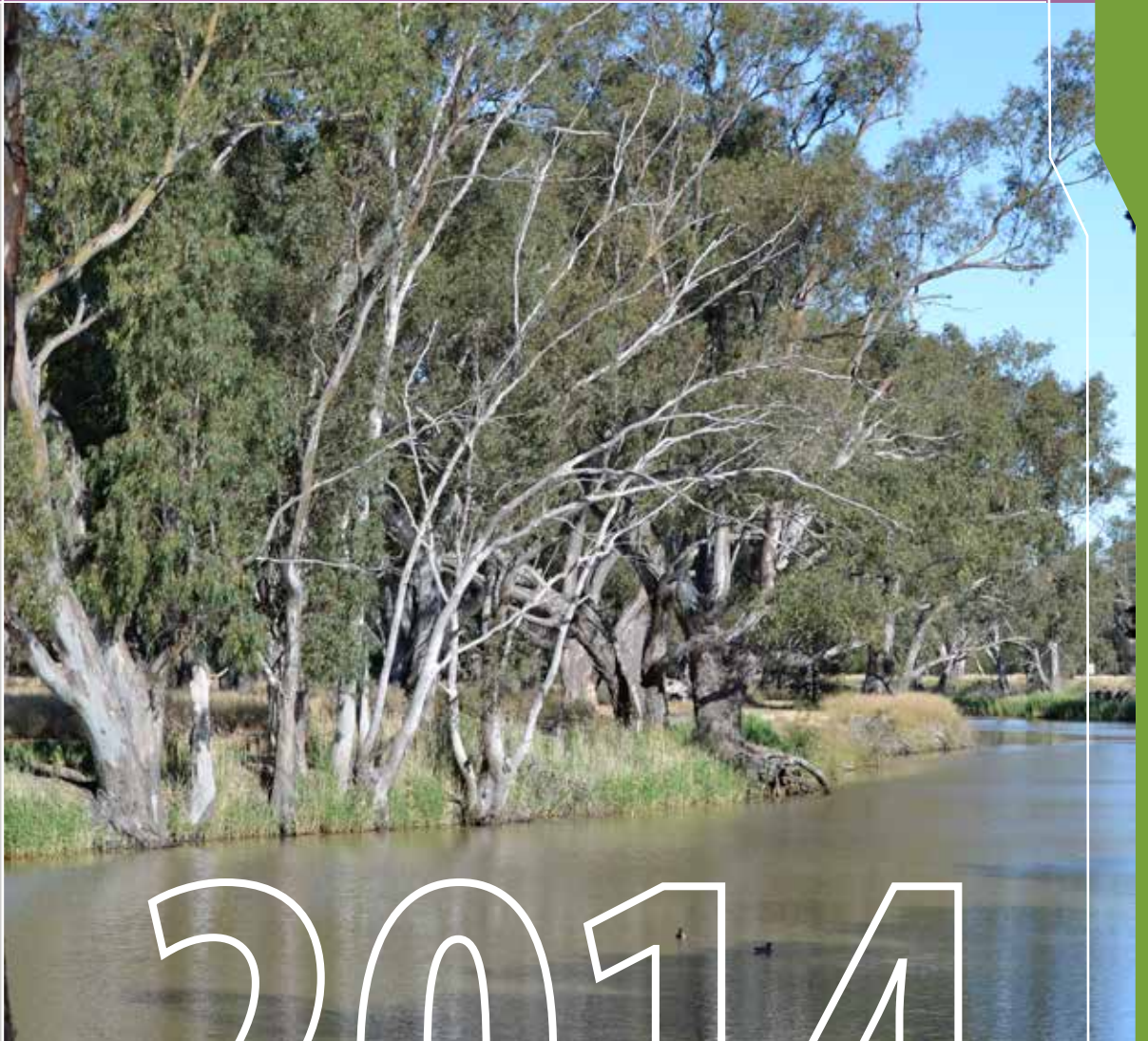


# Environmental Scan



# 2014

Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN





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## INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Scan (updated Feb 2013) is a profile of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning & Employment Network service region.

2010 saw the inception and delivery of the first year of the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program. In Victoria this program is delivered through Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs). The program is funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, a joint initiative of the Australian and State and Territory Governments. This program initially runs from 2010 to 2013 and broadens the LLEN's target group to youth aged 10 to 19 years (previously 15-19 years).

The four main 'Partnership Broker' stakeholder groups are:

- Education Providers
- Business and Industry
- Parents and Families
- Community Groups.

The School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) Environmental Scan has been produced by the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN (WSMLLEN) to inform the organisation's strategic planning for the period 2010 - 2013.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN Strategic Plan 2010-13 was reviewed in February 2013 to address local needs.

The strategic plan:

- Is based upon local research and analysis of available data to identify and recognise groups and locations where young people 10-19 are experiencing greatest disadvantage and are most at risk
- focuses on all Indigenous young people and any refugee and newly arrived young people, in our region
- identifies strategies and specific targets
- establishes monitoring and review processes
- determines reporting time lines.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN is committed to working with business and industry in identifying and addressing local and regional high priority skill needs, both current and emerging. The WSMLLEN is also committed to supporting schools and training providers to connect learning to real life application and in the provision of quality career information and advice.

As an independent broker, the WSMLLEN brokers partnerships that support integrated planning and strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration between members and partners to provide options for young people to achieve their potential.

Extensive research and consultation with regional stake holders has contributed to the production of this document to capture current trends and conditions and to identify gaps and existing and emerging skill shortage areas. The focus of the WSMLLEN is to improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people from across the region. The organisation has a particular focus on those young people who are at risk of disengaging, or who have already disengaged from education and training and are not in meaningful employment.

*This document was updated February 2014*

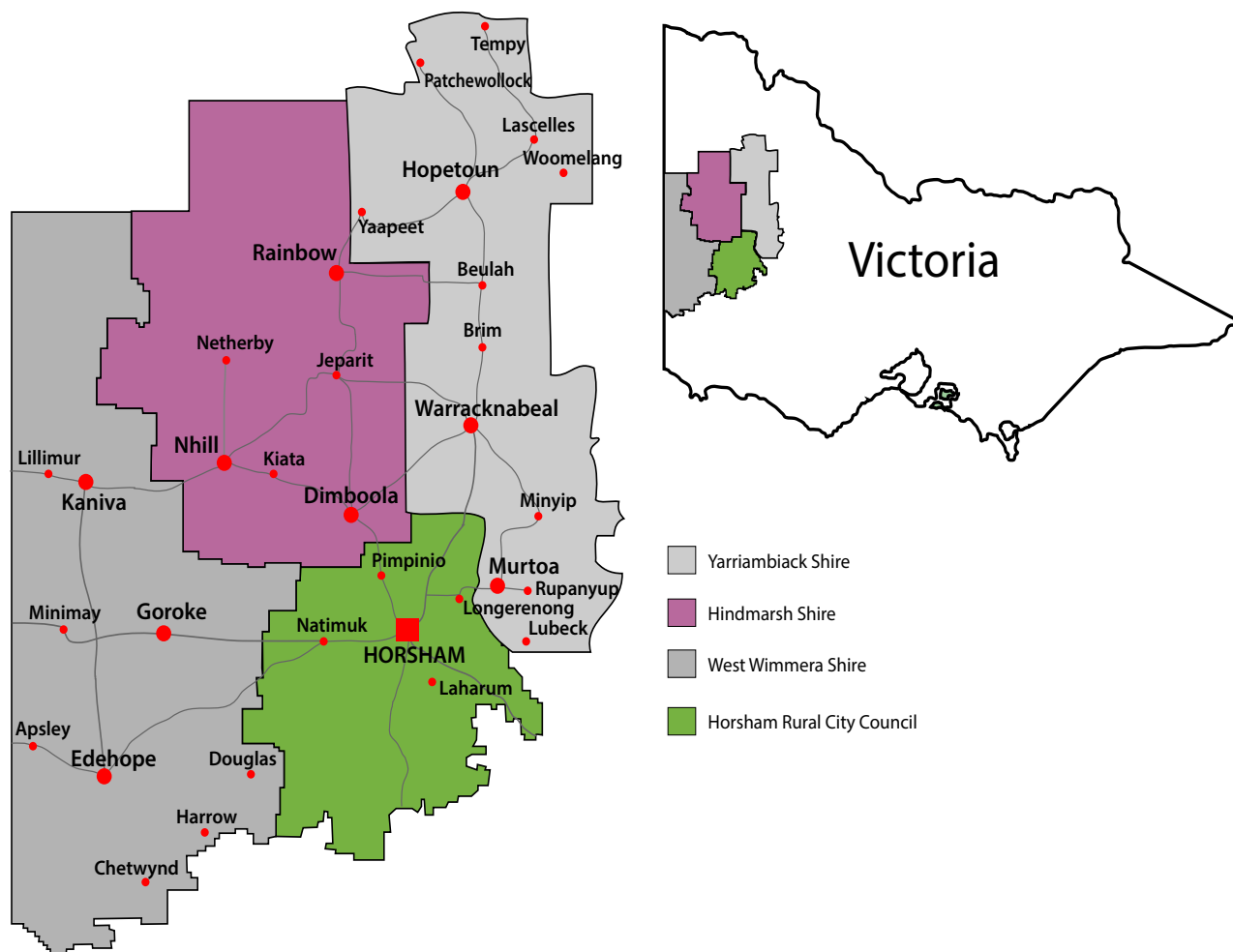
*Australian Bureau of Statistics data used in this document comes from the 2011 Census where such data was available. Where 2011 census data was not available, data from the 2006 census has been used.*

# PROFILE OF THE REGION

## 1. Overview of the Service Region

### 1.1 Region Size – Geography and Population

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN region covers over 28,000 square kilometres, from the Grampians to the South Australian border and incorporates the City of Horsham and the Shires of Yarriambiack, Hindmarsh and West Wimmera. There are approximately 38,000 people residing in the region with 11 Secondary Colleges, one TAFE campus and three Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).



The Melbourne–Adelaide transport corridor traverses the region, as does the Mildura–Portland corridor. The Wimmera is strategically placed within an important regional and national context. Three highways link the region with the rest of Australia.

The Wimmera is characterised by small towns separated by large distances. The area is mainly agricultural, producing broad-acre crops (predominantly wheat, oilseeds and legumes). Other agriculture includes olives, native flowers, poultry, lamb and wool production. Horsham is the region's major centre with a population of just over 14,000, with only three other towns, Nhill, Dimboola and Warracknabeal having populations of more than 1,000 people.

The Wimmera's land form includes a combination of mostly plains above flood level, sandstone ridges, east-west dunes and gentle to moderate hills with a network of lakes, swamps and rivers. (Most of these were dry during more than a decade of drought or below average rainfall between 1997 - 2009). Like most areas north of the Victorian Highlands, the landscape is generally either flat or undulating. (LCC, 1985)

The Wimmera River is the longest inland river in Victoria—rising from the Pyrenees Mountains near Ararat and passing through Horsham and Dimboola to flow into Lake Hindmarsh, near Jeparit.

## 1.2 Demographic Profile

The majority of Wimmera residents were born in Australia. There is only a very small percentage of residents born in a non-English speaking country. There are small numbers of skilled migrants and refugees moving to the Wimmera.

	2016	2021	2026	2031
Horsham RC	21,002	21,586	22,116	22,571
Hindmarsh Shire	6,003	5,826	5,662	5,526
West Wimmera Shire	4,505	4,404	4,305	4,222
Yarriambiack Shire	7,441	7,251	7,061	6,900
Total Wimmera Southern Mallee	40,967	41,088	41,170	41,250
Total Regional Victoria	1,584,097	1,691,817	1,805,693	1,914,626
Total Victoria	6,067,702	6,500,653	6,924,141	7,326,565

Source - Victoria in the Future 2012 DPCD

### Koorie Populations

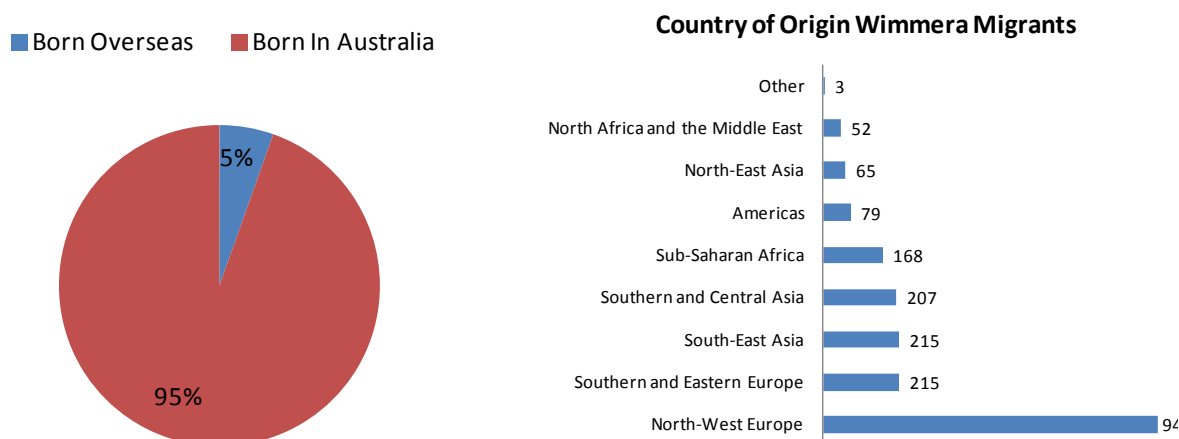
According to the 2011 Census there were 618 Indigenous people (comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) usually residing in the Wimmera. Of the total population in the Wimmera (Local Government Areas) 1.6% were Indigenous persons, compared with 0.7% for the State of Victoria and 2.5% Australia wide.

Source ABS Census 2011

### Migrant Populations

The percentage of migrants in the Wimmera (ABS Local Government Area) is relatively small. Only 5% of the resident population was born overseas, with almost half of this figure (2.4%) coming from North-West Europe.

#### Wimmera Migrant Population



Source ABS Census 2011

Data from the 2011 Census indicates that 673 migrants settled in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region between 2001 and 2011. This is 1.8% of the total population.

The Hindmarsh Shire recorded the highest percentage of recent migrants (arriving between 2001 and 2012) compared with other shires in the region.

#### Migrant settlement in the Wimmera 2001 - 2011

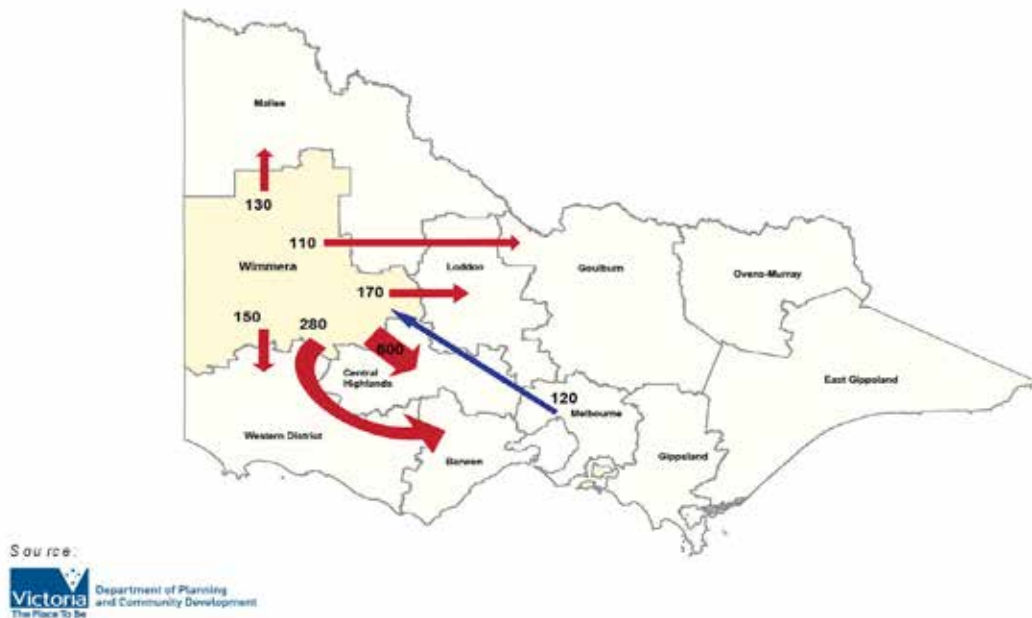
	Hindmarsh	Horsham RC	West Wimmera	Yarriambiack	Total
Migrants 2001 - 2011	156	372	46	99	673
Total Population	6,054	20,375	4,521	7,478	38,428
Recent Migrants as % of total population	2.6%	1.8%	1.0%	1.3%	1.8%

Source: ABS 2011 Census

## Internal Migration

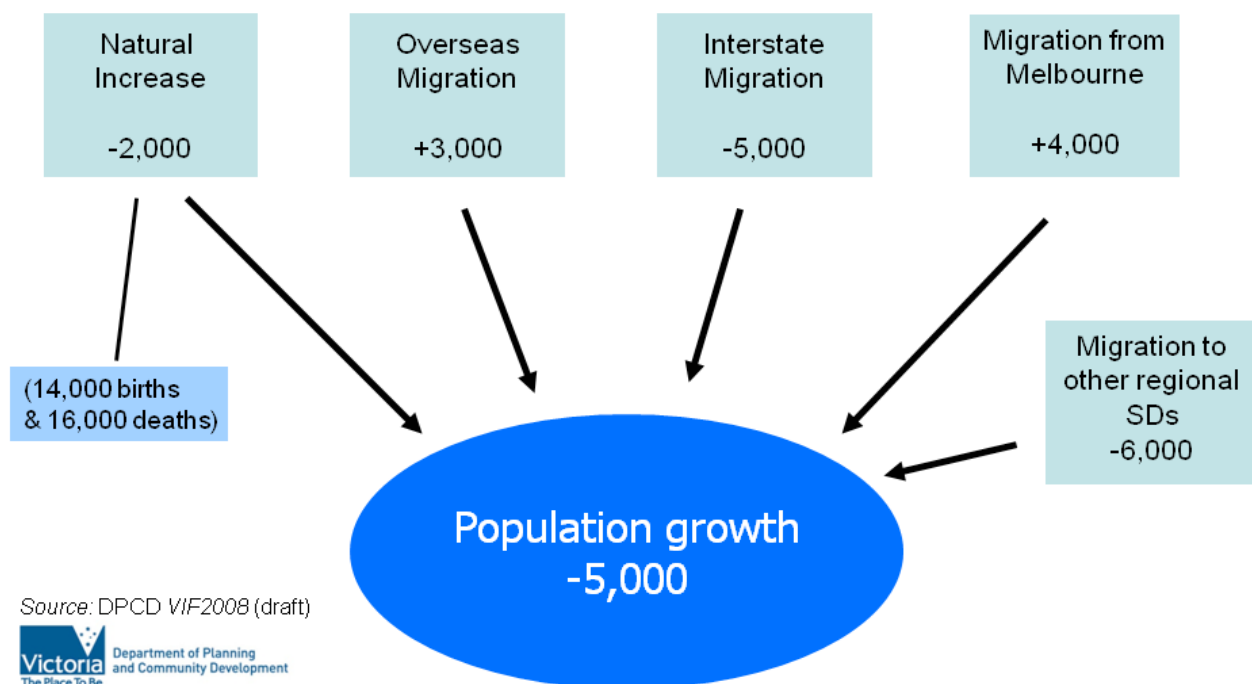
In the Wimmera, as in other parts of regional Victoria, there is a strong age profile to the migration in and out of this region. For a long time there has been a loss of school leavers to Melbourne and to a lesser extent, Ballarat and Geelong. The implied net migration charts below show the net movement for the Wimmera over the last six intercensal periods and show the consistency of the migration trend.

### Internal Migration: Wimmera 2001 - 2006



Source - DPCD, Victoria in the future

## The components of projected population growth for Wimmera SD, 2006 to 2036





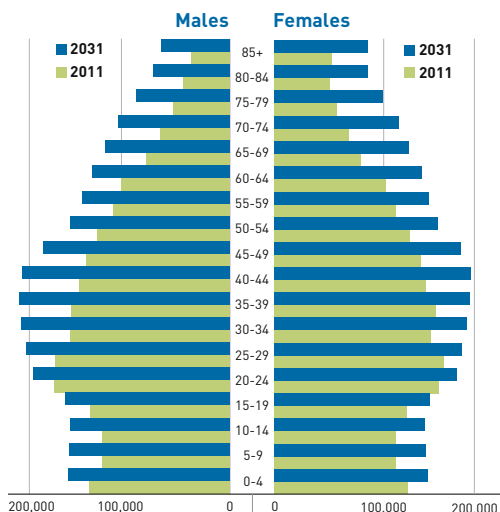
### 1.3 Age Structure of population

The age of the population is an important indicator of the demand for different products and services such as kindergartens, schools and aged care services.

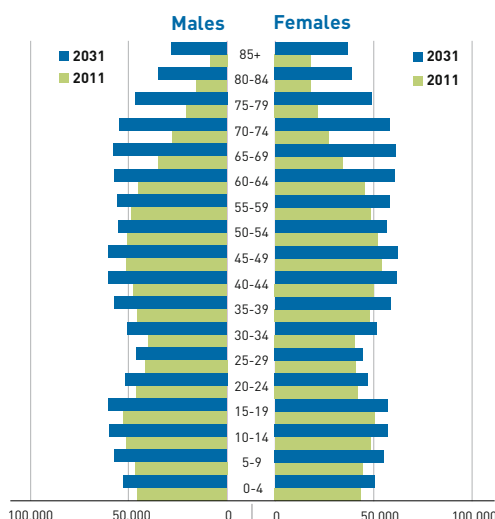
While the Victorian population is projected to grow in size, the proportion of children is projected to steadily decrease. The changing distribution of the population to different age groups (age structure) is influenced by the large group of people born between 1945 and 1971 (who are now aged 40 to 66). The age groups born after 1971 are smaller in number, due mainly to the decline in birth rates. At the same time, average life expectancy continues to rise. Both of these factors are contributing to a population in which the average age of the population is increasing. The two age and sex pyramids in Figure 6 clearly depict the change projected to occur over the next 20 years. Although population ageing will impact on age structures across all of Victoria, the overall age profile is projected to remain younger in Melbourne than in regional Victoria. As shown in the migration profile in Figure 7, Melbourne attracts younger migrants from other countries, interstate and regional Victoria. This will boost the numbers and proportions of people in the younger cohorts in Melbourne, and, in time, Melbourne's level of natural increase. In contrast to the age profile of Melbourne, regional Victoria's older age profile will be further accentuated by the net outmigration of young people (ages 20-29 – see Figure 7).

**Figure 6.**  
Population by age and sex, Melbourne SD and regional Victoria, 2011 and 2031.

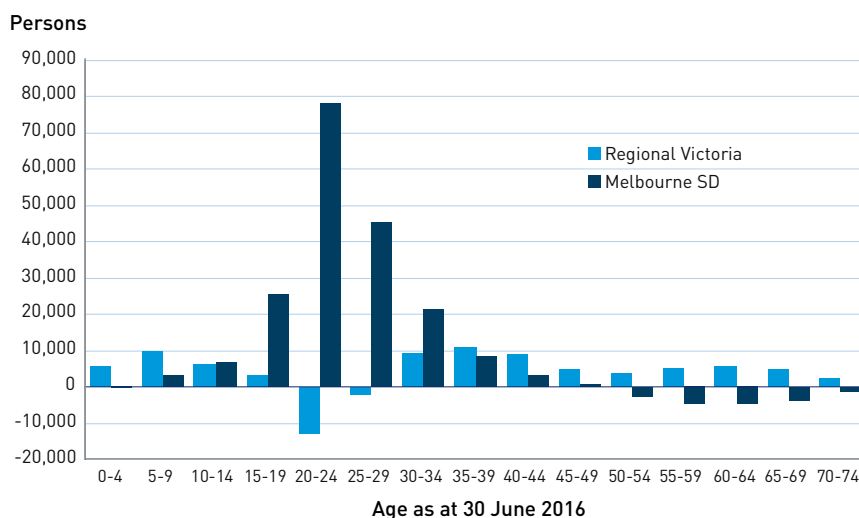
#### Melbourne SD



#### Regional Victoria



**Figure 7.**  
Implied net migration, Melbourne SD and regional Victoria, 2011–2016.

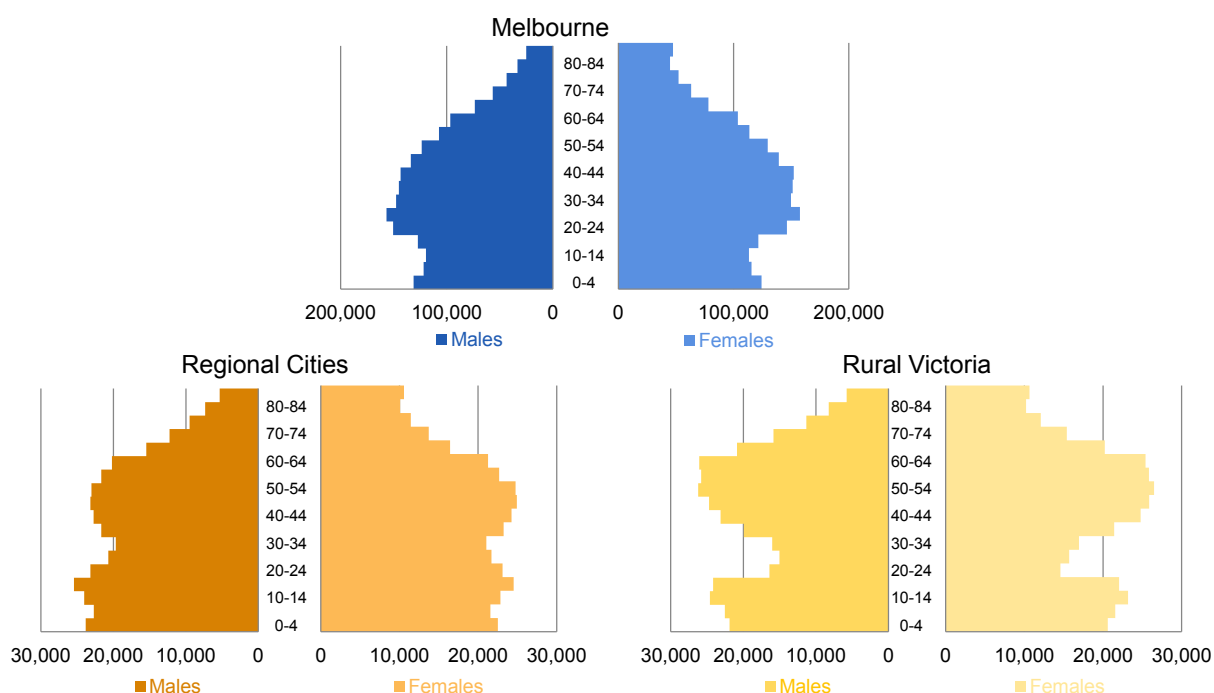




## 1.4 Youth in the Region

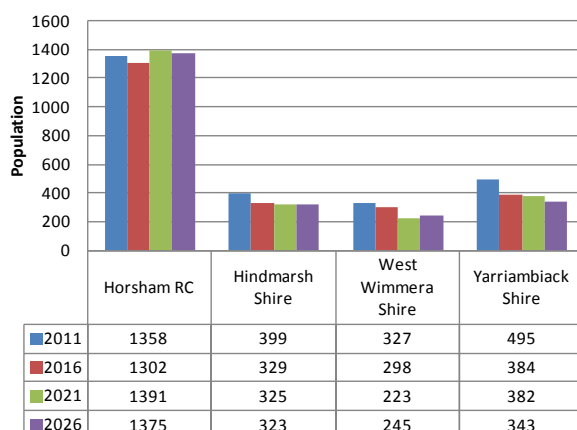
Data from The Department of Community Planning and development clearly shows a relatively low percentage of 18 - 35 year olds residing in rural Victoria compared with the numbers residing in regional cities and in Melbourne. (Different age structures in different parts of Victoria). This would be explained by the fact that many 18 year olds move to Melbourne or regional cities for tertiary study or to find employment.

### Different age structures in different parts of Victoria

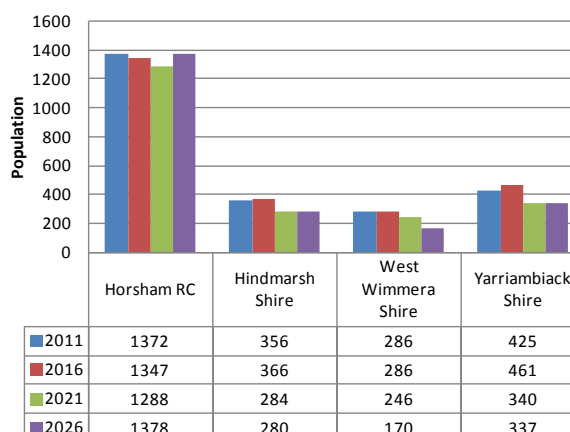


Projected population data for 10–14 year olds and 15–19 year olds indicates that a decline in these age-groups is expected in the Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack shires in the period from 2011 to 2026. Projections indicate that there will be a very small increase in these age-groups in the Horsham Rural City LGA over the same period. This will have an impact on schools outside the Horsham rural City Council area as school enrolments decline.

10-14 Yr Old Projected Population by Shire



15 - 19 yr Old Projected Population by Shire



Source - Victoria in the Future 2012 - Population Projections – DPCD

## 1.5 Population Projections

### Population projections

The population of the 4 local government areas in the Wimmera Southern Mallee is projected to increase by 696 between 2011 and 2026. (This represents a 1.8% increase.)

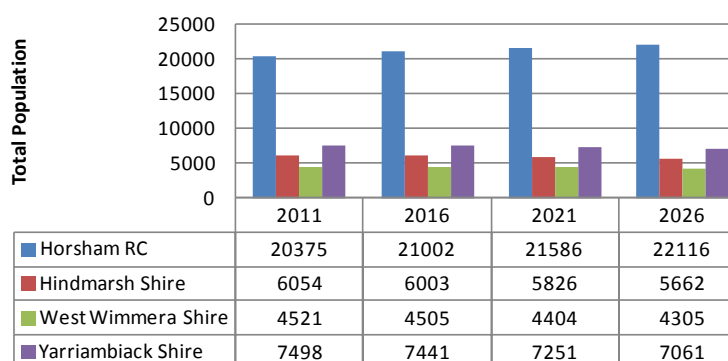
In comparison with the rest of Victoria the projected population change between 2011 and 2026 is:

Victoria	23% increase
Melbourne (statistical division)	24% increase
Regional Victoria	22% increase

Of the 4 shires in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region, the Horsham Rural City is the only local government area which is predicted to increase in population. By the year 2026 it is predicted that Horsham Rural City population will increase by 8% whereas Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack shires will all decrease in population.

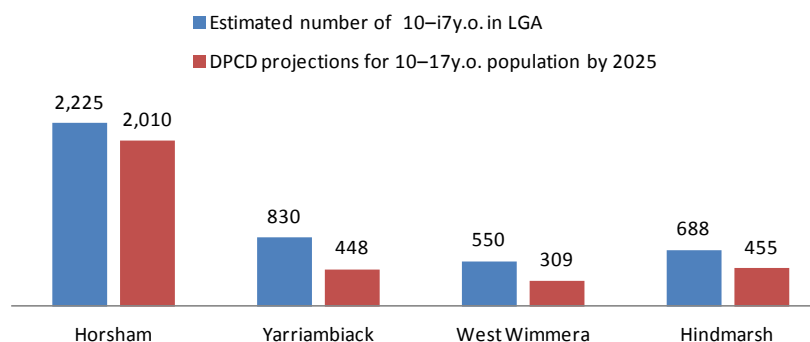
Source - Victoria in Future 2011- Wimmera Population Projections – DPCD

### Population Projections By Shire

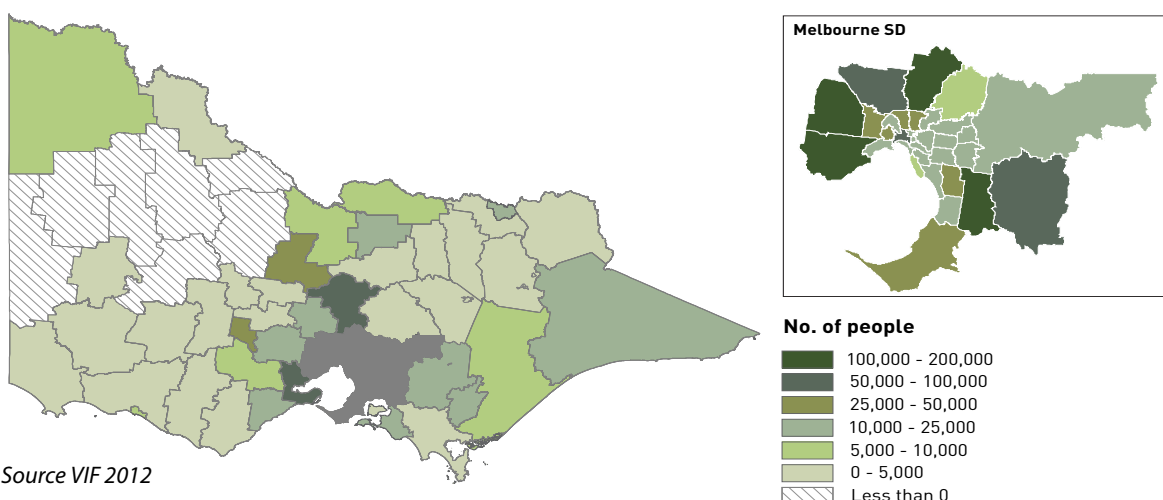


### Population and projections 10-17 year olds by Local Government Area

#### Wimmera southern Mallee Youth Population Projections



### Population change by Local Government Area, 2011-2031.



Source VIF 2012

## 1.6 Economic Profile

The regional industry structure in the Wimmera Southern Mallee is strongly underpinned by the primary production sector of agriculture (see Figure 1). Agriculture accounted for a quarter of total employment in the Wimmera Southern Mallee in 1996, although this has declined over subsequent years to approximately 17 per cent in 2011. Nevertheless the share of employment in agriculture is expected to grow slightly to 18 per cent by 2031 (see Figure 2, page 10). While there has been a long-term decline in agricultural employment, which has been experienced consistently across the state – possibly due to factors such as increased mechanisation, efficiencies and productivity (including increasing farm sizes in some areas) – this decline may be halted by more intensive agriculture establishing in the region. The long-term decline in employment in manufacturing is forecast to continue, with a reduction from approximately 9 per cent in 2011 to 6 per cent in 2031. *The Regional Economic Profile Wimmera Southern Mallee* produced by Regional Development Victoria (RDV) in 2012, compares the region with the rest of the state and regional Victoria. This document forecasts the region will experience lower growth in gross regional product and employment terms compared to the rest of the state and regional Victoria. Growth will most likely be uneven, with Horsham expected to have the bulk of economic and employment growth in the region. The RDV profile identifies the Wimmera Southern Mallee needs to build on its comparative advantage in agricultural production as the foundation for developing and diversifying its economy, to grow export markets and to minimise the impacts of external shocks to the economy. Potential future growth industries include:

- agricultural production and agri-business research and development
- food processing
- gold and mineral sands mining
- engineering and manufacturing of equipment for transport, mining, agriculture and alternative energy systems
- renewable energy.

Source: DPCD Victoria, WSM Background report

Figure 1 - Employment by industry sector

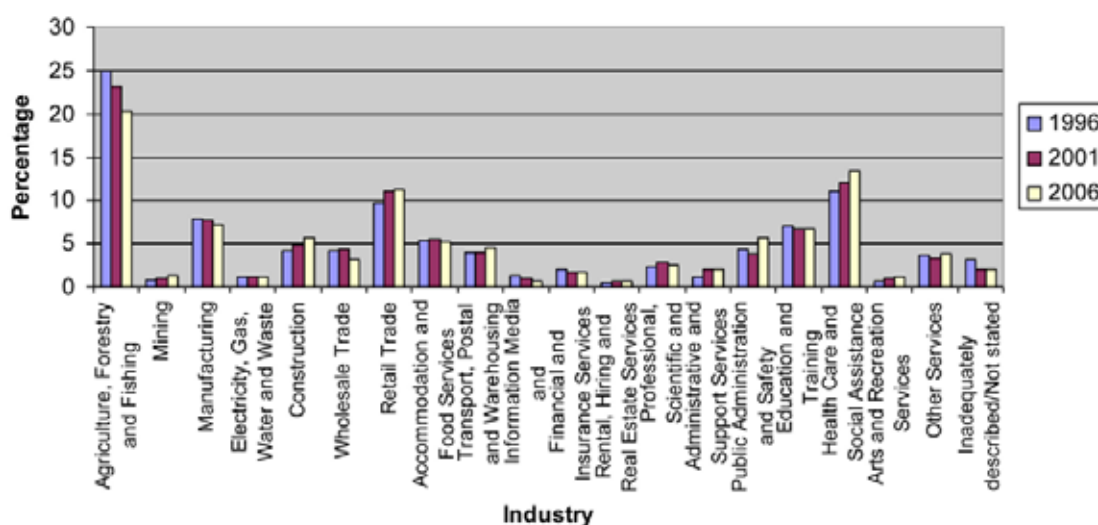
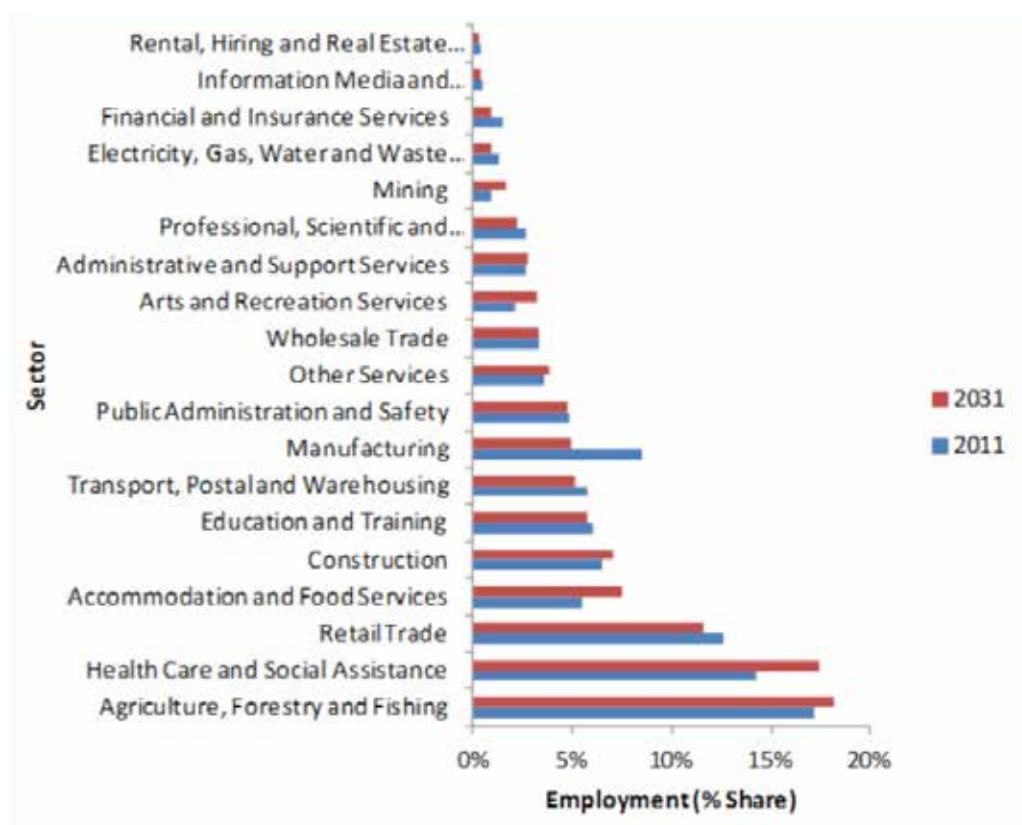


Figure 2 - Projected employment in the Wimmera Southern Mallee by industry sector (%share 2011–2031)



Source: *Regional Development Victoria*

Other major employers in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region include healthcare and social assistance organisations, which are projected to grow from 14 per cent in 2011 to 17 per cent in 2031. In terms of relative strength compared with the Victorian average, agriculture and mining are strongly represented in the region. The share of agricultural employment is more than eight times the Victorian average, while the share of mining employment is more than four times the Victorian average. Arts and recreation services, healthcare and social assistance, transport and other services industries are also strongly represented, but to a much lesser extent. As with other agricultural regions in Victoria, the Wimmera Southern Mallee is under-represented in professional, scientific and technical services as well as wholesale trade and telecommunications. The region is expected to see its employment base reduce between 2018–19, mainly due to a lack of population growth, but also due to a lack of significant industry growth. However, the region should not be seen as having a uniform economic profile.

Source: *DPCD Victoria, WSM Background Report*

### Agricultural production

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the Wimmera Southern Mallee. In 2008–09 the gross value of agricultural production in the region was \$921 million, which represents around 9 per cent of the total Gross State Product. The region therefore plays a critical role, not only in relation to economic outputs, but also in Australia's food security.

The region is based on broad-acre cropping of cereals, pulses and oilseeds in the central and northern areas, and dry-land livestock grazing in the south. Agriculture in the Wimmera is highly export focused, with over 60 per cent of all crop products exported. A summary of the key agricultural attributes of the region is set out below.

Cereal crop production within the Wimmera was worth around \$361 million, almost 40 per cent of the total value of agriculture in the region. The largest produced crop in the Wimmera is wheat. Other crops include barley, canola and pulses including lentils, faba beans and lupins.

Sheep and some beef cattle are the dominant livestock industries in the Wimmera, mostly in the south-west. Sheep are produced for wool and meat. Trends in the region include a shift away from sheep, towards more profitable production systems (e.g. cropping) and the increasing focus on prime lambs, with wool production declining.

The prevalence of intensive agriculture (such as piggeries and broiler farms) varies considerably across the region. A broiler farm is located near Donald. Luv-a-Duck, which supplies around 98 per cent of Victoria's duck consumption, is located just outside Nhill within the Shire of Hindmarsh. Luv-a-Duck is the largest duck meat processing facility in Australia. However, these businesses are relatively isolated in a region that is predominately geared towards grain and sheep production. Areas such as West Wimmera and Yarriambiack have almost no intensive agricultural industry.

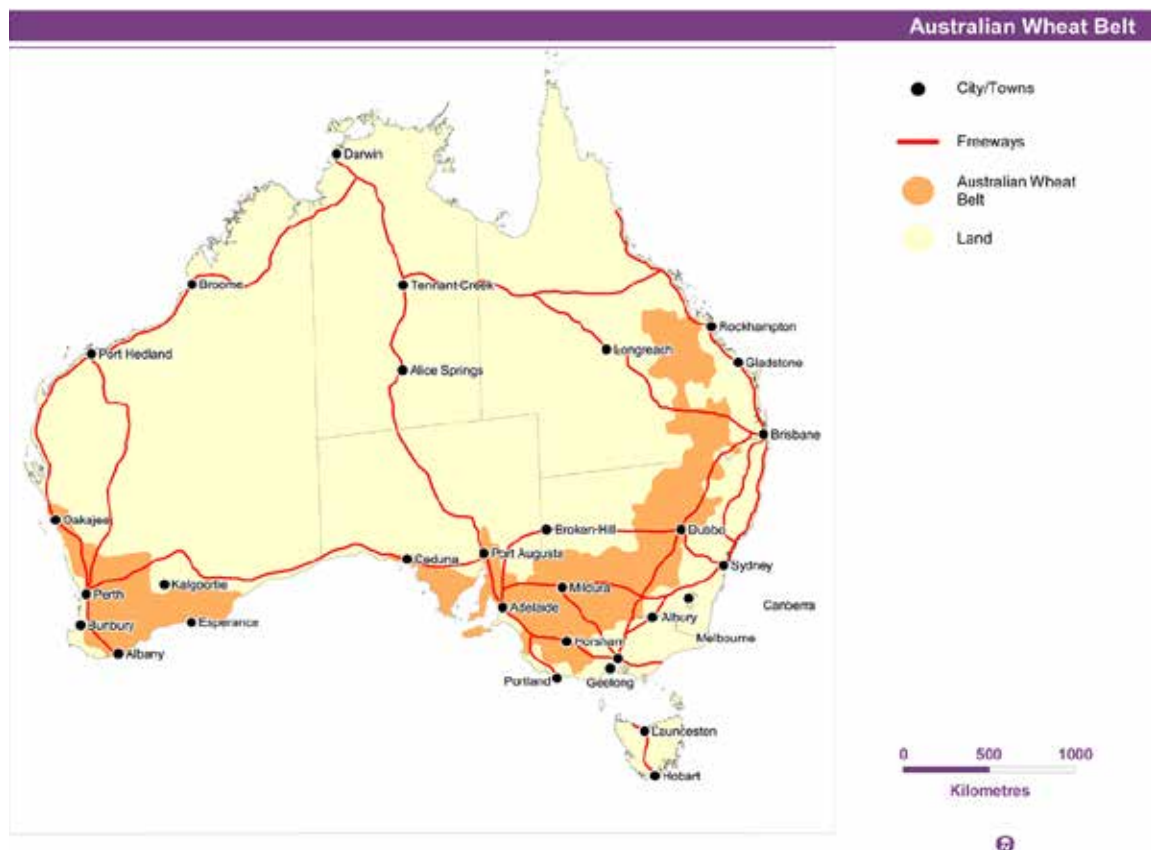
Vegetable production within the Wimmera is worth around \$19 million. Carrot production at Kaniva is expanding with one of the largest carrot producers in Australia (Lamattinas) establishing a large carrot producing enterprise south of Kaniva.

A small number of niche businesses operate in the Wimmera. They are generally dry-land based. Herb production, goats for meat and hair and shedded sheep are some of the niche businesses in the Wimmera.

### Land use implications

There are approximately 2,628 farm establishments in the Wimmera with an average farm size of 880 hectares. A significant majority of private land within the region is included within the Farming Zone which seeks to protect land for agricultural purposes.

Drought over the last decade has seen a shift in agricultural production occurring with reductions in livestock and growth in cropping. This trend has a spatial dimension too as cropping has shifted further south into land previously occupied by extensive grazing. It also has implications for the way freight is transported. There is evidence this trend may be declining given improving returns from livestock and more assured water availability. This is more evident in less favourable cropping areas south of Horsham and around Edenhope but is understood to be occurring in some other locations across the region. Changing agricultural production and practices will impact on other land uses, including industry and infrastructure. Recent deregulation of the grain industry may affect how products are transported as there may be less demand for existing bulk storages attached to railway lines.



Source: DPCD, derived from Infrastructure Australia and AACL

## Sustainability and vulnerability of agriculture

There are general questions around the affordability of machinery and agricultural expansion in the region. The cost of capital for broad-acre farming is increasing and with farming becoming more capital intensive, it is now very difficult for new players to buy-in.

Whilst there is evidence of some expansion of enterprises, this is more likely to indicate a move to corporate farming where smaller farms are being consolidated into a larger business. In many instances this translates to a shrinking on-farm population with older farmers exiting the industry. The shrinking farm (rural) population may also be accentuated by farmers retiring to major centres such as Horsham or Nhill (driven by access to services). Some of the farm consolidation may be via family enterprises becoming more corporate in their size and practices, others may include investment from outside the area.

Changes in local and international sustainability policies and practices will provide additional opportunities. Examples include ecomarkets being adopted in the region, wind farms providing supplementary income to farmers, potential Carbon Farming Initiative opportunities, and recognition by consumers that natural values on farms can increase the productive value of traditional agricultural commodities. The recent variable climatic conditions in the Wimmera Southern Mallee, where a decade of drought was followed by flooding, are an indicator of some of the extreme conditions the region may face in the future.

These events demonstrate the need for any land use plan to consider and plan for the impacts of a variable climate on the region, including by:

- maintaining appropriate flexibility in land use controls to ensure agricultural production and farm operations/ holdings can be modified, as required, thereby assisting the sustainability of the industry
- assisting in diversifying the regional economy
- protecting significant environmental assets, soils and water resources to ensure a healthy environment.

### The Pipeline

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, a major investment in regional water infrastructure, provides a number of possibilities for regional growth and development (route shown in Map 3). AEC & Tract (2012) identify that the pipeline route provides a good indication of the areas most suited for agricultural diversification. The pipeline generally runs in a north-south direction, which corresponds with many of the major transport routes (including the Western and Sunraysia highways). This combination of secure water and transport infrastructure is an important characteristic that should be leveraged for broader economic growth. The increased reliability and secure supply of water from the pipeline will provide opportunities for on-farm diversification and regional growth and development. Intensive animal industries, such as lamb feed lotting, are anticipated to expand when 'growth water' delivered through the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline is made available in 2012.

On-farm diversification opportunities may become available in some areas as a result of a more reliable and secure supply of water from the pipeline. By connecting to each property through the standard system, the pipeline may be able to deliver additional water to households and farms. Additional water is available at the headworks of the system, requiring additional investment to deliver the water to a storage location close enough to be viable. Opportunities for on-farm diversification may include beef feed lots, lamb finishing, poultry production, pig production, a range of niche plant and animal products, and possibly horticultural enterprises.

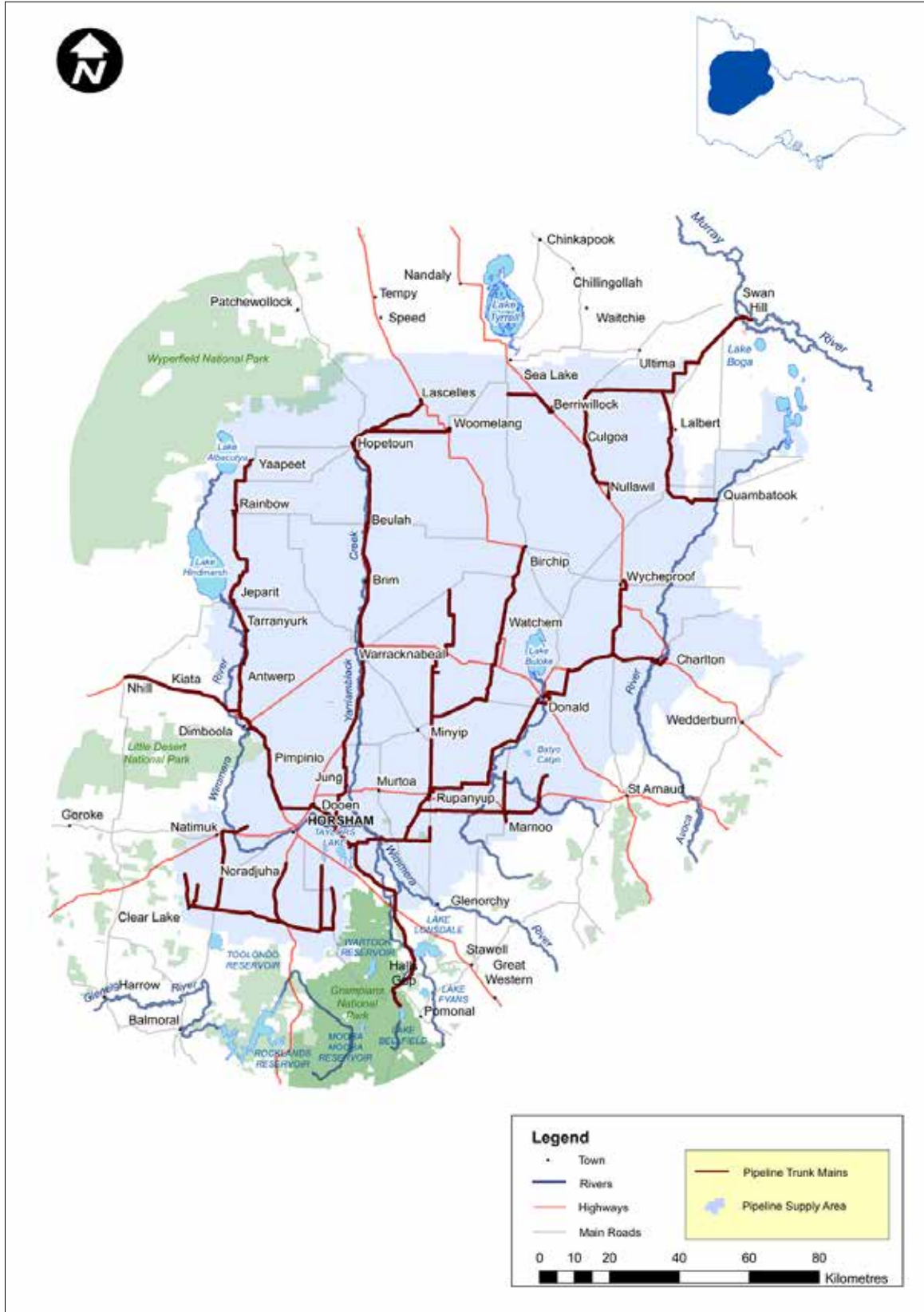
A Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the opportunities arising from Wimmera Mallee Pipeline recommended: "That the Victorian Government, through the Department of Primary Industries, investigate opportunities for businesses to establish pig, sheep and beef slaughtering facilities in the Wimmera Mallee. This initiative would contribute to the further development of the local economy, the encouragement of these businesses to develop within the region and in the establishment and diversification of these types of local industries. Furthermore, the diversification and establishment of these new industries would significantly contribute to reducing current environmental concerns about food miles travelled by animals in these industries." (*Rural and Regional Committee, Inquiry Into Positioning The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Region To Capitalise On New Economic Development Opportunities Final Report, August 2010*)

The draft Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan provides a strategic approach to this issue linked to the benefits provided by the pipeline, thereby providing support for diversification of the regional economy. There are a range of other diversification and value-adding opportunities that have been considered in developing the draft Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan. The region has several grain processing companies that specialise in value-adding. This is predominantly undertaken in the pulse market (lentils, chickpeas etc.) with processing done to value-add to the raw product and produce a higher value export product. Investigations are being undertaken by a local farming cooperative into the feasibility of a variety of agricultural by-products that may be able to be reprocessed and used as a value-added product. Sufficient industrial land and necessary infrastructure needs to be available in relevant locations to support the development of new industries.



## REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN DRAFT BACKGROUND REPORT

Map 3 – Wimmera Mallee Pipeline





## The Intermodal Freight Terminal

The Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal provides a major opportunity for value-added industries from grain and complementary industries to locate around Horsham. A greater critical mass of agricultural industries would help drive efficiencies in production, providing benefits across the region.

The Luv-a-Duck farm near Nhill is evidence of an individual facility that has become very successful despite what many may regard as sub-optimal locations due to their relative isolation from similar uses. This business is a major employer and central to the local economy. This highlights the flexibility that is required in rural land use planning so that it does not stifle entrepreneurship or emerging markets that may not typically be associated with a particular location.

Whilst good opportunities for growth in intensive agriculture lie across the region, AEC & Tract (2012) identifies Horsham local government areas as one of the areas particularly well suited for further expansion due to the supporting infrastructure already in place. Key favourable characteristics identified include:

- low population density and close proximity to grain production areas
- Horsham has established feed mills that can easily deliver feed to the region
- the Western and Sunraysia Highways are key transport routes
- quality and security of water supply provided by the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

AEC & Tract (2012) state that further consolidation of intensive agriculture in these local government areas would continue to create efficiencies in production and help facilitate the growth of supporting industries. However, if market conditions permit the establishment of intensive agricultural uses elsewhere in the region, this should be encouraged.

Farmers, like many other business owners, are struggling to compete in a globally competitive marketplace. This has driven increased investment in agricultural research and development. There is a need for agricultural industries and related companies to maximise their investigation and uptake of new technology. Greater focus on advanced cropping has translated into a demonstrated strong demand for agronomy services and the focus of service providers to develop relationships with farmers. Again there is a need to understand the spatial requirements, if any, for the development of this industry.

## Industrial development

The Wimmera Southern Mallee region's location at the heart of Victoria's grain production is a competitive advantage when it comes to attracting industry. The region has well-integrated agribusiness supply chains and good accessibility to south-east Australian population centres. Food products, including meat processing, are the dominant manufacturing outputs of the region. Other manufacturing includes agricultural machinery and equipment, metal fabrication and transport equipment.

The Horsham Municipal Strategic Statement notes the potential to develop a cluster of agro-processing and industrial activities around the relocated sale yards at Burnt Creek and logistics businesses around Dooen, where the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal has recently commenced operation.

## Tourism

Tourism presently contributes a relatively small proportion of the region's economic output. While tourism in the Northern Grampians, particularly the northern end of the Grampians National Park including Halls Gap, is well established, there are opportunities to develop and improve the tourism product for the other shires within the Wimmera Southern Mallee region. Tourism Alliance Victoria (2009) undertook a comprehensive research project to identify the existing tourism performance of the region. One of the strengths of the region from a tourism perspective is its natural assets, however nature-based activities required further improvement.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee region has potential to develop the region's nature-based and outback tourism. Some projects are already planned or underway to capitalise on this potential growth industry. The construction of visitor facilities at Mt Arapiles and the development of The Little Desert, Big Desert and Wyperfeld parks which extend over a significantly large area, have potential to offer additional outback/eco-tourism opportunities for the region if adequate infrastructure is built. The Little Desert Nature Lodge, established in 1969, is located adjacent to the national park and hosts nature-based tourism for schools, coach tours and international guests. The expansion of eco-friendly accommodation throughout the region may strengthen the region's 'nature-based tourism' image and facilitate higher visitation.

Hindmarsh contains some of the largest water bodies within the region, such as Lake Hindmarsh and Lake Albacutya. Encouraging private tourist operators and significant infrastructure development (such as accommodation and visitor facilities) will be the key to growing this market, given existing limited facilities and infrastructure investment. The Wimmera Mallee lakes district attracts a large number of bird watchers and there is anecdotal evidence that there is increased demand for appropriate services and accommodation in this area.

**Source: DPCD Victoria, WSM-Background-report**

## 2. Education and Training Provider Profile

### 2.1 Primary and Secondary schools in the Wimmera Southern Mallee

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN area covers the Rural City of Horsham, the West Wimmera Shire, the Hindmarsh Shire and the Yarriambiack Shire. It includes 27 government schools made up of 2 special schools, 15 primary schools, 6 P-12 colleges and 4 secondary colleges. There are 9 independent primary schools and one independent secondary college in the region.

#### Schools in the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN area

Horsham is the largest centre in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region and has 4 government schools on 6 campuses within the urban area, including the largest secondary school, 4 primary school campuses and a special school. Only 3 other centres within the region still have a secondary and a primary school (Dimboola, Warracknabeal and Rainbow) and the enrolments in these schools are relatively small. In Murtoa, Kaniva, Nhill, Goroke, Edenhope and Hopetoun the primary and secondary schools have merged to become P-12 colleges with Hopetoun merging in 2012. All other schools in the region are small rural primary schools.

In 2013, a new special school was opened in Horsham. This state-of-the-art facility won the Council of Educational Facility Planners International Victorian Award for Best New Educational Facility Construction – Entire Educational Facility.

There is a large variation in school size within the region. The largest primary school has about 500 students on 2 campuses and the smallest has less than 10 students. Eleven of the 16 state primary schools and 5 of the 9 independent primary schools have enrolments of less than 50 students. At the secondary level, the size of the Year 7-12 cohort ranges from 60 at Rainbow Secondary College to over 1,000 at Horsham College. This distribution of students presents significant challenges in the provision of a comprehensive post compulsory curriculum to students in the smaller colleges.

There were 59 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students enrolled in the region's schools in 2011. This is a significant increase from the 2009 enrolment of 37.

The proportion of families with children in the 0-8 year age range where the parents have completed a year 12 qualification is relatively low and well below the state figure.

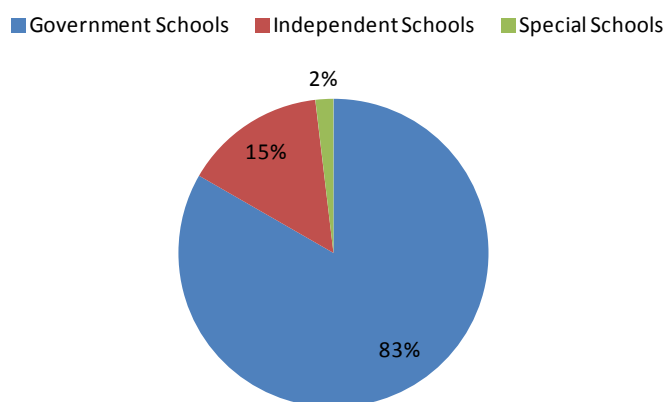
A decade long drought followed by flooding in 2009 and 2010 caused significant economic stress to families and to communities. This has impacted on schools in a number of ways, ranging from fund-raising to the impact on children due to family stress. In communities it is having an effect on the viability of farms and businesses, with a flow on impact through population decline and a reduction in the services available in rural towns.

While the regional centre of Horsham is growing, a number of towns within the area are experiencing population decline, and an ageing demographic profile. This is being balanced to a limited extent by an increase in the number of lower socioeconomic status families moving into the area to take advantage of the cheaper housing. Both of these trends are causing challenges for schools in terms of declining school-age populations, an increase in student mobility and an increasing need for access to welfare services.

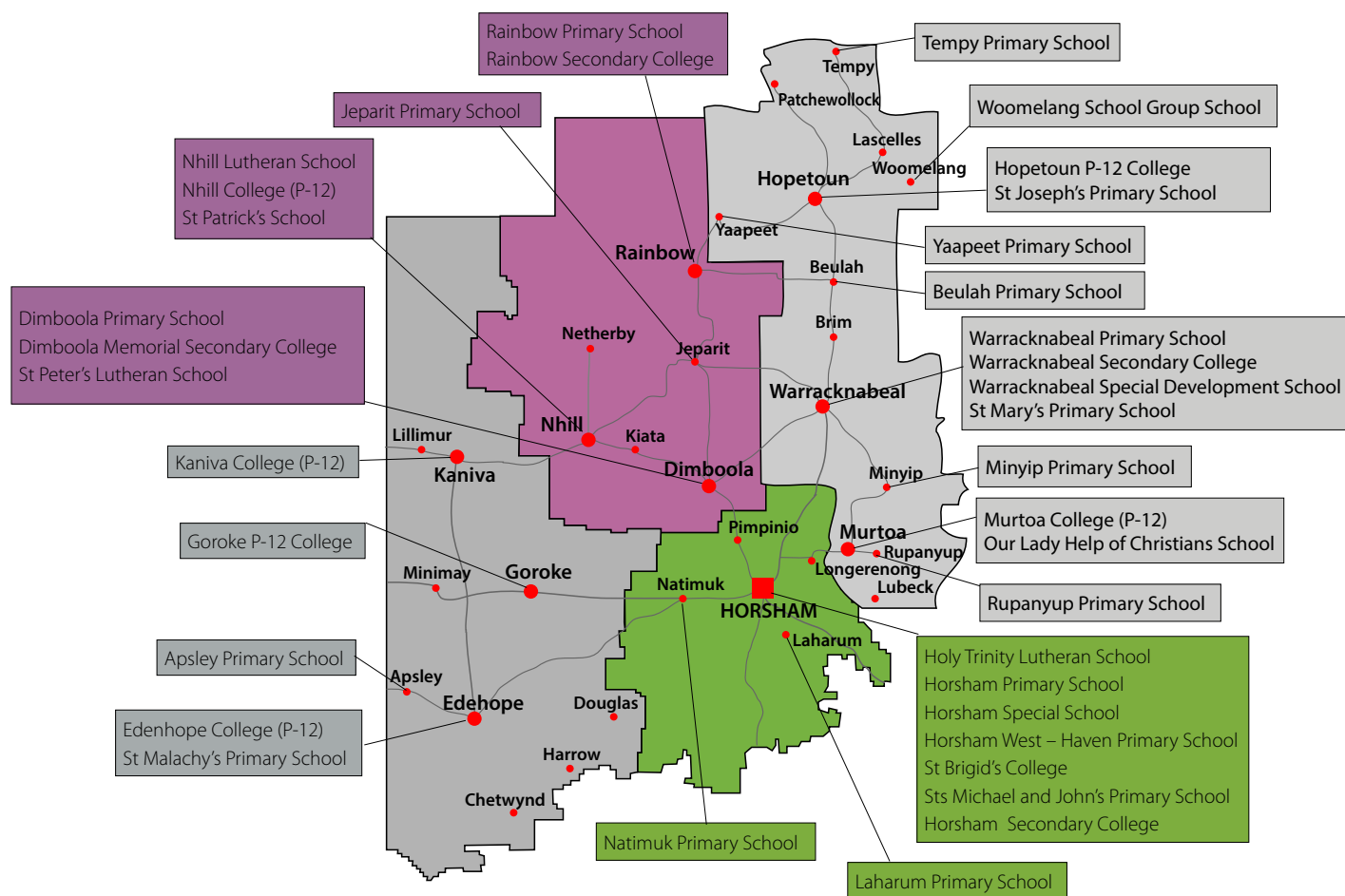
The relatively small size of many of the schools in the region, declining student populations and distance from major regional centres and the metropolitan areas results in some difficulties in staffing. The inability of schools to fill new positions has resulted in an ageing staffing profile within most schools in the region. In some specialist areas where there are state-wide shortages, the task of attracting and retaining teachers is a major challenge.

*Source – Wimmera West Network Strategic Plan 2009-2012 and My School Website*

**WSM Region  
Enrolment by School Sector 2011**



Schools in Shire Districts			
Yarriambiack Shire Schools 14 Schools	Hindmarsh Shire Schools 9 Schools	West Wimmera Shire Schools 5 Schools	Horsham Rural City Schools 9 Schools
Tempy Primary School Woomelang Group School (Primary) Hopetoun P-12 College St Joseph's Primary School (Hopetoun) Yaapeet Primary School Beulah Primary School Warracknabeal Primary School Warracknabeal Secondary College Warracknabeal Special Development School St Mary's Primary School (Warracknabeal) Minyip Primary School Murtoa College (P-12) Our Lady Help of Christians School (Murtoa) Rupanyup Primary School	Rainbow Primary School Rainbow Secondary College Jeparit Primary School St Patrick's School (Nhill) Nhill Lutheran School Nhill College (P-12) Dimboola Primary School Dimboola Memorial Secondary College St Peter's Lutheran School (Dimboola)	Kaniva College (P-12) Goroke P-12 College Apsley Primary School Edenhope College (P-12) St Malachy's Primary School (Edenhope)	Natimuk Primary School Holy Trinity Lutheran School (Horsham) Horsham Primary School Horsham Special School Horsham West – Haven Primary School St Brigid's College Sts Michael and John's Primary School (Horsham) Horsham Secondary College Laharum Primary School



Wimmera Southern Mallee Schools	Total Enrolments			Teaching Staff FTE			School ICSEA value			Indigenous students (%)			LOTE Background (%)			Student attendance rate		
Government Primary Schools	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
Apsley Primary School	33	26	19	2.7	2.5	2.4	959	964	998	3%	4%	0%	0%	0%	-	92%	92%	95%
Beulah Primary School	27	22	18	3	2.2	2	991	991	1002	7%	9%	11%	0%	0%	-	94%	94%	90%
Dimboola Primary School	163	150	144	10.1	9.4	10.5	985	990	986	6%	5%	4%	8%	4%	2%	92%	92%	93%
Hopetoun Primary School (Merged to P12, 2012)	48	43	-	-	2.6	-	1022	1022	-	2%	0%	-	8%	0%	-	90%	90%	-
Horsham 298 Primary School (merged 2011)	437	506	477	-	34	36.1		968	966	2%	6%	6%	3%	4%	7%	93%	-	94%
Horsham North Primary School (merged 2011)	75			-						25%			6%			85%		
Horsham West- Haven Primary School	635	646	641	33.6	35.6	36.1	1015	1018	1016	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%	93%	93%	94%
Jeparit Primary School	35	45	39	3	4	3	867	883	899	23%	20%	18%	13%	0%	-	90%	90%	93%
Laharum Primary School	35	36	39	3.5	2.9	3	1037	1044	1040	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	93%	93%	95%
Minyip Primary School	36	39	40	3.1	3.9	2.8	1007	1012	1017	3%	3%	2%	0%	13%	10%	94%	94%	97%
Natimuk Primary School	37	43	40	3.1	3.3	3.3	1020	1031	1032	5%	5%	5%	10%	8%	9%	92%	92%	90%
Rainbow Primary School	62	70	59	4	4	4	1021	1016	1009	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	-	92%	92%	94%
Rupanyup Primary School	32	43	39	3.3	3.2	3.2	1020	988	995	9%	7%	8%	0%	7%	9%	95%	95%	97%
Tempy Primary School	27	23	26	2.7	2.4	2.4	978	978	986	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	17%	92%	92%	90%
Warracknabeal Primary School	195	181	171	10.8	10.9	9.5	1002	1004	1010	1%	2%	1%	11%	5%	6%	92%	92%	93%
Woomelang Group Primary School	39	27	23	2.7	3.7	3	1031	1038	1020	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	-	92%	92%	99%
Yaapeet Primary Schools	9	7	5	1.4	1.6	1.4	1064	1064	1066	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	97%	97%	96%
Non Government Primary Schools:																		
Holy Trinity Lutheran School	214	228	246	11.8	13	14.3	1062	1071	1066	0%	-	-	3%	2%	14%	95%	95%	95%
Nhill Lutheran School	70	65	69	5	5	5.1	1036	1036	1000	0%	-	-	0%	0%	0%	93%	90%	90%
Our Lady of Help Christian Primary School Murtoa	31	22	25	3.3	2.5	2.6	1032	1032	1031	3%	-	-	18%	0%	-	97%	89%	94%
St Malachy's Primary School Edenhope	38	38	40	3.1	3.2	3.5	1060	1060	1055	0%	-	-	0%	0%	-	94%	95%	94%
St Mary's Primary School Warracknabeal	52	65	71	3.6	4.4	4.9	1020	1020	1029	0%	-	-	0%	0%	5%	96%	96%	98%
St Michael's & St John's Primary School – Horsham	246	253	263	16.4	16.1	18	1041	1041	1030	0%	-	-	3%	0%	4%	93%	94%	92%
St Joseph's Primary School Hopetoun	20	24	25	2.7	2.3	2.5	1049	1049	1047	0%	-	-	0%	0%	-	95%	99%	97%
St Patrick's Primary School Nhill	20	15	12	3	2.6	3	985	985	1020	0%	-	-	14%	0%	40%	94%	93%	98%
St Peter's Lutheran School Dimboola	24	24	28	2.6	2.5	2.5	987	987	986	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	94%	87%	92%
Total Primary School Enrolments	2640	2641	2559															
Government Secondary Schools:																		
Dimboola Secondary College	187	164	193	20.8	22.8	22.5	964	962	958	1%	1%	2%	5%	1%	3%	93%	93%	91%
Hopetoun Secondary College (P-12, in 2012)	97	96	-	15.5	16.8	-	985	991	-	0%	0%	-	0%	5%	-	87%	87%	-
Horsham Secondary College	1019	1013	1010	73.6	73.2	71.5	994	989	983	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%	4%	92%	92%	98%
Rainbow Secondary College	63	60	67	13.4	13.4	11.4	1013	1006	1005	2%	3%	4%	16%	0%	-	91%	91%	93%
Warracknabeal Secondary College	239	238	253	23.6	26.2	27.4	983	977	967	0%	2%	2%	3%	5%	3%	97%	97%	92%
Government P12 Colleges																		
Hopetoun P-12 College	-	-	128	-	-	21	-	-	997	-	-	0%	-	-	13%	-	-	92%
Murtoa College	309	293	287	30.5	27.9	26.8	980	982	980	1%	1%	1%	5%	2%	-	90%	90%	92%
Nhill College	404	400	383	35.5	35.7	34.5	990	988	982	1%	1%	1%	8%	2%	12%	92%	92%	93%
Kaniva College	240	233	212	25.4	24.8	24.9	1036	1031	1001	3%	3%	3%	6%	5%	1%	93%	93%	93%
Goroke P-12 College	105	110	106	16.2	17.4	16	983	984	980	2%	3%	7%	0%	0%	-	94%	94%	94%
Edenhope College	237	219	206	26.2	23.6	23.8	963	968	966	1%	0%	1%	7%	4%	7%	93%	93%	94%
Non Government Secondary Schools:																		
St Brigid's College	400	408	423	31.6	32.2	35.2	1037	1039	1011	0%	1%	1%	4%	7%	5%	100%	100%	100%
Special Schools																		
Horsham Special School	64	73	73	8.2	8.1	10.4	-	-	-	3%	5%	3%	3%	5%	-	94%	-	-
Warracknabeal Special Development School	34	34	30	4.1	6.1	6.1	-	-	-	12%	15%	20%	0%	0%	-	89%	-	-

Source: My School Web Site

## 2.2 Other Education Providers

The WSMLLEN has key partnerships with the following educational institutions. These organisations have an extensive array of infrastructure and resources that will continue to underpin successful regional education and transition outcomes.

Federation University Wimmera HUB Longerenong College Goulburn Ovens TAFE Northern Metro Institute of TAFE South West TAFE	Registered Training Organisations which provide delivery of courses as part of Vocation Education and Training for students. Ideal preparation for traineeship or School Based New Apprenticeship.
Federation University – TAFE Division	CGEA component of Satellite VCAL
Connect Ed Satellite VCAL - Horsham Satellite VCAL - Warracknabeal	Out of School Alternative Education for disengaged and 'at risk' young people

### Adult, Community and Further Education Board

Through the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board, the Victorian Government provides funding to community-based organisations, known as Learn Local organisations, and two adult education institutions, the CAE and AMES, for delivery of education and training programs to a broad range of Victorians over compulsory school-leaving age (young people, older people, people with special needs, people from diverse cultural backgrounds) with a special focus on people who have had limited prior access to education.

The community basis and diversity of the organisations is one of the great strengths of Learn Local. There are more than 320 Learn Local organisations spread across Victoria, 9 of which are situated in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region offering learning opportunities to residents.

Yarriambiack Shire	Hindmarsh Shire	West Wimmera Shire	Horsham Rural City Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateway BEET- Hopetoun</li> <li>• Beulah Historic Learning and Progress Association</li> <li>• Warracknabeal Neighbourhood Centre Inc</li> <li>• Shared Learning and Activities Murtoa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rainbow - Rainbow Learning Group and Neighbourhood House Inc</li> <li>• Nhill - Nhill Neighbourhood House Learning Centre Inc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kaniva- Learning and Information Network Kaniva</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horsham Community House</li> <li>• Wimmera HUB</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Alternative Education Options

### Satellite VCAL – (formerly Community VCAL)

Satellite VCAL programs are designed to engage those students who are unable to complete Year 12 or equivalent in a mainstream school setting. They aim to support these young people to complete Year 12 or equivalent (either through the VCAL program or following a transition to another setting) and to make a successful transition from the program to further education, training or employment. Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN supports the Satellite VCAL Program which is delivered through a partnership between Horsham College and the Federation University and the Warracknabeal Satellite VCAL Program.

### Horsham Satellite VCAL Enrolments

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Contacts	12	20	34	45	57	59	55
Registered on VASS	4 results	13 results	20 results	29 results	38 results	45 results	41 results
Certificates obtained				5	4	12	5

Source Horsham SVCAL Coordinator (Note: 7 students have to achieve 1 or 2 credits to gain their VCAL certificate in 2011)

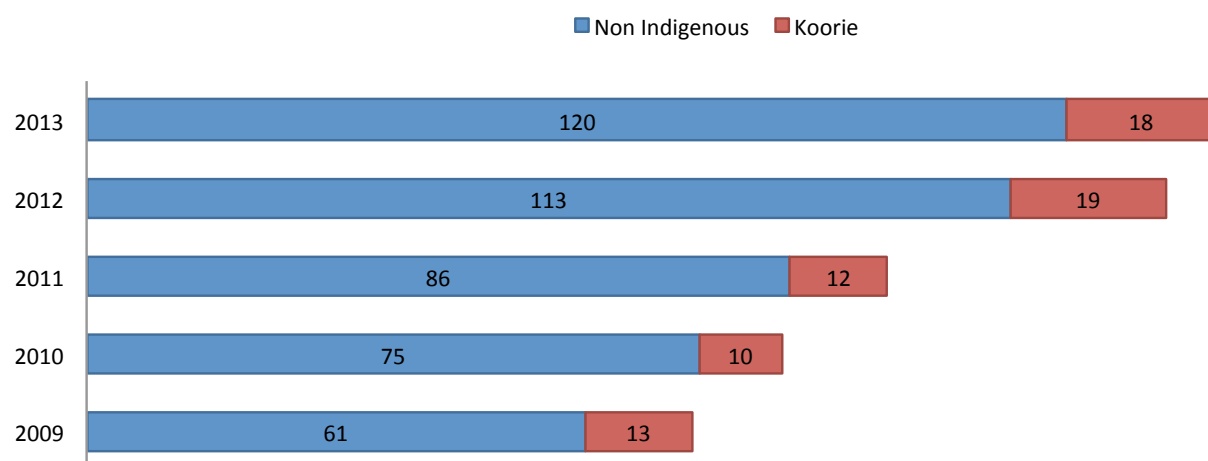
## Connect Ed – Horsham

Connect Ed was developed during 2006 in Horsham to provide opportunities for young people, who have left school, to re-engage in a learning process that is specifically designed to cater for their individual needs. Connect Ed was approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in partnership with Horsham College, and is supported by Grampians Community Health Centre Inc, Nexus, Wimmera Uniting Care and the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN.

Connect Ed started operating at the beginning of the school year in 2007. Individual Learning Programs are designed to cater for individual needs. Connect Ed students go to a community-based centre, where they meet with an adult who assists with their learning. Young people enrolled in Connect Ed can access a range of courses from Distance Education Victoria Centre and other education providers such as TAFE. Assistance is also provided to link the young people in with community agencies and organisations.

Source: Grampians Education Partnership website.

## Connect Ed Enrolments



## Connect Ed (Horsham College) Re-engagement Program – Student Outcomes

Connect Ed Students Horsham College	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Enrolments	84 (incl. 13 Koorie students)	85 (incl. 10 Koorie students)	98 (incl. 12 Koorie students)	132 (incl. 19 Koorie students)	138 (inc 18 Koorie students)
Academic results	4	9 enrolled in VETiS (did not finish) 22 enrolled in VCAL (did not finish) 3 enrolled at HUB (did not finish)	8 Certificate 2 in CGEA 1 Certificate 2 in Business 2 Safe food handling certificates 12 students participated in Quick Smart Numeracy <i>Total 11 qualifications</i>	15 completed VCAL Work related Skills Units 1 & 2 7 completed VCAL Work related Skills Unit 1 3 completed VCAL Work related Skills Unit 2 11 completed first aid training 6 completed Responsible Serving of Alcohol certificate 6 completed Food Hygiene certificate 14 students participated in Quick Smart Numeracy <i>Total: 48 qualifications</i>	18 completed VCAL Foundation Literacy Skills 20 completed VCAL Foundation Numeracy Skills 4 completed BSBWHS201A & BSBCMM201A Foundation Industry Specific Skills 5 completed BSBITU202A Foundation Industry Specific Skills 4 completed Apply First Aid 2 completed Food Hygiene Certificate 8 students participated in Quick Smart Numeracy <i>Total: 53 qualifications</i>

## 2.4 VCAL

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a hands-on option for students in Years 11 and 12. Like the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), VCAL is an accredited secondary certificate. The VCAL program has experienced a dramatic rise in enrolments in 2009 and again in 2011. The rise in enrolments is reflective of a growing demand for applied learning, and a desire of students to learn work related and personal development skills whilst improving their achievements in literacy and numeracy. Students who do the VCAL often go on to further training at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute, start an apprenticeship, or move into employment.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee VCAL Network comprises of all secondary schools in the region. VCAL coordinators meet on a monthly basis to share knowledge and best practice, improve quality assurance processes, highlight project successes and support the VCAL program on a regional basis. A highlight for the WSMVCAL Network is the VCAL Expo, held annually at one of the region's schools. Students attend and present their projects to their peers and the VCAL Network.

### VCAL Enrolments – Wimmera Southern Mallee

VCAL enrolments	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Foundation (F)	60	66	64	137	98	203	149
Intermediate (I)	36	35	37	61	61	78	158
Senior (S)	19	20	14	7	12	117	37
Total	115	121	115	205	171	398	340
ATSI Students	Unknown	1 Foundation	3 Foundation 1 Intermediate 1 Senior	2 Foundation	1 Foundation 1 Intermediate	2 Foundation 1 Intermediate	1 Foundation 2 Intermediate

Source – LLEN Data Disc 2013



## 2.5 VET

There were 15 VET subjects offered by the Registered Training Organisations in the Wimmera in 2011. This increased to 26 in 2012 and decreased to 22 in 2013 and 2014. Many of the programs offered are aligned closely with the region's skill shortage areas, including courses in agriculture, building and construction, automotive, engineering, retail and community services. The VET Cluster works to enable students from across the region to access a wide range of courses.

### VETiS Enrolments - Wimmera Southern Mallee

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of students	344	377	338	331

Source – LLEN Data Disc - DEECD, WSM Workplace Learning Coordinator

Wimmera Southern Mallee Vet Enrolments In Skill Shortage Areas				
VET COURSE	2009 VET enrolments	2010 VET enrolments	2011 VET enrolments	2012 VET enrolments
Agriculture	44	44	35	32
Building and Construction	40	55	55	47
Engineering	30	68	30	19
Health and Community Services (Children's services)	21	27	65	27
TOTAL	135	194	185	125

Source WSM VET Cluster coordinator and LLEN Data Disc 2012– DEECD

The completion rate of VET and VCAL units has shown robust upwards growth between 2008 and 2011 and is indicative of the strong participation and 'buy-in' of all partners. VCAL completion rates in the Wimmera Southern Mallee of 93.67% in 2011 are significantly higher than the 2011 State average of 70.1% completion. The Wimmera Southern Mallee VET completion of 97.30% is more than 22 percentage points higher than the 2008 completion rate, and significantly higher than the state average.

VET AND VCAL UNIT COMPLETION RATES – WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE		
YEAR	VET COMPLETION RATE	VCAL COMPLETION RATE
2008	75.14%	76.90%
2009	84.96%	88.76%
2010	91.41%	86.73%*
2011	97.30%	93.67%

Source: DEECD Ballarat Office

# VET Subjects on offer to the WSM VET Cluster 2014

VET Program 2014 Courses	Course Code	RTO/site
Certificate II in Agriculture (1st & 2nd year) Certificate III in Agriculture (Partial) (3rd year)	AHC20110 AHC30110	W.T.T.C. Longerenong
Certificate II in Automotive Studies (pre-vocational) (1st & 2nd year) Certificate III in Automotive Mechanical Technology (Light Vehicle) 3rd Year offered as School Based Apprenticeship	22015VIC AUR30405	W.T.T.C. Fed U
Certificate II in Building and Construction (Partial) (1st & 2nd year) Certificate II in Building and Construction (Completion) 3rd year	21844VIC	W.T.T.C. Fed U
Certificate II in Community Services (& selected units from Cert III in Children's Services) (1st & 2nd year)	CHC20112 CHC30712	Wimmera HUB
Certificate II in Creative Industries (Media) (1st year)	CUF20107	Wimmera HUB
Certificate II in Engineering Studies (1st & 2nd year) Certificate III in Engineering (Mechanical) (Partial)	22019VIC MEM30205	W.T.T.C. Longerenong
Certificate II in Furniture Making (1st & 2nd year) (& selected units from Certificate III in furniture Making	LMF20309 LMF30302	W.T.T.C. Horsham College
Certificate II in Hairdressing (1st & 2nd year)	SIH2011	W.T.T.C. Fed U
Certificate III in Health Services Assistance (1st & 2nd year)	HLT32512	Fed U
Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations) (1st & 2nd year) Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) (3rd year only) School Based Apprenticeship	SIT20307 SIT30807	W.T.T.C. Horsham College
Certificate II in Integrated Technology (1st & 2nd year)	22071VIC	W.T.T.C. Horsham College
Certificate II in Music (1st year)	CUS20109	Wimmera HUB
Certificate II in Plumbing (Pre-apprenticeship) (1st & 2nd year)	22138VIC	W.T.T.C. Fed U
Certificate II in Retail Make -up and Skin Care (1st & 2nd year)	SIB20110	Fed U
Certificate III in Sports & Recreation (1st & 2nd year)	SIS30510	Fed U
Certificate IV in Visual Arts & Contemporary Crafts (2nd year)	CUV20103	Fed U

Fed U = Federation University

WTTC = Wimmeara Trade Training Centre

Source WSM VET Cluster Student Handbook 2014

## 2.6 Student Destinations

### Year 12 Completers

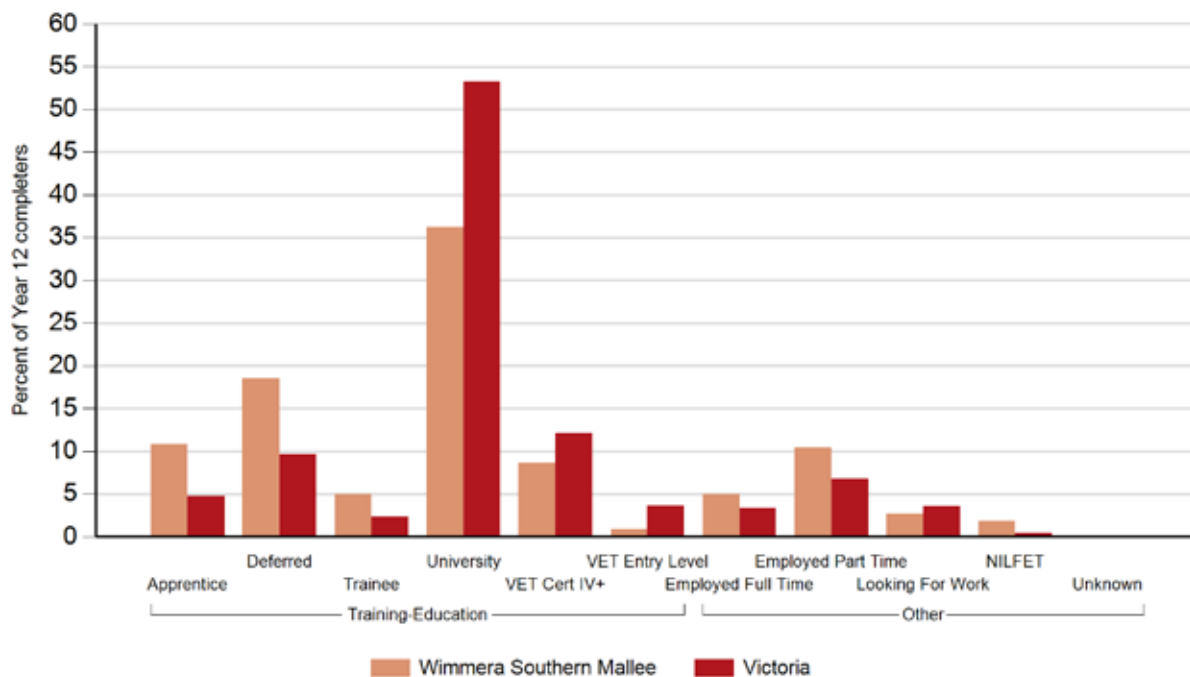
Year 12 completers from the Wimmera Southern Mallee region take up university places at a much lower rate than the state average. Factors such as family circumstances, costs, distance, the need to relocate and dislocation from family and friends have a negative impact on the ability of many of the region's youth to pursue tertiary education. The number of students deferring their university commencement is also almost double the state average (See Figure 2). Although there is no data on the percentage of students deferring who actually go on to tertiary study after their gap year, it is reasonable to assume that some of these who defer their tertiary study actually enter employment and do not take up their tertiary offers.

Year 12 Completers	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	State Av 2012
University	30.7%	36.9%	31.1%	26.6%	29.3%	30.8%	34.6%	36.2%	53.2%
VET Cert 4 +	8.3%	8.9%	7.9%	10.0%	7.5%	11.8%	9.1%	8.6%	12.1%
VET entry - level	6.6%	4.4%	6.2%	4.4%	4.2%	5.7%		0.9%	3.7%
Apprentice	9.6%	8.9%	8.4%	9.2%	10.0%	10.4%	12.5%	10.9%	4.8%
Trainee	9.2%	7.6%	10.2%	6.6%	8.4%	3.3%		5.0%	2.3%
Full-time work	6.1%	7.6%	12.0%	15.7%	7.1%	8.5%	37.0%	12.7%	6.2%
Part-time work	14.4%	7.7%	8.9%	7.9%	10.9%	7.6%		18.1%	11.8%
Unemployed	2.2%	4.0%	3.6%	3.9%	5.0%	4.3%	4.3%	5.4%	4.8%
Deferred	13.2%	10.7%	12.4%	15.7%	17.6%	17.5%	*	*	*

\*numbers deferring are included in University placement

Source : On Track Survey, 2013

**Figure 2 Destinations of 2012 Year 12 or equivalent completers, showing deferrals: Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN and Victoria**



Source: On Track Survey 2013

## Early School Leavers

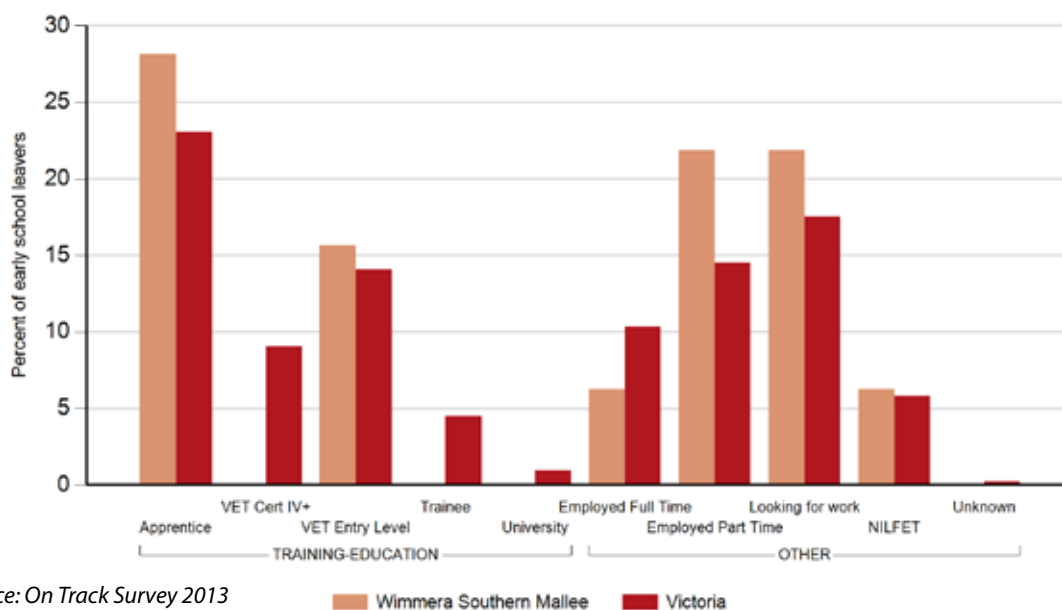
Only 28.1% percent of surveyed 2012 early school leavers in the Wimmera Southern Mallee took up an apprenticeship or traineeship which showed a significant percentage drop from previous years. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that more students are staying at school and undertaking school based apprenticeships and traineeships rather than leaving school to take up apprenticeships, however, there is no data available to support this theory. It is worth noting that the total number of early school leavers in 2012 dropped significantly from 2011. In 2011 there were 59 early school leavers whereas in 2012 that number dropped to 32.

The data shows significant fluctuations from year to year in the destinations of students. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that only a percentage of school leavers are surveyed in the collection of the data, or by the fact that employment in the Wimmera Southern Mallee has a strong agriculture base and fluctuating seasonal conditions affect the regional economy and subsequent employment.

## Estimated Number Early School Leavers

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	State Average 2012
VET/TAFE	26.5%	14.8%	16.3%	6.6%	12.2%	5.9%	12.9%	15.6%	23.2%
Apprenticeship	35.3%	50.6%	41.9%	44.4%	51.2%	44.1%	41.9%	28.1%	23%
Trainee	2.9%	6.2%	7.0%	17.8%	0.0%	11.8%		0%	4.5%
Full-time work	13.2%	12.3%	11.6%	15.6%	9.8%	17.6%	29.0%	6.3%	10.3%
Part-time work	5.9%	8.6%	14.0%	4.4%	17.1%	5.0%		21.9%	14.5%
Unemployed	16.2%	7.4%	9.3%	11.1%	9.8%	14.7%	14.5%	21.9%	17.5%

**Figure 3 Destinations of 2012 early school leavers: Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN and Victoria**



Source: On Track Survey 2013

Comparative state averages for proportion of school leavers continuing in education or training (2011)		
	State	WSMLLEN Area
Year 10	85.4%	95.6%
Year 11	69.8%	72.6%
Year 12 (prior to completion)	55.7%	44.8%
Year 12 (on completion)	78.9%	70.8%

Source DEECD Grampians Regional Office – Ballarat

Proportion of early school leavers who have F/T employment or continue in education or training – WSMMLLEN area

Year Level on Leaving School	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 10	75.5%	76.5%	89.3%	95.6%
Year 11	60.8%	67.8%	66.1%	72.6%
Year 12 (prior to completion)	53.1%	47.2%	62.5%	44.8%
Year 12	67.2%	73.3%	75.1%	70.8%

Source DEECD Grampians Regional Office – Ballarat

Apparent retention rate Yr 10-12 in Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN area

	2010	2011	2012
Year 10-12 retention	65.5%	69.4%	76.1%

Source DEECD Grampians Regional Office – Ballarat

The apparent retention rate is the number of students enrolled in year seven as a percentage of the students enrolled in year 12 six years later. It is possible that this number can be greater than 100%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) enrolments in WSMMLLEN region

Secondary Enrolments of ATSI Students in Government Schools in Wimmera Southern Mallee 2012

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Special Schools	Total
Hindmarsh (S)	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	8
Horsham (RC)	5	6	4	6	9	2	4	36
West Wimmera (S)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Yarriambiack (S)	1	2	1	1	1	1	6	13
Total WSM	9	9	7	8	12	4	10	59

Source: LLEN Data Disk 2013

There were 59 ATSI secondary students enrolled in the region's schools in 2012. This is a significant increase from the 2009 enrolment of 37.

ATSI VCE (Units 3-4) Enrolments – Wimmera Southern Mallee

	2008	2009	2010	2011
VCE Enrolments (units 3-4) - ATSI	1	0	1	1
VCE Enrolments (units 3-4) - Total	569	538	538	514

Source – LLEN Data Disc 2012

ATSI Student Enrolments in Years 11 & 12 – Wimmera Southern Mallee

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Year 11 ATSI Enrolments	6	6	9	12
Year 12 ATSI Enrolments	1	3	4	4

Source DEECD Grampians Regional Office – Ballarat

## Learning

Students who achieved the national minimum standard in reading in the 2010 NAPLAN.

	Year 5	State Average	Year 7	State Average	Year 9	State Average
Horsham	90.8%	94.2%	92.9%	96.2%	86.4%	93.3%
Yarriambiack	86.7%		93.5%		85.7%	
West Wimmera	96.7%		95.5%		86.0%	
Hindmarsh	94.0%		92.8%		94.0%	

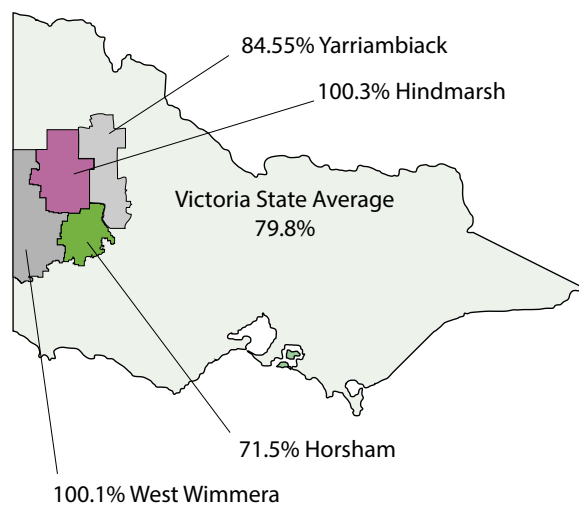
Students who achieved the national minimum standard in writing in the 2010 NAPLAN.

	Year 5	State Average	Year 7	State Average	Year 9	State Average
Horsham	91.3%	94.8%	92.5%	93.6	82.2%	89.3%
Yarriambiack	86.6%		86.5%		85.8%	
West Wimmera	96.7%		92.3%		91.4%	
Hindmarsh	95.1%		88.0%		85.9%	

Students who achieved the national minimum standard in numeracy in the 2010 NAPLAN.

	Year 5	State Average	Year 7	State Average	Year 9	State Average
Horsham	93.6%	95.7%	93.1%	96.1%	91.5%	94.8%
Yarriambiack	90.7%		92.4%		89.7%	
West Wimmera	98.4%		95.5%		100.0%	
Hindmarsh	93.8%		96.4%		97.6%	

### Percentage of young people aged 19 years who attained year 12 or its equivalent (2009)



*Attainment rates represented are calculated by dividing the number of year 12 students gaining a qualification by the estimated resident population of 17 year olds two years prior. (Using this formula, attainment rates can be greater than 100%)*

Source 2011 Adolescent Community Profiles - DEECD, NAPLAN Annual Report 2010

## 2.7 Mentoring

The MATES Mentoring Program was developed following the Dimboola Mentoring Pilot Program (DMPP) in 2010 which proved to be a resounding success and is continuing to be implemented through Dimboola Memorial Secondary College. The DMPP was developed initially after research, conversations and planning between the School, the Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning Employment Network and the Hindmarsh Shire Council determined the need for a mentoring program.

MATES is a mentoring program which has been designed as a model which is easy and effective for schools to implement at very little cost. MATES draws on the strong support of the local community to be positive role models for students. MATES recognises that in a changing world, schools can't do it alone. Communities have to work together to help support and nourish the variety of needs and capabilities of our young people.

The aims of the mates program are clearly contained in its acronym:

- Mentor** – to provide an additional positive role model in the lives of young people
- Assist** – to assist and extend the positive life experiences of young people
- Target** – to specifically target life and educational goals of young people
- Engage** – to engage young people more fully into their schools and local communities
- Skills** – to identify and enhance the skills & strengths of young people

By 2013 the MATES Mentoring Program had provided 233 mentors for young people in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

MATES Program	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Dimboola Memorial Secondary College	9	15	11	8	43
Nhill College	-	10	11	5	26
Murtoa College	-	7	8	5	20
Horsham College	-	8	11	8	27
Warracknabeal Satellite VCAL	-	11	-	-	11
Goroke P-12	-	-	8	4	12
Horsham Special School	-	-	7	-	7
Horsham Satellite VCAL	-	-	4	-	4
Kaniva College	-	-	11	7	18
Horsham Primary School 298 Campus	-	-	16	9	25
Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Campus	-	-	6	7	13
Edenhope College	-	-	-	8	8
Wimmera Uniting Care	-	-	-	3	3
Warracknabeal Primary School				8	8
St Mary's Primary School Warracknabeal				8	8
Total	9	51	93	80	233

Students who participated in the MATES Mentoring Program in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region were surveyed at the end of 2013. The survey results indicate that a high percentage of mentees believed having a mentor had made a positive contribution to their lives. (See survey data on page 28)

### MATES Reading Buddies Program

The WSMLLEN created the MATES Reading Buddies program in the second half of 2012 in response to discussions held with primary school principals. The principals identified that many students were in need of additional support to develop their reading skills to the required standard. Many young people have to negotiate primary school and transition to secondary school with below standard reading skills.

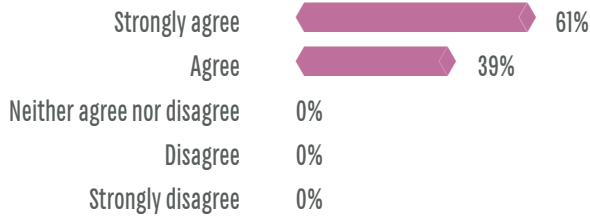
There are significant challenges for many parents to provide the required support for development of their child's reading skills, including lack of access to books, parents being time poor, lack of confidence, low literacy levels of parents, family dysfunction and social and economic factors. A pilot program was developed by the WSMLLEN and implemented at the Rasmussen Rd Campus of Horsham Primary School in 2012. Community volunteers were recruited and trained to support students' reading. Each morning, volunteers visit the school and listen to the students read. Volunteers encourage, prompt and develop students' reading skills.

The program was extended in 2013, recruiting 58 volunteer Reading Buddies across 7 Wimmera Southern Mallee schools.

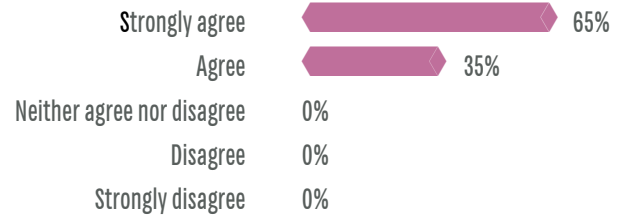


## Results of a survey of participants in the MATES Mentoring Program in 2013

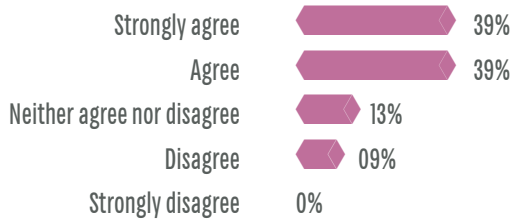
### I am more confident because of my Mentor and being in MATES



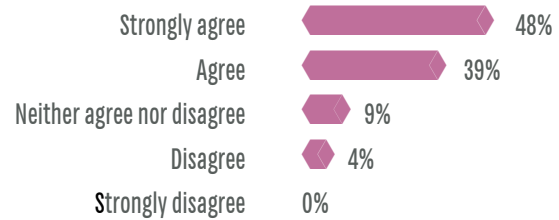
### I feel better about myself because of my Mentor and being in MATES



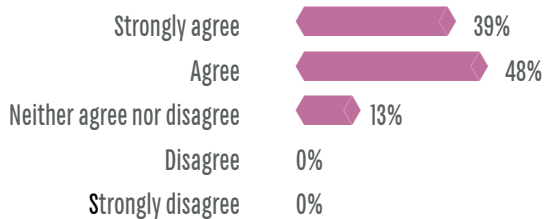
### My behaviour is better because of my Mentor and being in MATES



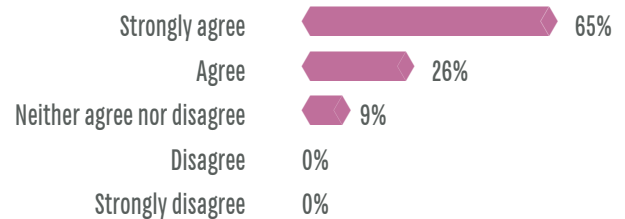
### I get along better with my friends because of my Mentor and being in MATES



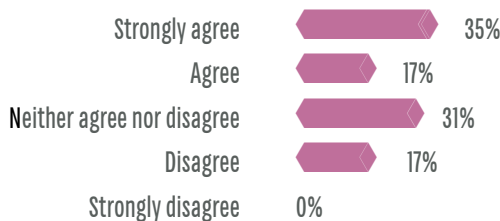
### I feel better about school because of my Mentor and being in MATES



### I would recommend the MATES Program to other young people



### I go to school more often because of my Mentor and being in MATES



## 2.8 Wimmera Trade Training Centre

The Wimmera Trade Training Centre aims to strengthen the relationship between the major training providers in the Wimmera and all Wimmera schools with secondary enrolments to promote and provide enhanced training opportunities in identified skill shortage areas.

Funds have been used to :

- upgrade existing facilities at Federation University TAFE in the areas of Hairdressing, Building and Construction (Carpentry and Plumbing) and Automotive,
- upgrade existing facilities at Longerenong College in the areas of Agriculture and Engineering
- construct a new industry standard facility at Horsham College which will deliver training in the areas of commercial cookery, electro-technology, hairdressing and furniture and cabinet making.

The Southern Mallee Trade Training Centre aims to provide pathways in Agriculture, Construction, Engineering and Mechanical trades for students in the Southern Mallee Cluster. The funding has been used for equipment and minor upgrades of the Colleges' Agriculture, Automotive, Woods and Metals Technology existing infrastructure. The Trade Training Centre will enable the delivery of automotive electrical technology, furniture making (cabinet making), general construction (carpentry – framework, formwork and finishing), engineering – mechanical trade, engineering – fabricator trade and agriculture.

*Source: [www.deewr.gov.au/TradeTrainingCentres](http://www.deewr.gov.au/TradeTrainingCentres)*

The WSMMLLEN played a strong role in the planning and development of the Wimmera Trade Training Centre (W TTC). WSMMLLEN Committee of Management members serve on the W TTC Committee of Management and have strong input into the ongoing development of the multi-campus Trade Training Centre. The upgrades to facilities at Longerenong College and Federation University were made and the new buildings at Horsham College were officially opened in December 2012. Students are able to undertake their VET studies in modern facilities with up-to-date equipment and technology in the multi-campus Wimmera Trade Training Centre.

The development of the W TTC has been underpinned by the strong engagement and 'buy in' of all partners involved. The partners are committed to the ongoing viability of the Trade Training Centre and there is strong agreement that the programs delivered through the centre will be focused on skill shortage areas. The project has strong support from schools, RTO's, local business, industry and the wider community. The strong Wimmera VET network cluster facilitates student access to training on the regular public transport service, which originated in the region as the 'VET Bus'.

## 2.9 Gaps or weaknesses in provision of service

Factors contributing to gaps and weaknesses in the provision of services in the WSM region include:

- low student numbers in rural schools limiting the number of subjects offered
- shrinking population in all towns in the region (apart from Horsham), leading to declining enrolments
- difficulty in filling vacant teaching positions due to remote locations
- ageing teacher cohort
- difficulty accessing other means of education and training due to limited transport options and isolated location of some schools
- low tertiary uptake compared to the rest of the state
- increasing numbers of transient families in the region—children from this cohort frequently do not stay in one place long enough to get the long term support needed. This has an adverse impact on numeracy and literacy results for young people
- low retention rates for students engaged in education
- growing number of at-risk students and disengaged students
- limited number of out of school options in smaller towns to provide for students disengaged from mainstream schooling
- existing alternative education programs running at maximum numbers—waiting lists exist to deal with students wishing to enrol
- no established options for education or training if a student becomes disengaged at a rural school other than to relocate
- a projected increase in VCAL numbers creating pressure on a limited number of host employers for work placements as per the VCAL requirements
- no compulsory obligations for students to obtain Structured Workplace Learning placements while completing a VET course in order to obtain hands on experience and links with business and industry
- more pressure on businesses and less opportunity for students to obtain School Based Apprenticeships or Traineeships due to the long-term effects of the drought and contraction in agri-based rural economy

- rising delivery costs, teacher shortages and a shrinking population having detrimental effects on enrolment figures, the income of RTO's, the viability of the access bus and the program in general
- RTO's being subjected to cost pressures, as they lift pay rates to attract suitable staff. Some courses are overloaded while others are not fully subscribed
- long days for VET students travelling from remote communities (Some students travel in excess of 3 hours each VET day)
- low percentage of Indigenous students completing year 12. There were 59 Indigenous young people enrolled in the region's secondary schools in 2012—only 4 Indigenous students were enrolled in Year 12 with one enrolment in VCE Units 3&4. There were 2,159 VCE enrolments in the region's schools in the period 2008 to 2011. Only three of these enrolments were identified as Indigenous students.

## 2.10 Strengths

Factors contributing to strengths in the provision of services in the WSM region include:

- the region's strong school networks and schools working collaboratively within these networks and the program clusters
- strong sustainable partnerships established across the region—these partnerships facilitate information sharing and an integrated approach to improving education and transition outcomes for the region's youth
- schools having an intimate knowledge of their student cohort due to relatively small student numbers in most schools
- the VET, VCAL, and Careers Association networks enabling students from across the region to have a broader choice of subjects, opportunities and pathways
- most schools making use of the 'virtual campus' to increase curriculum offerings to their students.

## 2.11 Education Networks

### Wimmera Southern Mallee VCAL, VET and Careers Network clusters

These three cluster groups meet monthly to share information, discuss relevant issues and provide support for one another. DEECD, RTOs and WSMLEN representatives are present at these meetings as well as other stakeholders.

**Wimmera Principal Network**—this network strategically works towards providing ongoing high quality education for all students from birth to the completion of Year 12 or equivalent.

### Grampians Education Partnership—Youth Options Guarantee

This partnership involves a range of organisations that share a commitment to improving the educational outcomes of young people in the Grampians Region. Members of this partnership are: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Grampians Region), Department of Human Services (Grampians Region), Department of Planning and Community Development (Grampians Region), Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development (Workforce Participation Division), Catholic Education Office (Diocese of Ballarat), Federation University (Higher Education), Federation University (Tec), ACFE, Grampians Regional Council, BGT Youth Services, Centacare, Pyrenees Grampians Primary Care Partnership, Australian Industry Group Regional Board (Western Region), Central Grampians LLEN, Highlands LLEN, North Central LLEN, Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN and Ararat Rural City Council.

### Community Action Networks

These partnerships are dedicated to work collaboratively to obtain the best outcomes for those young people aged 15-19 years, who leave school early without an appropriate pathway. The Horsham Community Reference Team (CRT) has been re-energised and re-invigorated to provide support for local disengaged youth. The CRT has been renamed as the Horsham Community Action Network (CAN). Heads of agencies and representatives of key organisations including Wimmera Uniting Care, Department of Human Services, Grampians Community Health, Federation University, WorkCo, Wimmera HUB, Job Service Australia providers, Centrelink, Victoria Police, Youth Connections, local government, youth workers and school personnel participate in the CANs.

A Koorie Community Action Network has also been formed, and the Warracknabeal CAN commenced in that town in August 2010. CANs were established for Nhill and Murtoa in 2011.

The Community Action Networks provide a platform for those involved in education to network with the wider community. (See Community Group Profiles, page 39 of this report for more information.)

### 3. Business and Industry Profile

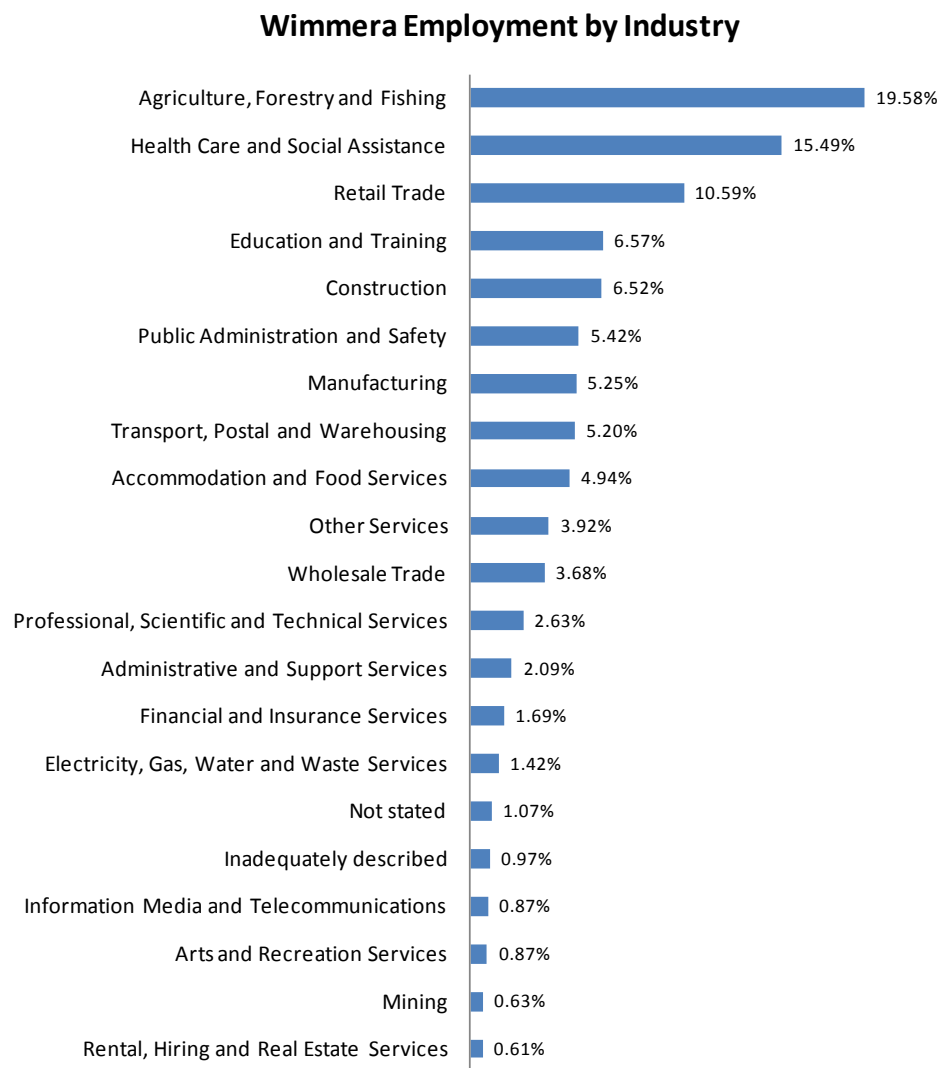
#### 3.1 Regional Employment by Industry

The Wimmera has an agri-based economy. The region's major employer is agriculture, followed by health care and social assistance, and retail trade. Other significant sectors include manufacturing, education and training, and building and construction. All of these major industry sectors (apart from retail trade) experience difficulty in filling vacancies and suffer from skill deficits.

The region's VET program has become more closely aligned with these skill shortage areas. The Wimmera Trade Training Centre, which opened in 2012, provides first class training facilities and programs in skill shortage areas.

*ANZSIC first edition.*

Employment by industry



Source: ABS Census Data 2011

## Wimmera Workforce by Age

The table below gives a breakdown of employment status in 10 year age groups in the Wimmera Southern Mallee shire areas.

Age group (years)	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100 +
Employed, worked full-time	352	1826	1679	2534	2538	945	199	34	0	0
Employed, worked part-time	631	565	892	1163	1110	676	202	37	0	0
Employed, away from work	63	185	166	175	273	176	44	21	3	0
Unemployed, looking for full-time work	48	114	67	68	57	20	0	0	0	0
Unemployed, looking for part-time work	73	36	20	43	35	21	3	0	0	0
Not in the labour force	1138	579	705	682	1112	2306	2482	1717	304	12
Not stated	86	114	138	198	199	186	204	266	56	8
Not applicable	2435	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4826	3419	3667	4863	5324	4330	3134	2075	363	20

Source: ABS 2011 Census Data

Some of the region's major employers include:

### Wimmera Health Care Group

Wimmera Health Care Group is the major specialist referral centre for the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region of Victoria, servicing an area of 61,000 square kilometres and a population of approximately 54,000 people. They have campuses in Horsham and Dimboola and provide emergency and critical care services for adults and children. Every year, Wimmera Health Care Group treats over 10,000 inpatients, 16,000 emergency patients and 123,000 outpatients. With a work force of approximately 850 staff, they are the largest employer in the region.

### West Wimmera Health Services (WWHS)

WWHS is a Victorian Public Health Service and is bound by a Service Agreement with the Department of Human Services to deliver acute care, aged care, allied, disability and community health services for the six rural communities of Nhill, Goroke, Jeparit, Kaniva, Rainbow and Natimuk. WWHS employs approximately 520 staff.

### Rural Northwest Health

Rural Northwest Health employs 250 staff across the three campuses (Warracknabeal, Beulah and Hopetoun) including registered nurses (division 1 and 2), allied health professionals, personal care attendants, hostel services, administration and maintenance staff.

### Wimmera Uniting Care

Wimmera Uniting Care is the fourth largest Victorian community service agency. Employing more than 420 staff and supported by over 200 volunteers, they help more than 8,000 people every year by providing over 80 programs and activities.

### GWM Water

GWM Water employ approximately 230 staff. GWM has approximately 70,000 customers spread over 62,000 square kilometres, which is about 30% of Victoria and covers 13 municipalities either fully or partially.

### Grains Innovation Park

Based in Horsham, Grains Innovation Park is home to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria (PV). There are approximately 150 DPI staff engaged in research and extension in a wide range of disciplines. These include cereal, pulse and oilseed breeding, molecular genetics, grains agronomy, plant pathology, virology, organic chemistry, soil chemistry, systems modelling, TOPCROP, fisheries, meat and wool, farm forestry, agribusiness, biosecurity and emergencies, practice change and community relationships.

### Local Government

Hindmarsh Shire – employing 119 people

Yarriambiack Shire – employing 130 people

West Wimmera Shire Council – employing 150 people

Horsham Rural City Council – employing 240 people

## **WORKCO**

WORKCO Limited is the largest provider of employment and training services in the Wimmera and Grampians regions. The services offered by WORKCO Limited include apprenticeships, traineeships, recruitment, personnel hire, training, Youth Careers Centre and an Australian Apprenticeships Centre. A not-for-profit organisation, they are actively involved in the community. WORKCO employs approximately 400 people (including apprentices through the Group Training system).

## **Luv-a-Duck**

Luv-a-Duck farms are located in the Wimmera wheat lands with the main farm on 200 hectares located in Nhill. There are a further 54 sheds on 25 sites. Local farmers are contracted to place grower sheds on their land. This provides a diversification of income for farmers and a buffer against financial downturn caused by seasonal fluctuations. In 2011, Luv-a-Duck produced an average of 95,000 ducks per week.

Luv-a-Duck products are sold and distributed throughout Australia and exports to South East Asia, Pacific Islands and the Middle East. It is the largest fully integrated duck operation in the southern hemisphere. In addition to providing income for contract farmers, Luv-a-Duck employs 160 full-time staff plus 30 casual and part-time staff.

## **Woodbine**

Woodbine Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation that provides accommodation, day and employment programs and training to people with intellectual disabilities. Based at Warracknabeal, Woodbine provides a variety of services, including permanent and respite accommodation, day programs, employment and recreational activities for almost 100 clients who come from all Victorian regions and South Australia. Woodbine employs approximately 200 people which includes employment from the client base.

### **3.3 Level of business engagement in supporting young people's education/training outcomes**

#### **BEC Business Nhill**

This Business Network has actively engaged with young people, supported the Nhill College and is working to address the needs of the future work force as a collaborative approach to address issues that affect small rural communities.

#### **Business Horsham**

The Business Horsham Network consists of over 100 businesses. Business Horsham has acknowledged the importance in working with schools and young people to form a mutual understanding of work requirements.

#### **WORKCO Limited**

WORKCO offers courses in various training departments. All courses undertaken are accredited as Nationally Recognised Training and all competencies are provided by the National Training Package. In 2006 WORKCO Limited took over the administration of Longerenong College (a 1058 ha fully operational farm providing a training facility in agriculture, engineering and horticulture).

#### **School Friendly Business Program**

The Workplace Learning Coordinator's Program launched the School Friendly Business program in Horsham and Warracknabeal in 2013. The School Friendly Business program provides recognition for businesses that support their local schools. Thirty eight businesses registered with the School Friendly Business program within the first few months of the program being established.

School Friendly Businesses support the local community by:

- Being aware of important school dates
- Welcoming invitations to important school events
- Considering flexi-time for parent/guardian employees to attend significant school events
- Welcoming authorised school and parenting information/literature in their staff room
- Being prepared to host students for workplace learning (work experience, Structured Workplace Learning and/or School Based Apprenticeships or traineeships)
- Being willing to allow small groups of students to visit their workplace for a tour
- Supporting the MATES Mentoring Program in their local schools
- Supporting the MATES Reading Buddies program in their local schools
- By being be a part of the "village that raises a child".

### 3.4 Challenges and Opportunities

Horsham has experienced small growth in recent years, but the ageing population and decrease in population across the region has prompted action by local business and government to actively investigate new measures to stabilise and/or grow populations, particularly in smaller communities. The region has a demonstrated track record of collaboration and partnership to deliver major initiatives including the Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline, and a study into large-scale solar prospects for the region.

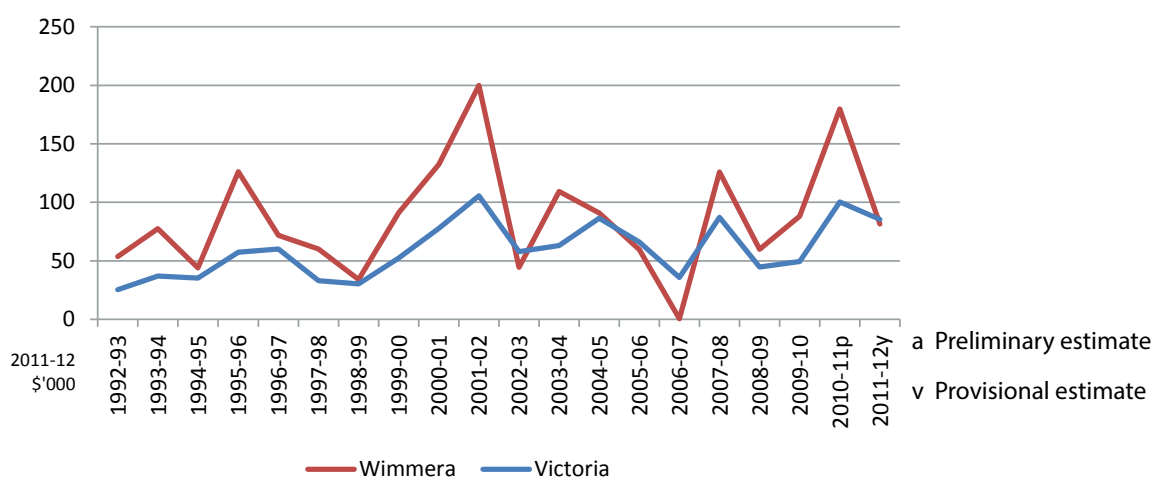
The impacts of climate change on agricultural production and water supply and security present challenges to regional communities and industries. The region recognises it can no longer rely almost exclusively on its agricultural economic base and is seeking to diversify industry, attract new investment and develop new opportunities through education, infrastructure and broadband connectivity.

*Source - Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Directions for the Next Decade – Discussion Paper, 2009.*

The effects of a fluctuating agri-based economy, based on seasonal conditions, have an ongoing impact on local business and industry (see chart below). Between 26 – 50 % of businesses reported a 40% decrease in gross income in 2006 and 2007.

*Source - Wimmera Agribusiness Status Report, 2008)*

Farm cash income, broadacre farms, the Wimmera Victoria  
average per farm



*Source: Commodity output and financial performance of key agricultural industries in the Wimmera region July 2012*

#### Challenges for business and industry include:

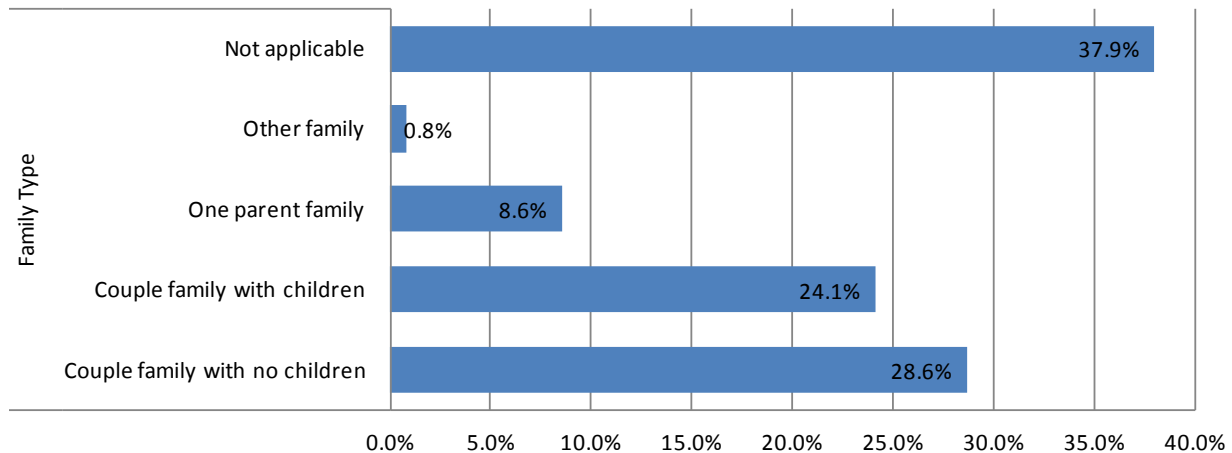
- continuing contraction of regional agri-based economy leading to difficult trading conditions
- businesses having difficulty attracting professional staff to the area
- personnel and skill shortages in agriculture, building and construction and allied trades, health and community services
- shortage of young people wanting to work in the agricultural sector
- high exposure to adverse climatic conditions and impacts of climate change
- ageing work force, and a declining number of young people in the region
- shrinking population within the region
- loss of services and suppliers throughout the region
- students entering the work force lacking many of the pre-requisite skills
- limited financial and human resource capacity to do anything apart from "core business"
- limited engagement with education providers
- limited understanding of the education system and vocational training
- diminishing capacity of employers to maintain businesses viability and retain staff
- the unreliability of agriculture as the region's main economic driver
- insufficient numbers of next generation to meet the demand of the exiting skilled work force
- increase business costs due to transport and logistics
- rapidly ageing population and outward migration of young people
- difficulty in retaining apprentices and trained staff as higher wages attract them to regional centres, cities and interstate.



#### 4. Parent and Family Profile

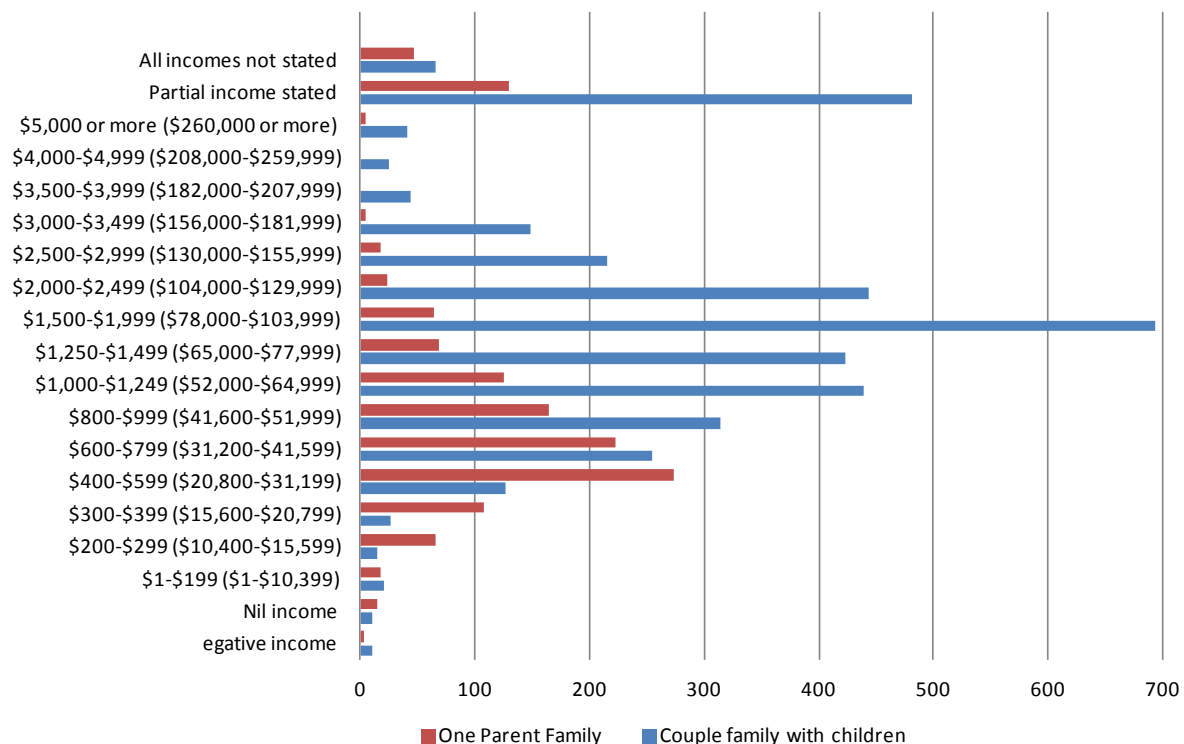
The 2011 ABS Census data indicates that 32.7% of households in the four shires within the Wimmera Southern Mallee region are family households with children. Of these households, more than one quarter (26.3%) are single parent families. Census data also shows that of the single-parent families, 52% have a household income of less than \$800 per week whereas only 12.2% of two-parent families have a household income less than \$800 per week.

**Family Composition Wimmera Southern Mallee Region**



Source ABS Census 2011

**Household Income Wimmera Southern Mallee Region Single Parent and Two Parent Families**



Source ABS Census 2011

## Parent and Family Groups

There are relatively few parent and family groups throughout the region. All schools have School Councils with parent representatives and most schools have parents and friends groups in various forms.

### Parent Clubs

Parent Clubs often encompass three different foci: educational issues, fund-raising and social activities. All aspects are valid within the definition providing that the club's purpose is to work for the benefit of the students and the school. The Parent Clubs provide a forum for all parents to discuss issues and exchange and share information and concerns. Parents also support one another through pooling of knowledge. The Parent Clubs work in co-operation with the School Council in ensuring quality education provision for the school and students. Parent Clubs stimulate interest in the school and encourages participation in all elements of school life.

*Source: Parents Victoria*

### Parent Engagement

Parental engagement at kindergarten and primary school level is often quite high but this engagement diminishes markedly as students progress into secondary school. Some of the factors contributing to this lessening of family and parental involvement include work commitments, time constraints, social factors and children not wanting their parents to be involved with the school. Some parents have had difficult experiences during their time as students and, as a result, do not feel comfortable in the school environment.

### Parent Influence

Parents are identified as having a strong influence on their children's subject and course selection. Some studies indicate that parental influence over their children's subject selection can be as high as 80%, even though many parents do not have a clear understanding of the language of education and are confused or unaware of differences between VCE, VCAL and VET programs. While schools and teachers have distinct and important roles and responsibilities in building the educational foundations for their students, family involvement is a primary factor in enhancing student learning.

### Regional Parent Groups

Parent and family groups in the region include, the Wimmera Uniting Care Parent Support Network, junior sporting clubs throughout the region and the Home Schooling Parents Network. One strategy to promote the engagement of parents and families is to encourage the use of existing resources and services available, such as the Family and School Community Partnership Bureau, which has an interactive website: <http://www.familyschool.org.au/>. The Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau has been set up to help Australian schools, families and communities build sustainable, collaborative and productive relationships.

There is a Southern Mallee regional network of Parents Victoria, which is a state wide democratic organisation representing parents of students in Victorian government schools. Parents Victoria provides parents with a voice, presenting an organised parent perspective to State and Federal Governments, educational bureaucracies and institutions, community organisations and the media.

### Key Issues in Parent Involvement in their Child's Education

Some of the key issues impacting on the ability of parents and families to support their children's education outcomes include:

- higher proportion of low SES families than the state average
- high proportion of single parent families (see data page 35)
- fluctuating agri-based economy, based on seasonal conditions, having an ongoing impact on families
- increasing pressures on families due to loss of services in smaller communities
- many parents and families being unable to afford to send their children to tertiary institutions (The Wimmera Southern Mallee region has one of the lowest tertiary educated parent cohorts in the state.)
- low parental engagement in children's secondary education
- many secondary school aged children not wanting their parents' involvement at school
- low parental aspirations for their children's academic achievement and career destinations
- family break-ups happening more frequently and earlier in the parent's relationship (as reported by welfare and support organisations)

- increasing numbers of students presenting with problems due to financial pressures, family dysfunction and breakdowns in relationships. These issues contribute to low school attendance, substance abuse, social isolation, and disengagement from education and training
- lack of access to support agencies particularly in rural locations
- agencies having limited resources to deal with growing family support needs
- lack of access and distance, limiting families' abilities to support their children's education
- increasing number of lower socioeconomic status families moving into the area to take advantage of the cheaper housing. This trend is causing challenges for schools in terms of an increase in student mobility and an increasing need for access to welfare services.

Many secondary schools in the region have had difficulty engaging parents and families with their school community. Those most in need of support are often unwilling or unable to establish a meaningful relationship with their children's school. Even schools in smaller communities have struggled to meaningfully engage family groups with school activities. Effective relationships between schools and families will enhance young people's education outcomes. Parents and families are their children's first teachers. Their support and engagement are essential to improve young people's education and transition outcomes. They have a critical influence on young people's growth, development and academic achievement. The WSMMLLEN will encourage all parents, teachers and friends groups in the Wimmera Southern Mallee to participate in a network to facilitate knowledge sharing, increase parent and family engagement and share strategies and best practice.

There is an identified gap in the successful engagement of this key stakeholder group throughout the region.

## 5. Community Group Profile

### 5.1 Community groups in the region

**Wimmera Uniting Care:** - Community Adolescent Placement Service (CAPS) and Community Adolescent Support Team (CAST) provide support to young people who cannot live at home.

**School Focused Youth Services:** - aim to develop an integrated service response to support young people at risk and to create stronger collaborative relationships between schools and communities.

**Nexus/Grampians Community Health Centre:** - Provides outreach support to young people aged 12-18 and their families via early intervention, mediation and specific counselling aimed at family preservation.

**Grampians Community Health Centre:** - The Tribal Youth Program provides a combination of adventure activities with group work and individual support for 12-18 year old youth. It aims to develop skills and self-esteem through a series of activities and challenges. Drug and Alcohol counselling services are also provided.

**Youth Connections (delivered by WorkCo):** - Youth Connections aims to assist young people aged 13-19 who are most at risk of not making a successful transition by keeping them engaged or re-engaging them with education.

**Community Axis: - Personal Support Program (PSP)** The PSP assists people with significant barriers to employment, including homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, a criminal record, financial management problems or suffering from the affects of trauma, abuse or stress. An individually tailored program is developed with each client to assist in overcoming these barriers.

**Axis Worx (formerly The Wool Factory), Woodbine, Cooinda and Karkana Support Services:** - Disability business enterprises and day services provide vocational training and employment for people with a disability throughout the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

**The Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly** is a volunteer based organisation established to support the growth, development and promotion of sport and recreation at the grass-roots level. The Assembly provides a vital link between local clubs and state and national bodies. It has formed a solid partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria and other strategic partners (including VicHealth, local government and health agencies) to provide a quality service for Wimmera sports clubs and associations which encompasses the needs and priorities of the region.

**Wimmera Primary Care Partnership** – The Wimmera Primary Care Partnership (WPCP) plays an important role in brokering strategic partnerships in the health sector. The WPCP is made up of 30 member agencies including local government, welfare, disability, Medicare Local and education and aims to address the social, economic and environmental factors that affect health and produce inequities. Young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, migrant groups, indigenous groups, and remote rural communities are supported by this important organisation.

**Community Action Networks** – In 2010-2011 Community Action Networks (CANs) were established as an initiative of the WSMMLLEN in Horsham, Nhill, Murtoa, Warracknabeal. A CAN was specifically established for the Koorie community in the Horsham region. The Community Action Networks continued in 2012.

#### **Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce – Schools and Youth Working Group**

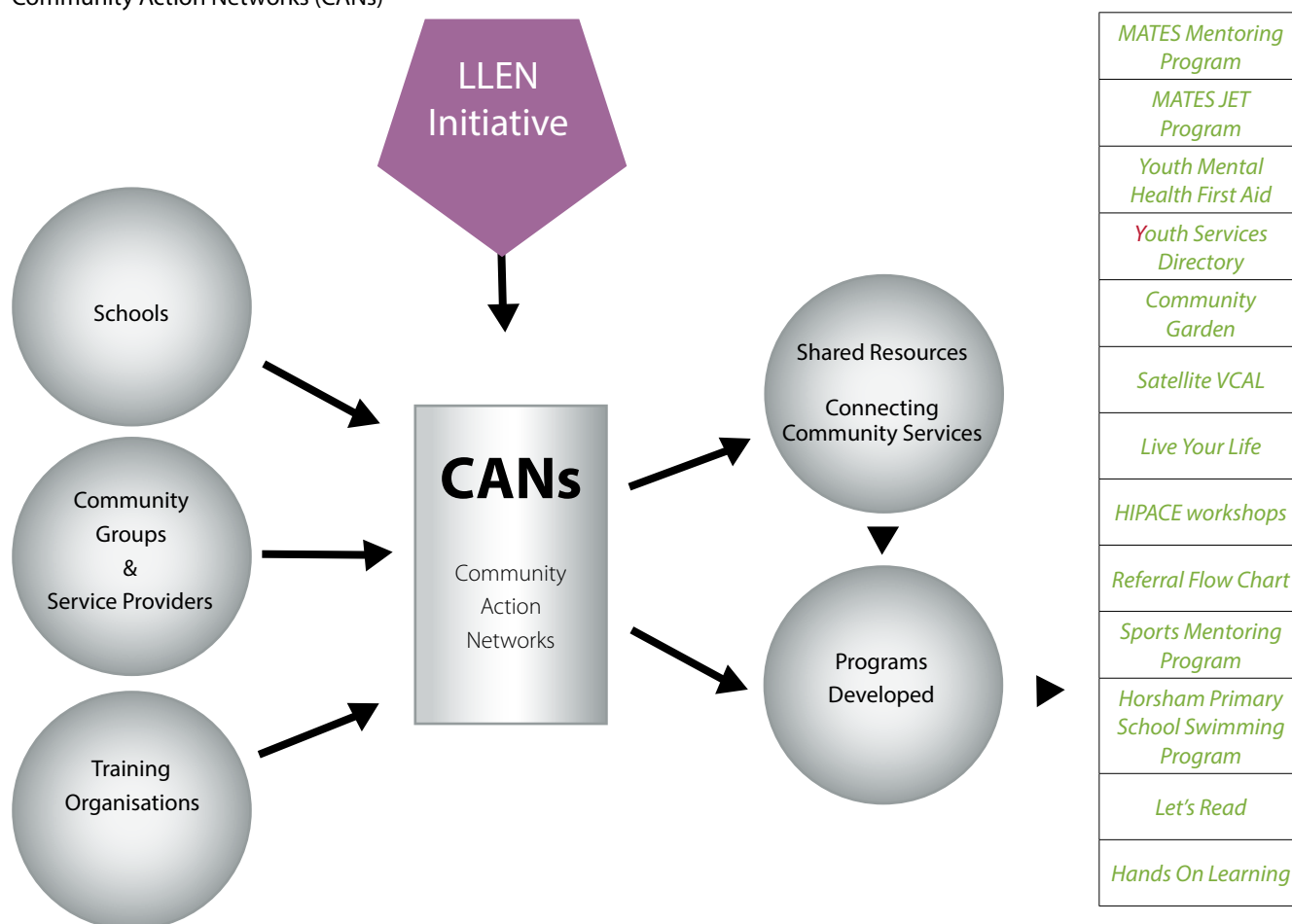
Working with Schools, DEECD, Health and Allied Health providers the WDAT provides the systematic delivery of clear and accurate health messages regarding alcohol and other drug use. The WSMMLLEN EO chairs the Schools and Youth working group. Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) pilot program, supported by key health stake holders was implemented at Horsham Primary School (Rasmussen Rd campus) in Term 2, 2012 and at Horsham Primary School (298 campus) in Term 4,

**These networks provide a platform for education providers and community organisations to work together to coordinate resources and develop programs specific to the needs of the local community.**

## 5.2 Activities relevant groups are undertaking and Networks formed

WSMLLEN Brokered Partnerships Achievements and Outcomes

Community Action Networks (CANs)



### Horsham CAN (established 2010)

The Horsham CAN has been instrumental in:

- production of a Youth Services Directory which was compiled and listed on the WSMLLEN website, listing all organisations delivering support services to the region's youth
- support for Horsham College Connect Ed program, including providing work spaces for teachers and students and facilitating community support for the program
- development of the MATES JET program which commenced in 2012 and was delivered at Connect Ed, St Brigid's College, Kaniva College and Nhill College. This program focuses on developing literacy, numeracy, employability and social skills and targets at-risk and disengaged youth
- Provision of REACH workshops, the MATES mentoring program, mock interviews, VCAL and supportive work placements. Partners include Horsham College, the Connect Ed program, Wimmera HUB, Workco, Youth Connections, the Workplace Learning Coordinator (WLC), the Reach Foundation and community members.
- facilitating and enabling stronger relationships and connections between Horsham College and the community.
- Supporting Horsham College to establish the Hands On Learning program (2013)

### Warracknabeal CAN (established 2010)

The Warracknabeal CAN has been instrumental in:

- working with Warracknabeal Secondary College and Neighbourhood House to support the implementation of Satellite VCAL. 20 Students were successfully re-engaged in 2011 - 2012
- implementation of the MATES Mentoring Program for the SVCAL students. (2011)
- implementation of the MATES Mentoring Program at Warracknabeal Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, Warracknabeal (2013)

- creating the 'Live Your Life' partnership program. This program aims to build community and school capacity throughout the Yarriambiack Shire to deal with youth mental health issues and the high suicide rate experienced in the Shire. Partners include the Warracknabeal, Hopetoun and Murtoa Colleges, the Yarriambiack Shire, Victoria Police, Wimmera Uniting Care, Grampians Community Health, Rural Northwest Health, Wimmera Primary Care Partnership, Ballarat Health Services, the Warracknabeal Herald and community members
- facilitating and enabled stronger relationships and connections between the Warracknabeal College and the community
- establishment of *Let's Read Yarriambiack*, to provide support for families to develop literacy skills for preschool children from birth to age 5.

#### **Murtoa CAN (established 2011)**

The Murtoa CAN has been instrumental in:

- implementation of the MATES Mentoring program for Murtoa College students. 20 students have been successfully matched with community members since the program commenced in 2011. Benefits of the program identified by College staff include improved attendance rates, positive changes in behaviour, improved student relationships with peers and teachers, and stronger community relationships with the school
- supporting the Murtoa College Professional Learning Team to implement alternative learning options for at-risk and disengaged youth
- providing blended learning opportunities for students with the support of the Murtoa Neighbourhood House
- facilitating and enabled stronger relationships and connections between the Murtoa College and the community
- Supporting Murtoa College to establish the Hands On Learning Program .

#### **Nhill CAN (established 2011)**

The Nhill CAN has been instrumental in:

- implementation of the MATES mentoring program at Nhill College with 26 students being mentored since the program commenced in 2011
- supporting a Nhill Business group and WLC forum to promote SWL, SBAT, Work Experience and VCAL
- planning and establishment of a community garden project through a partnership between the Nhill College, West Wimmera Health Service, Coinda Disability service, the Nhill CAN, the community, Karen refugees and the WSMMLLEN
- strengthening the schools community connections through the community garden, mentoring and Men's Shed program
- facilitating an alternative blended learning program which has provided community based learning options at the Men's Shed and Neighbourhood House
- building stronger relationships between Nhill College and the Karen refugee community
- working with local industry, the DEECD and Nhill College to support and provide ESL courses for Karen refugees
- establishment of a breakfast club at Nhill College with support from WSMMLLEN
- supporting the establishment of a homework club for Nhill College students with a focus on improving education outcomes for Karen refugee students.

#### **Koorie CAN (established 2010)**

The Koorie CAN has been instrumental in:

- continuing to engage a broad range of individuals and organisations to support Koorie young people
- development of a referral flow chart for use by all stakeholders and organisations to improve service delivery to Koorie youth
- organising supportive work placements for Koorie students hosted by CAN members
- linking Koorie students into the Horsham College MATES Mentoring Program
- supporting Horsham Indigenous Parent and Community Engagement workshops in 2011 and 2012
- facilitating a Koorie Role Models Day in 2013

#### **Dimboola MATES Mentoring Program (established 2011 following 2010 pilot program)**

A partnership between Dimboola Memorial Secondary College, the Hindmarsh Shire, the community and WSMMLLEN successfully created and implemented a mentoring pilot program in 2010. The success and knowledge gained from the pilot program led to the creation of the MATES mentoring program. By the end of 2013 the MATES program had been successfully established in 14 schools/organisations in the region with a total of 233 young people having been mentored by volunteer community members. (See page 28 for more information on the MATES Mentoring Program.)

### **Wimmera Mallee Sports Mentoring Program**

A partnership including the region's primary schools, the Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, Auskick, netball and hockey coordinators, local sporting clubs, and the community was convened by the WSMMLLEN with 136 young people participating in the program in 2012. More than 290 young people participated in the program in the three years from 2010 - 2012. Primary schools identified and encouraged children to participate. Participants included Koorie children, children with a disability and children from migrant families. The program increases the physical activity of participants, promotes social inclusiveness and increases the participants' connections with positive role models and the community. An increase in the engagement of families with their children's activities and their school is one of the many positive outcomes of this program.

### **Horsham Primary School – Rasmussen Road Campus Swimming Program**

The WSMMLLEN has brokered a partnership with Horsham Primary School, parents and families, Horsham Rural City Council, YMCA, Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly and the DEECD to provide a swimming program for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This partnership commenced in 2010 and has enabled Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Campus students from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 to take part in a 10 week swimming program.

The program provides many benefits for the students including learning to swim, access to the Aquatic Centre, breaking down social barriers, improving physical fitness and development and broadening their life experiences. Importantly, it will help to remove some social, physical and cultural obstacles and improve these students' chances of making a successful transition from primary to secondary school. The program provided families with additional support and opportunities to improve their engagement with their school.

The YMCA fully funded the 2012 program, with no financial contribution required by the partners. This is an excellent outcome and the YMCA is committed to continue supporting the program on an ongoing basis.

### **The Workco Try-a-Trade Primary School Expo**

The Workco Try-a-Trade Primary School Expo includes trade specialists, site displays and hands-on activities for more than 400 primary school-aged children. The Expo began in 2010 and the 4th Expo was delivered in 2013.

A feature of the event is the strong participation of parents and families attending with their children. Business and industry representatives from industries including building, plumbing, electrical, engineering, horticulture, agriculture, bricklaying, plastering, painting, hairdressing, cooking, mechanical and automotive provided children and families a hands-on trade experience.

The WSMMLLEN continues to support this excellent event as it provides primary school students with a wide range of hands-on experiences and raises their aspirations regarding future career possibilities. The Expo engages Year 5 and 6 students from Horsham and regional primary schools.

The WSMMLLEN provided support to construct a number of try-a-trade mobile displays which will be used to deliver events across the region. The project has gained strong business and community support and provided students with a stronger understanding of possible career pathways.

### **WLC Program**

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN successfully tendered to deliver the Workplace Learning Coordinators Program (WLCP) in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region. The WLCP Service Plan which has been developed in close consultation with the WSMMLLEN, includes a strong focus on increasing work placements and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) across the region. The WLC has been active in implementing strategies outlined in the WSM service plan and has built key relationships with major stakeholders across the region. The WLC and WSMMLLEN staff work with all Secondary Schools and alternative learning programs in the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN region. The WLC has identified opportunities to support staff at these schools with their Workplace Learning for students, with targeted support for their Koorie students.

The WSMMLLEN has introduced the WLC at different forums and meetings, including Wimmera Regional Youth Affairs Network (WRYAN), Wimmera Primary Care Partnership (PCP), Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECCG) and Local Indigenous Network (LIN), the Wimmera CAN, Warracknabeal CAN, Murtoa CAN, Nhill CAN and Koorie CAN network meetings. The WLC has been able to use the extensive WSMMLLEN networks to promote the program to industry, business associations and community groups. The WSMMLLEN and the WLC have also attended the VCAL and VET Cluster meetings to build and strengthen relationships with teachers and staff who attend. The WSMMLLEN has worked with the WLC to provide employer events in towns across the region. The employer events build awareness and promote SBAs and the WLC program. These events are excellent forums to gain employer feedback on the relevance and efficacy of vocational training and this feedback is used to inform RTOs and VET providers on industry skills needs.



Major employers in the region have been contacted, including LGAs, Parks Victoria, GWM Water, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority and Wimmera Health Care Group to further promote the program. WLCP promotional material has been distributed through the Business Horsham Network. Local newspapers have agreed to feature stories about students on placements to further promote the WLCP program.

A North Western WLCP provider's network has been established to share information, develop marketing materials, evaluate strategies and to coordinate and integrate the delivery of the program throughout the wider region. This network has also developed a wiki website which will enable access to resources and the sharing of experiences and ideas. The WLC has met with the regions RTOs, local government and community organisations to promote the program and build relationships that will provide increased work placements and SBATS. The WSMMLLEN promotes the WLCP at every opportunity.

The strategy to increase the alignment of VET programs with identified skill shortage areas and maintain student numbers enrolled in those VET programs is a continuing success. The WSMMLLEN will continue to actively support and work with the VET Cluster Network to strengthen the alignment of VET programs with regional skills needs. The WSMMLLEN will liaise with the region's RTOs to maintain a comprehensive training calendar on the WSMMLLEN website, which details all courses offered in the region. This close working relationship with the RTOs will enable the WSMMLLEN to further strengthen the alignment of VET programs with skill shortage areas in the region. The WSMMLLEN continues to work with the Wimmera Trade Training Centre committee, the Federation University, Workco, Wimmera HUB and other training providers to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to aligning locally delivered vocational training to skill shortage areas. The WSMMLLEN will work with key stake holders, including business, industry groups and RTOs to more closely align training provision to regional skills needs areas.

### **Warracknabeal Satellite VCAL**

The Warracknabeal CAN provided the forum and opportunity for the Principal and senior staff of the Warracknabeal College to meet with key stakeholders from the local community. The Principal and staff met the manager of the Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House and from this initial meeting, the College Staff visited the Neighbourhood House. The Manager of the Neighbourhood House expressed a strong interest in supporting alternative education programs. Further discussions have resulted in the College forming a Satellite VCAL program, which is delivered by College staff at the Neighbourhood House. 13 Students were re-engaged in the 2011 program. Warracknabeal CAN members visited Connect Ed, Satellite VCAL and The Wool Factory (Disability Business Enterprise) in Horsham to look at the provision of alternative education options. The Warracknabeal CAN members gained ideas and inspiration regarding the range of the options available, to establish the appropriate model for setting up a Satellite VCAL program in Warracknabeal in 2011 to support 'at risk' and disengaged youth. Excellent outcomes have been achieved with the SVCAL students

### **Murtoa College Alternative Pathways**

The WSMMLLEN is working with the Murtoa College Alternative Pathways Professional Learning Team and the Murtoa CAN to assist disengaged students to either re-engage with school or improve their motivation to remain at school in a meaningful manner. If attending school is not a realistic outcome for some students, then the aim is to provide some form of alternative education to Murtoa College (in addition to distance education) or a pathway into the workforce. A partnership with the Murtoa Neighbourhood House (SLAAM) has been developed and students attend SLAAM for some lessons.

SLAAM offers assistance to students through the Men's Shed, computer and internet access, cooking facilities, work space to complete written work, a vegetable garden and a coffee shop. The program has been expanded to include the 'Community Connect' program which enables VCAL students to support elderly residents and the community with home and garden maintenance projects.

### **Live Your Life**

The Live Your Life project aims to build community capacity by training community members in Youth Mental Health First Aid and to remove the stigma attached to mental illness. Mental Health First Aid training gives people the knowledge and skills to identify and assist people who may be suffering mental health problems. Mental health first aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis, until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.

The Live Your Life project began in Warracknabeal in 2011 as a response to the tragic suicides and growing mental health issues experienced by some of the region's young people. The issue was raised at a Warracknabeal Community Action Network meeting held at Warracknabeal College on the 1st June 2011. A meeting was called at the Council Offices in Warracknabeal on the 24th October 2011 and all interested organisations and individuals were invited to attend.

At the initial meeting and a wide range of organisations and stake holders were represented. There was strong representation

from the Yarriambiack Shire, the Department of Education and Childhood Development, Wimmera Uniting Care, Grampians Community Health, Rural Northwest Health, Macedon Ranges Shire, School Focussed Youth Service, Wimmera Primary Care Partnership, Victoria Police, Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House, Warracknabeal Herald, Murtoa College, Dunmunkle Health Services, Hopetoun College, West Vic Division of General Practice, the WSMMLLEN and community members also attended.

Macedon Range Shire youth workers and creators of the Live 4 Life program gave a presentation on their program and a wide ranging discussion followed to evaluate the options to provide a strong community response to supporting the shire's young people.

The Live Your Life steering committee was formed at this initial meeting, with representatives from key organisations. The steering committee has been able to work with the Mental Health First Aid Training and Research Program Centre for Youth Mental Health at the University of Melbourne to enable the Yarriambiack Shire to participate in the research study titled First Aid Training to Parents of Teenagers. This nationwide study will evaluate the effectiveness of parental training in physical first aid or Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). This professional and personal development opportunity is free and will assist to make Warracknabeal and surrounding towns stronger healthier communities.

In 2012, the Live your Life program had 2 local people trained as Youth Mental Health First Aid instructors. These local instructors commenced training in the course for community members from the Yarriambiack Shire and surrounding areas. The aim of the project is to train as many community members, school teachers, and professional staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid as possible. The project will build the capacity of local community members to identify and support our young people, who may be struggling, and assist and direct them to professional help.

More than 60 people have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid including teachers from Murtoa, Warracknabeal and Hopetoun Colleges.

### **Wimmera and Southern Mallee Careers Expo**

The Wimmera Careers Expo works with business, industry, schools, tertiary institutions, and employers to increase awareness and knowledge of career pathways. WSMMLLEN is a member of this partnership. The steering committee works with business and industry to promote and develop career pathways to a wide range of occupations. The WSMMLLEN plays a key role by working with local business to deliver Try-a-Trade sessions over a wide range of trades. The 27th Careers Expo was delivered in 2013. Students from 15 secondary schools participated in the expo and took the opportunity to speak with employers, industry specialists, and university representatives and attend seminars and tertiary information sessions. More than 2,000 people attended the event.

### **Dream Job - Fabulous Futures**

A specific Koorie component, "Dream Job - Fabulous Futures", was introduced at the Wimmera and Southern Mallee Careers Expo in 2012. Koorie students, parents and families attended sessions provided by inspirational local Koorie community members. 'Dream Job - Fabulous Futures' was developed and supported by the Careers Expo Steering Committee, the DEECD, KESO's, the KTO, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, LAECG, Federation University, Western District Employment Access, Workco, and the WSMMLLEN. Group activities were conducted by Koorie role models, where students had the opportunity to find out about career journeys and exploring career pathways. Students were able to find out about:

- Education and training options
- How Koorie role models have gone about their career journeys
- Importance of staying at school
- What is available to support Koorie students in career development
- Indigenous and mainstream scholarships.

Approximately 50 community members attended, including 20 Koorie students to explore the opportunities and career pathways for Indigenous young people. A feature of the event was the broad representation from all key Aboriginal organisations from the Wimmera and beyond. Koorie role models worked with individual students to help raise their aspirations and explore potential career paths.

Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN Youth Services Directory provides information and contact details of youth services in the local region. The directory can be accessed from the WSMLLEN web site at [www.llen.com.au](http://www.llen.com.au)

The directory provides information about a wide range of local services.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN Youth Services Directory. The header is red and contains several logos and banners. The main navigation bar is also red and lists various programs. The central content area is titled 'Youth Services Directory By Category' and provides a list of services available in the region. A sidebar on the left offers additional navigation options and a newsletter sign-up. The footer contains copyright information.

## 6. Existing Program Profile

### 6.1 Commonwealth Programs/Initiatives:

#### 2009 National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has identified the achievement of the following five high-level outcomes as key to boosting Australia's participation and productivity. The desired outcomes are that:

- all children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling
- young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards and, overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving
- schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children
- Australian students excel by international standards
- young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

**Programs under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions are:**

#### Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

This program aims to support the implementation of reforms in the areas of multiple learning pathways, career development and mentoring. The Workplace Learning Coordinators Program is a key program and in the Wimmera Southern Mallee is delivered by the WSMLLEN. The objectives of the program are:

- to increase the numbers of young people undertaking workplace learning placements, especially in industries that provide strong vocational outcomes for young people,
- to increase the alignment between Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning (VCAL), vocational education and training (VET) provision and local industry needs
- to increase the number of Koorie young people undertaking workplace learning placements.

**School Business Community Partnership Brokers program** works to improve community and business engagement with schools

**Youth Connections Program** provides an improved safety net for young people at risk. Youth Connections provides a national, individualised and responsive service to assist young people who are most at risk of disengaging from education or training and therefore not attaining Year 12 or equivalent and not making a successful transition to further study, training or work

**National Career Development** aims to include development of national level resources for the benefit of all jurisdictions eg: My Futures web site.

**Job Services Australia** provides employment placement services for unemployed young people. An individually tailored employment pathway plan is developed with the job seeker to assist with job searching to gain access to work experience and training education and to overcome other difficulties in finding employment. Assistance is also available for employers wishing to find appropriately qualified staff. Local providers include St Laurence Employment Services, Western District Employment Access and Community Axis.

**National Disability Coordination Officers** use an Australia-wide network of 31 service regions to provide information, coordination and referral services for people with a disability who are looking for (or are enrolled in) post-school education and training.

**Centrelink** is an Australian Government Human Services agency. They deliver payments and services for a number of government departments including: The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

#### The Australian Blueprint for Career Development

In 2008 the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) commissioned the roll-out of the Blueprint as well as the design of a website that houses it, its appendices and a professional development kit. [www.blueprint.edu.au](http://www.blueprint.edu.au)

The primary aim of the Blueprint is to enable teachers, parents, career development practitioners, employment service providers or others who are in a position to support people's careers and transitions, to work with a nationally consistent set of career management competencies which will help all Australians to better manage their lives, learning and work.



## **6.2 State/Territory Programs/Initiatives:**

### **Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)**

LLENs help improve education, training and employment options for young people from 10 - 19 years. They have a particular focus on assisting those at risk of making poor transitions from compulsory schooling to the next stage of their lives and careers. LLENs have operated since 2002. From 1 January 2010 the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program in Victoria has been delivered through the LLEN initiative funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, a joint initiative of the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

### **Youth Partnerships Initiative**

Youth Partnerships is an initiative by the Victorian Government to design and test new ways for the education, youth and family support, justice, homelessness and mental health sectors to work more collaboratively to support individual young people experiencing problems.

Over three years, the Government will support service providers to work together to ensure:

- a greater focus on early intervention
- consistent approaches to assessment and referral of young people across these sectors
- clear entry points into the right youth services at the right time, including tailored education options.

Youth Partnerships will develop new resources to support all the sectors that work with young people to identify those in need of support, assess their needs and refer them for extra support in a consistent, efficient way.

(The initiative is funded until mid 2014)

### **Grampians Education Partnership**

The Grampians Education Partnership involves a range of organisations that share a commitment to improving the educational outcomes of young people in the Grampians Region. The Grampians Education Partnership has initiated a Regional Youth Commitment called the Youth Options Guarantee. Regional Youth Commitments are a framework negotiated within and between all local and regional stake holders to link and coordinate pathway and transitions support arrangements for 15-19 year olds.

### **School Focused Youth Service**

The School Focused Youth Service is a joint initiative between the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services. The objective of the School Focused Youth Service is to ensure that at risk young people are well supported in their communities, that risk factors are addressed or mitigated and that they continue to be engaged and connected to education. This will be achieved by:

- creating partnerships and pathways between schools and community organisations to support at risk young people
- coordinating the provision of community based services in partnership with schools and community agencies to support schools to address the needs of at risk young people.

### **Regional Youth Affairs Networks (RYANs)**

Regional Youth Affairs Networks (RYANs) bring together community members, youth service providers, young people and all levels of government with an interest in improving the lives of young Victorians. The work of the 15 networks is supported by the Department of Human Services' Community Engagement Officers.

### **FReeZA**

FReeZA is an innovative youth development program managed by the Office for Youth, within the Department of Planning and Community Development in the Victorian Government. FReeZA gives young Victorians aged 12-25 the chance to enjoy live band gigs, dance parties and other cultural, recreational and artistic events in supervised and safe venues. All FReeZA events are drug, alcohol and smoke-free.

### **On Track**

On Track is a Victorian Government initiative designed to ensure that year 10 to 12 government and non-government school students are on a pathway to further education, training or employment after leaving school.

On Track will ensure that year 10–12 students are:

- contacted after leaving school
- assisted with further advice if they are not studying or in full time employment

On Track also includes a research component to provide a comprehensive picture of what happens to young people after they leave school. Young people who are not studying or in full-time employment and request assistance when surveyed, will be referred to relevant local agencies which will provide the advice and services they require.

## **7. Existing Partnership Profile**

There are many partnerships operating in the Wimmera Southern Mallee. The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN is an active partner in many partnerships and networks across the region.

The diagrams on pages 49 and 50 give an outline of the partnerships brokered by Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN.

### **7.1 Partnerships in which Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN is involved**

LLEN staff are actively involved in the following partnerships:

Wimmera Southern Mallee VET Cluster

Wimmera Southern Mallee VCAL Cluster

Western Region LLEN Network

Year 12 Retention Fund Project

WLC State Providers Network

Wimmera Southern Mallee Careers Association

Grampians Education Partnership

Partnership Brokers State Providers Network.

Wimmera Southern Mallee Strategic Plan Education and Training Working Group

Business Horsham

Wimmera Workforce Development Forum

Wimmera Careers Expo Steering Committee

VECCI Wimmera Regional Business Council

School Friendly Business Program

Wimmera Regional Youth Affairs Network

Wimmera Primary Care partnership

Wimmera Principals' Network

Wimmera Drug Action Task Force Working Group

Wimmera Youth & Community Centre Organising Committee

Volunteers Western Vic Research Steering Committee

Wurreker Broker Regional Committee

<b>Koorie Kids After School (KOOKAS) Club</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aboriginal parents and families</li> <li>2. Delkaia Best Start Program</li> <li>3. Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative</li> <li>4. Horsham College</li> <li>5. Horsham Primary School</li> <li>6. Horsham West Primary School</li> <li>7. Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group</li> <li>8. Wimmera Regional Library Corporation</li> </ol> <p>An after-school program for students, parents and families, providing learning support for Koorie students with literacy activities and homework support</p>	<b>Nhill Community Garden</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooinda Disability Services</li> <li>2. Karen Community Group</li> <li>3. Local Businesses</li> <li>4. Nhill College</li> <li>5. Nhill Community Action Network</li> <li>6. Nhill Lutheran School</li> <li>7. Nhill Neighbourhood House</li> <li>8. Parents and families</li> <li>9. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>10. West Wimmera Health Service</li> </ol> <p>A community garden for use by parents, families, refugee families Cooinda clients, Nhill College VCAL students and the wider community</p>	<b>Wimmera Southern Mallee Sports Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Auskick Community Coordinators</li> <li>2. Auskick Regional Coordinator</li> <li>3. Local sports clubs across the region</li> <li>4. Netball Victoria</li> <li>5. Parents and families</li> <li>6. Primary schools across the region</li> <li>7. Warracknabeal Special School</li> <li>8. Wimmera Hockey Association</li> <li>9. Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly</li> </ol> <p>Provides support for youth to enable students to participate in junior sports programs to remove barriers to successful transition to secondary school</p>	<b>Horsham Primary School (Rasmussen Rd Campus) Swimming Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DEECD</li> <li>2. Horsham Primary School</li> <li>3. Horsham Rural City Council</li> <li>4. Parents and Families</li> <li>5. Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly</li> <li>6. YMCA</li> </ol> <p>Supporting students at Horsham Primary School to participate in a program to build social inclusion and remove barriers to successful transition to secondary college</p>	<b>Lets Read Yarriambiack</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bendigo Bank</li> <li>2. DEECD</li> <li>3. Dunmunkle Health</li> <li>4. Local Government</li> <li>5. Murdoch Foundation</li> <li>6. Murtoa CAN</li> <li>7. Murtoa College</li> <li>8. Neighbourhood House</li> <li>9. Parents and Families</li> <li>10. Royal Children's Hospital</li> <li>11. Rural Northwest Health</li> <li>12. Warracknabeal CAN</li> <li>13. Warracknabeal Primary School</li> <li>14. Warracknabeal Secondary College</li> <li>15. Wimmera Regional Library Corp</li> </ol> <p>A whole-of-community approach to supporting parents and families with early years literacy development</p>	<b>Lets Read Hindmarsh</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DEECD</li> <li>2. Hindmarsh Hire</li> <li>3. Murdoch Foundation</li> <li>4. Nhill College</li> <li>5. Nhill Neighbourhood House</li> <li>6. Royal Children's Hospital</li> <li>7. West Wimmera Health Service</li> <li>8. Nhill CAN</li> <li>9. St Patrick's Primary School, Nhill</li> <li>10. Nhill Lutheran School</li> <li>11. Wimmera Regional Library Corp</li> </ol>
<b>Koorie Kids After School</b>	<b>Nhill Community Garden</b>	<b>Sports Mentoring</b>	<b>Horsham Primary School Swimming Program</b>	<b>Let's Read</b>	

## Parents and Family Partnerships

## Partnerships Brokered by Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN

## Education Partnerships

### MATES Mentoring

Provides support for youth by matching a young person with a positive role model drawn from the local community

<b>Dimboola 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dimboola Memorial Secondary College</li> <li>2. Hindmarsh Shire</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Campus 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Rd</li> <li>2. Horsham CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Murtoa 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Murtoa College</li> <li>2. Murtoa Community Action Network</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> <li>6. Murtoa Neighbourhood House</li> </ol>	<b>Warracknabeal Satellite VCAL 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warracknabeal College</li> <li>2. Warracknabeal CAN</li> <li>3. Warracknabeal Satellite VCAL</li> <li>4. Community Members</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> <li>6. Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House</li> </ol>
<b>Goroke 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Goroke College</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> <li>3. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Horsham Satellite VCAL 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham College</li> <li>2. Horsham Community Action Network</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Nhill 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nhill College</li> <li>2. Nhill Community Action Network</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Hindmarsh Shire</li> <li>5. Local business</li> <li>6. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warracknabeal Primary School MATES Mentoring Program</li> <li>2. Warracknabeal Primary School</li> <li>3. Warracknabeal CAN</li> <li>4. Community Members</li> <li>5. Local business</li> <li>6. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>
<b>Horsham College 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham College</li> <li>2. Horsham CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Horsham Special School 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham College</li> <li>2. Horsham CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>St Mary's Primary School, Warracknabeal MATES Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St Mary's Primary School Warracknabeal</li> <li>2. Warracknabeal CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Wimmera Uniting Care MATES Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St Mary's Primary School Warracknabeal</li> <li>2. Warracknabeal CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>
<b>Horsham Primary School 298 Campus 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham Primary School 298</li> <li>2. Horsham CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> <li>4. Local business</li> <li>5. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Edenhope P-12 College MATES Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edenhope P12 College</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> <li>3. Local business</li> <li>4. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	<b>Kaniva 'MATES' Mentoring Program</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kaniva College</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> <li>3. Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance</li> </ol>	



<p><b>Live Your Life Project</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ballarat Health Services</li> <li>2. Community members</li> <li>3. DEECD</li> <li>4. Grampians Community Health</li> <li>5. Hopetoun College</li> <li>6. Murtoa College</li> <li>7. Rural Northwest Health</li> <li>8. Warracknabeal Herald</li> <li>9. Warracknabeal Secondary College</li> <li>10. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>11. Yarriambiack Shire</li> </ol> <p>Building community capacity to identify and support young people suffering with mental illness by training teachers, parents and community members in Youth Mental Health First Aid</p>	<p><b>Warracknabeal CAN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Members</li> <li>2. DHS</li> <li>3. DEECD</li> <li>4. Grampians Community Health</li> <li>5. Local Businesses</li> <li>6. Local Government</li> <li>7. Neighbourhood House</li> <li>8. Rural Northwest Health</li> <li>9. University of Ballarat</li> <li>10. Volunteering Western Victoria</li> <li>11. Warracknabeal Satellite VCAL</li> <li>12. Warracknabeal Secondary College</li> <li>13. Wimmera HUB</li> <li>14. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>15. Yarriambiack Shire</li> <li>16. Youth Connections</li> </ol>	<p><b>Horsham CAN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Axis</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> <li>3. Connect Ed</li> <li>4. DHS</li> <li>5. DEECD</li> <li>6. DEEWR</li> <li>7. Federation University</li> <li>8. Horsham College</li> <li>9. Horsham Rural City Council</li> <li>10. Nexus Youth Centre</li> <li>11. Red Cross</li> <li>12. St Michaels &amp; St Patricks Primary School</li> <li>13. Victoria Police</li> <li>14. Volunteering Western Victoria</li> <li>15. Wimmera HUB</li> <li>16. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>17. Youth Connections</li> </ol>	<p><b>Murtoa CAN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bendigo Bank</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> <li>3. DHS</li> <li>4. DEECD</li> <li>5. DEEWR</li> <li>6. Dunmunkle Health</li> <li>7. Federation University</li> <li>8. Local Businesses</li> <li>9. Murtoa College</li> <li>10. Murtoa Neighbourhood House</li> <li>11. Victoria Police</li> <li>12. Volunteering Western Victoria</li> <li>13. Wimmera HUB</li> <li>14. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>15. Yarriambiack Shire</li> <li>16. Youth Connection</li> </ol>	<p><b>Nhill CAN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Axis</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> <li>3. DHS</li> <li>4. DEECD</li> <li>5. DEEWR</li> <li>6. Federation University</li> <li>7. Hindmarsh Shire</li> <li>8. Nhill Neighbourhood House</li> <li>9. Nhill College</li> <li>10. Victoria Police</li> <li>11. Volunteering Western Victoria</li> <li>12. Wimmera HUB</li> <li>13. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>14. Youth Connections</li> </ol>	<p><b>Korrie CAN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Members</li> <li>2. Connect Ed</li> <li>3. DHS</li> <li>4. DEECD</li> <li>5. DEEWR</li> <li>6. Delkaia Best Start Program</li> <li>7. Federation University</li> <li>8. Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-op</li> <li>9. Horsham College</li> <li>10. 3 Horsham Primary Schools</li> <li>11. Horsham Rural city Council</li> <li>12. LAECG</li> <li>13. Local Indigenous Network</li> <li>14. PACE Program</li> <li>15. VAEAI</li> <li>16. Victoria Police</li> <li>17. Volunteering Western Victoria</li> <li>18. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>19. Youth Connections</li> </ol>
Coordination and integration of support from schools, bringing together services providers to identify needs and provide support for youth who have disengaged from education or are at risk of disengaging					
<b>Warracknabeal Live Your Life Program</b>	<b>Warracknabeal CAN</b>	<b>Horsham CAN</b>	<b>Murtoa CAN</b>	<b>Nhill CAN</b>	<b>Koorie CAN</b>

## Community Partnerships

# Partnerships Brokered by Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN

## Education Partnerships

<p><b>MATES Reading Buddies Program</b></p> <p>Volunteers reading with children in primary schools on a regular basis to improve literacy levels</p> <p><b>Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Campus MATES Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham Primary School Rasmussen Rd</li> <li>2. Horsham CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> </ol> <p><b>Horsham Primary School 298 Campus MATES Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham Primary School 298</li> <li>2. Horsham CAN</li> <li>3. Community Members</li> </ol> <p><b>Tempy Primary School MATES Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tempy Primary School</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> </ol> <p><b>Kaniva College MATES Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kaniva College</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> </ol> <p><b>Warracknabeal PS MATES Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warracknabeal Primary School</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> </ol> <p><b>Dimboola Memorial Secondary College MATES Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dimboola Memorial secondary College</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> </ol> <p><b>Horsham West Primary School Reading Buddies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham West Primary School</li> <li>2. Community Members</li> </ol>	<p><b>Hands On Learning</b></p> <p>Provides support for students to increase engagement with learning through a hands-on approach to learning within their school</p> <p><b>Hopetoun College Hands On Learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hopetoun College</li> <li>2. Hands On Learning</li> </ol> <p><b>Horsham College Hands On Learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Horsham College</li> <li>2. Hands On Learning</li> </ol> <p><b>Murtoa College Hands On Learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Murtoa College</li> <li>2. Hands On Learning</li> </ol>
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## Business & Industry Partnerships

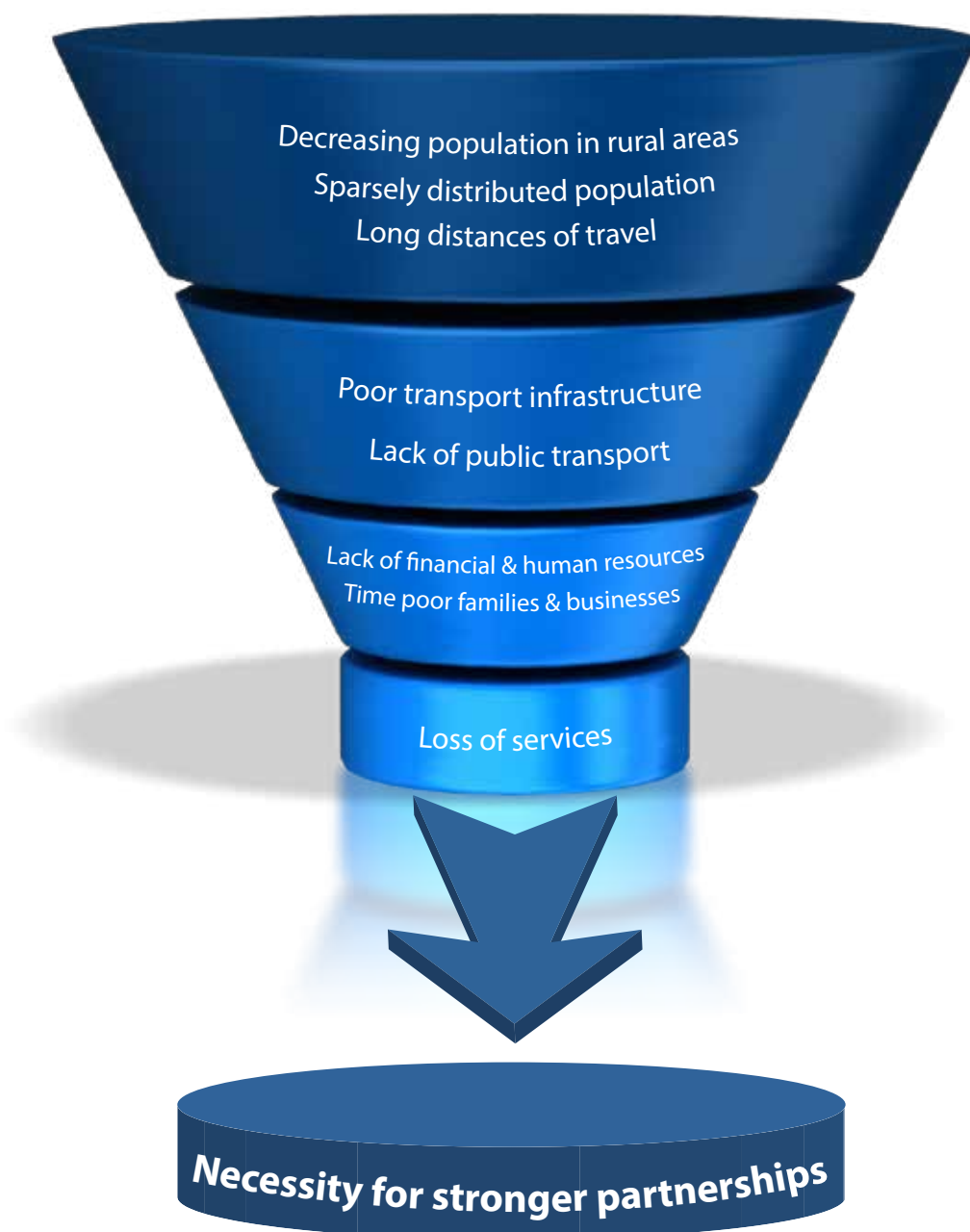
<p><b>MATES JET Program</b></p> <p>Providing a range of workshops on employment pathways, employability skills, life skills and further education and training to assist young people with making a successful transition to work and independent living</p> <p><b>MATES JET Program</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect Ed</li> <li>2. Federation University</li> <li>3. Horsham CAN</li> <li>4. Horsham College</li> <li>5. Local businesses</li> <li>6. The Reach Foundation</li> <li>7. Wimmera HUB</li> <li>8. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> <li>9. Workco</li> <li>10. WSM Schools</li> <li>11. Youth Connections</li> </ol>	<p><b>Community Champions</b></p> <p>Local businesses and organisations release employees to mentor young people in the mentoring programs across the Wimmera Southern Mallee area</p> <p><b>Community Champions (MATES Mentoring)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ABC Radio</li> <li>2. Advantage Pharmacy</li> <li>3. Dimboola Pharmacy</li> <li>4. GWM Water</li> <li>5. Hindmarsh Shire Council</li> <li>6. Landmark</li> <li>7. Luv a Duck</li> <li>8. Morrow Motor Group</li> <li>9. NAB</li> <li>10. Regional Schools Outreach Program</li> <li>11. Rural Northwest Health</li> <li>12. Saxton Rural</li> <li>13. TFW Engineering</li> <li>14. West Wimmera Shire</li> <li>15. Wimmera Foot Clinic</li> <li>16. Wimmera Health Care Group</li> <li>17. Wimmera HUB</li> <li>18. Wimmera Information Network</li> <li>19. Wimmera PCP</li> <li>20. Wimmera Uniting Care</li> </ol>	<p><b>School Friendly Business Program</b></p> <p>Increasing business and community engagement with schools, to facilitate stronger school, business and community relationships</p> <p><b>School Friendly Business Program, Warracknabeal</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 19 Local Businesses</li> <li>2. St Mary's Primary School</li> <li>3. Warracknabeal CAN</li> <li>4. Warracknabeal Primary School</li> <li>5. Warracknabeal Secondary College</li> </ol> <p><b>School Friendly Business Program, Horsham</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business Horsham</li> <li>2. 19 Local businesses</li> <li>3. Horsham College</li> <li>4. Horsham Primary School</li> <li>5. Horsham West Primary School</li> <li>6. St Brigid's College</li> <li>7. St Michaels &amp; St Johns Primary School</li> </ol>
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### 7.3 Key challenges to the continuing development of a partnership culture in the region

The region has quite a strong partnership culture, particularly in smaller communities. This culture has developed through necessity over a long period of time due to a shrinking population, loss of services, and a contracting regional economy. There is a growing recognition throughout the region, of the need to form effective sustainable partnerships to help to address the many challenges facing the Wimmera Southern Mallee. Challenges which make it necessary to develop a stronger partnership culture in the region, include:

- continuing loss of services in the rural areas due to decreases in population and economic rationalisation
- sparsely distributed population - long distances of travel to/from outlying areas
- lack of accessibility due to poor public transport infrastructure
- lack of financial and human resources
- organisations and people are time poor due to the demands of business and family commitments

#### Key factors driving the need for a stronger partnership culture



# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN – PART B

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN region covers over 28,000 square kilometres, from the Grampians to the South Australian border. The Wimmera is characterised by small towns separated by large distances. Horsham is the region's major centre with a population of just over 14,000, with only three other towns, Nhill, Dimboola and Warracknabeal having populations of more than 1,000 people.

### 1. Identified challenges

Challenges facing young people in the region include:

- low aspirations of young people and families
- social impacts of family breakdown, resulting in younger children disengaging from school
- extremely low retention and completion rates of Koorie students
- lack of alternative education options in small communities
- lack of curriculum choices
- lack of access to education providers
- low uptake of University courses due to distance and limited financial resources
- long distances for VET students travelling from remote communities VET means—some students travel in excess of 3 hours each VET day
- no established options for education or training if a student becomes disengaged at a rural school other than to relocate

Challenges facing education providers include:

- limited number of subjects offered in rural schools with low student numbers
- shrinking population in all towns in the region apart from Horsham, leading to declining enrolments
- difficulty in filling vacant teaching positions in remote locations
- ageing teacher cohort
- difficulty in accessing other means of education due to location and lack of transport for some schools
- low tertiary uptake in the region compared to the rest of the state
- the increase of transient families in the region—children from this cohort lack consistent long term support resulting in an adverse impact on numeracy and literacy results
- low retention rates
- increasing number of at-risk students
- increasing number of disengaged students
- lack of out of school programs in outlying towns to provide for students disengaged from mainstream schooling
- existing out of school programs running with maximum numbers—waiting lists exist to cater for students wishing to enrol
- a projected increase in VCAL numbers creating pressure on a limited number of host employers for work placements as per the VCAL requirements
- no compulsory obligations for students to obtain Structured Workplace Learning placements while completing a VET course in order to obtain hands-on experience and links with business and industry
- pressure on businesses due to the long term effects of the drought resulting in less opportunity for students to obtain School Based Apprenticeships or Traineeships
- rising delivery costs, teacher shortages and a shrinking population contributing to detrimental effects on enrolment figures, the income of RTOs
- RTOs being subjected to cost pressures as they lift pay rates to attract suitable staff—increasing course fees to cover rising costs likely to have a detrimental effect on enrolments and therefore the viability of running courses
- extremely low percentage of Koorie students achieving year 12—of the 107 Indigenous young people enrolled in the region's primary and secondary schools in 2008, only one Indigenous student was enrolled in year 12 (Of the 2741 VCE enrolments in the regions schools in the period 2005 to 2009, only two of these enrolments were identified as Indigenous students).

**Challenges facing parents and families include:**

- a higher proportion of low socioeconomic status families in the region than the state average
- continuing contraction in regional agri-based economy due to decade long drought
- increasing pressures on families due to loss of services in smaller communities
- inability of many parents and families to afford to send their children to tertiary institutions
- low tertiary educated parent cohort—the Wimmera Southern Mallee Region has one of the lowest tertiary educated parent cohorts in the State
- minimal parental engagement in children's secondary education
- many secondary school aged children not wanting their parents involvement at school
- low parental aspirations for children's academic achievement and career destinations
- family break-ups happening more frequently and earlier in the parent's relationship—as reported by welfare and support organisations and confirmed by ABS census data (see page 36)
- increasing numbers of students presenting with problems due to financial pressures, family dysfunction and breakdowns in relationships—these issues contribute to low school attendance, substance abuse, social isolation, and disengagement from education and training
- lack of access to support agencies particularly in rural locations
- agencies having limited resources to deal with growing family support needs
- an increasing number of lower socioeconomic status families (including refugees) moving into the area to take advantage of the cheaper housing—a trend which is causing challenges for schools in terms of an increase in student mobility and an increasing need for access to welfare services.

**Challenges facing business and industry include:**

- continuing contraction of regional agri-based economy leading to difficult trading conditions
- businesses having difficulty attracting professional staff to the area
- personnel and skill shortages in agriculture, building and construction and allied trades and health and community services
- shortage of young people wanting to work in the agricultural sector
- high exposure to adverse climatic conditions and impacts of climate change
- ageing work force and declining number of young people in the region
- shrinking population of the region
- loss of services and suppliers throughout the region
- students entering the work force not having adequate prerequisite skills
- limited financial and human resource capacity to do anything apart from 'core business'
- limited engagement with education providers
- limited understanding of the education system and vocational training
- diminishing capacity of employers to maintain businesses viability and retain staff
- the region no longer being able to solely rely on agriculture as its main economic driver
- difficulties replacing the exiting skilled work force—next generation numbers not sufficient to meet the demand
- transport and logistics factors causing increased business costs
- demographic changes within the region—rapidly ageing population and outward migration of young people
- difficulty in retaining apprentices and trained staff as higher wages attract them to regional centres, cities and interstate.

## 2. Opportunities

Opportunity 1.	To increase our schools' engagement with stakeholders in their community to improve students' aspirations, education and transition outcomes
Opportunity 2.	To increase the number of businesses and organisations partnering with our schools
Opportunity 3.	To improve the participation of vulnerable young people and their families in education
Opportunity 4.	To increase the re-engagement of young people into programs leading to credentials.
Opportunity 5.	Continue to build on strong relationships and partnerships to improve education and life outcomes for the region's young people.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN will use the following strategies to facilitate, broker and nurture sustainable partnerships with Education Providers, Business and Industry, Parents and Families, and Community groups to enhance the education and transition outcomes of our region's youth:

- broker and support partnerships to assist the Wimmera Southern Mallee schools to achieve their Improvement Goals and Strategies
- engage and facilitate partnerships to support programs delivered to increase the education participation rate of the region's young people
- broker sustainable education and industry partnerships to facilitate improved student pathways into skill shortage areas and promote and support VET and VCAL programs
- work in partnership with the Workplace Learning Coordinator Program provider to increase Work Experience placements, Structured Workplace Learning placements and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeship placements
- broker business and community support to raise the capacity of parents to support their children's education and training pathways.
- work in partnership with regional Indigenous groups to improve education, transition and career pathways for Indigenous youth, strengthen the working relationship with the DEECD Koorie Education Officers. Support and facilitate the establishment of mentoring programs and the Youth Options Guarantee (Regional Youth Commitment)
- work in partnership with the Youth Connections Provider to support the re-engagement of dis-engaged youth into an education or training program
- support and facilitate the Youth Options Guarantee (YOG), including the establishment and maintenance of Community Action Networks, facilitation of consistent re-connection protocols across providers and reviewing out of school options for 'at risk' and disengaged students.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN – PART C

### SOURCES

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The following organisations have provided input and information for this Environmental Scan through participation in the Wimmera Southern Mallee's strategic planning process:

*DEECD*  
*Wimmera East Principals Network*  
*Wimmera West Principals Network*  
*Department of Human Services*  
*Wimmera Primary Care Partnership*  
*Wimmera Uniting Care*  
*Federation University*  
*Youth Connections*  
*Hindmarsh Shire Council*  
*Horsham Rural City Council*  
*Horsham Community Action Centre*  
*Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co Op*  
*Wimmera Development Association*  
*Wimmera Manufacturing and Industry Group*  
*Workco*  
*SLAAM (Shared Learning and Activities at Murtoa)*  
*GWM Water*  
*Business Horsham*  
*Business Nhill*  
*Nexus Youth Centre*  
*Dimboola Memorial Secondary College*  
*Edenhope College*  
*Horsham College*  
*Longerenong College*  
*Murtoa College*  
*Nhill College*  
*Rainbow College*  
*St. Brigid's College*  
*Warracknabeal College*  
*Community Representatives*









