Acknowledgement

This document summarises the content of the Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018 which was prepared by the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance in collaboration with the Department of Training and Workforce Development. The Alliance comprised the following individuals who generously contributed their time and expertise:

Mr Anthony (Tony) Beard, Chair of the Alliance and Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Ms Cheryl Cowell, Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Ms Christine Douglas, Durack Institute of Technology
Mr Colin (Turk) Shales, Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Ms Danielle Richardson, Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mr Greg Nairn, Department of Education
Mr James (Jim) Caunt, Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Mr John Oxenham, Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Ms Larina Burke, Commonwealth Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Ms Merome Beard, Shire of Carnarvon
Mr Paul Kelly, Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Mr Phil Bruce, Shark Bay Prawn Trawlers Association Inc
Mr Stedman Ellis, Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association
Mr Stephen Webster, Gascoyne Development Commission
Mr Tom Day, Gascoyne Development Commission Board
Mr Wayne McDonald, Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Mr Wayne Murray, Commonwealth Government Department of Employment
Ms Joanne Favretto, Department of Training and Workforce Development

An electronic version of the executive summary and the full plan can be accessed from dtwd.wa.gov.au

Title: Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018: Executive summary

© Department of Training and Workforce Development 2015

Reproduction of this work in whole or part for educational purposes, within an educational institution and on condition that it is not offered for sale, is permitted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. This material is available upon request in alternative formats. Published by the Department of Training and Workforce Development, Optima Building, 16 Parkland Road, Osborne Park WA 6017.

For further information please contact:
State Workforce Planning
T: 08 6551 5000
E: rwd@dtwd.wa.gov.au

Disclaimer: This publication was prepared by Carpe Diem Strategic Solutions under the direction of the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance and published by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. While the information contained in the publication is provided in good faith and believed to be accurate at the time of publication, appropriate professional advice should be obtained in relation to any information in this publication. Members of the Alliance, the consultant, the State Government and the Department of Training and Workforce Development shall in no way be liable for any loss sustained or incurred by anyone relying on the information. While every effort has been made to vet the contents of this publication, it may contain references to, or images of, people who are now deceased. The Department regrets any offence this might cause.

The term ‘Aboriginal’ people in this publication is inclusive of Torres Strait Islanders. It is noted that the terms ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Indigenous’ have both been used in this publication as a result of the terminology used in sourced information.
The Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018 (the plan) aims to build, attract and retain a skilled workforce to meet the economic needs of the Gascoyne region. It contains a range of priority actions which were identified by local stakeholders to address local workforce development challenges.

The plan aligns with the State Government’s *Skilling WA – A workforce development plan for Western Australia (Skilling WA)*, which provides a framework for government and industry’s response to Western Australia’s skill and workforce needs.

The Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance, which is made up of industry, community and government representatives from the region, will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. The Alliance will identify those actions within the plan that should be given highest priority and facilitate their implementation. Progress will be reported to stakeholders annually and be included in *Skilling WA*’s annual progress report.

The plan has been designed as an important reference point for all stakeholders as it identifies the challenges, agreed solutions and organisations that have a key stake in its implementation.

For the Regional Development Council, as the peak advisory body to the Western Australian Government on regional development matters, the plan is used to identify workforce issues and solutions which require policy consideration across regions. Importantly, the plan will also be closely aligned and will support the long term aspirations of the *Gascoyne Development Commission Blueprint*. It is expected that the *Blueprint* will have a significant role in prioritising many funding decisions in the region including Royalties for Regions initiatives.

For local government bodies, the plan identifies workforce issues to be taken into account as part of local government decision making processes.

The plan will be used by industry associations and employer peak bodies as a reference when working directly with employers to implement industry and enterprise solutions to workforce development challenges.

The plan also captures the views and aspirations of the broader community and provides a useful reference when engaging on workforce development issues across the region.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development in conjunction with the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance will facilitate the coordination of State Government responses outlined in the plan. This will include working with those agencies and training providers designated to take the lead on priority actions in the plan.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic context</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional workforce development plans</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles, responsibilities and timeframes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment to the Blueprint</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment by industry sector</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gascoyne Regional Investment Blueprint – economic opportunities</em></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic goals for meeting future labour needs</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce participation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted skilled migration</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction and retention</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills development and utilisation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and coordination</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority issues in the Gascoyne</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of priority issues</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to education, VET and higher education</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-migration</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive salaries and wages</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and availability of accommodation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing local labour and appropriate skills</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal and transient labour force</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability and access to childcare services</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Aboriginal unemployment</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability and access to air services</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other observations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Strategic context
Over recent years, regional Western Australia has faced a number of challenges associated with ensuring the availability of a skilled and flexible workforce that can respond to the State’s changing economic needs. Maintenance of a labour market environment that allows the State’s regions to meet their full economic and social potential has been impacted by a combination of:
• rapid economic growth, followed by a recent softening;
• shifts in the nature of employment demand;
• inter-regional migration trends;
• ageing workforces; and
• changes in the nature of education and training.

To address this issue the Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development has developed a coordinated and integrated whole of state workforce planning and development process: Skilling WA — A workforce development plan for Western Australia (Skilling WA)\(^1\). The overarching objective of Skilling WA is to maximise the availability of skilled labour to meet the needs of employers, the community and the individual and involves a number of core considerations:
• an assessment of current and future demand for workforce skills;
• an examination of existing capacity and capability of the workforce;
• current and future workforce gaps; and
• the development of realistic and achievable workforce development strategies.

The Skilling WA outputs shown in diagram 1 ensure that the specific needs of industries, regions and those under-represented in the workforce, as well as major projects and enterprises are addressed. Governments, industry, community, education and training providers, enterprises, new job seekers and workers all have a role to play in meeting the workforce development needs of the State. Only in partnership with these stakeholders will the State address the skill and labour demands of our industries and provide the opportunity for all Western Australians to benefit from our strong economy.

Skilling WA is reviewed and updated by the Department of Training and Workforce Development as required. Skilling WA, second edition\(^2\) was released in November 2014.

---

1 Available from dtwd.wa.gov.au.
2 Ibid.
Regional workforce development plans

Regional workforce development plans are a key element of the *Skilling WA* framework. These are being developed by regional workforce development alliances to provide a whole of government, industry and community sector approach to providing services, infrastructure and support for each of the nine regions in Western Australia.

*Skilling WA* articulates five strategic goals which set the direction for workforce planning and development in Western Australia and are aimed at building, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce to meet the economic needs of the State. With this in mind, the *Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018* identifies local workforce issues related to these strategic goals, and suggests strategies and priority actions to address these. The *Skilling WA* strategic goals considered in the *Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018* are shown in diagram 2.

The *Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018* has been developed in partnership with the Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC) and overseen by the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance, which comprises key industry, community and government representatives from across the region.
Roles, responsibilities and timeframes

The Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018 has a four year timeframe and is intended to provide a broad assessment of the workforce development trends and issues in the region. It does not aim to tackle in depth all of the various issues and scenarios associated with employment in the region but rather to develop a more general analysis of problems, likely solutions and required actions.

The plan’s implementation will be overseen by the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance. Specific government, industry and community based agencies will be given the ‘lead’ responsibility to coordinate strategies and projects included in the plan. Progress on these will be monitored on a six monthly basis. As economic conditions evolve the Alliance will monitor the progress of the workforce strategies and projects included in the plan, and review and modify these as necessary to address the prevailing conditions in the region. Importantly, the plan will support the Gascoyne Regional Investment Blueprint (the Blueprint), once developed.

Alignment to the Blueprint

The Gascoyne Regional Investment Blueprint, currently being developed by the Gascoyne Development Commission, will outline the region’s long term growth and development aspirations, comparative advantages, and will provide a set of initiatives and investment opportunities to drive future growth. It will articulate a series of ‘transformational pillars’ to
facilitate achievement of the Gascoyne's vision for its future. All pillars will have a training and workforce development response. Once the Blueprint is finalised, the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance will ensure that Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018 initiatives are aligned with, and support the Blueprint.

Methodology
To support the preparation of the Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018, extensive desktop research was undertaken, including a review of current research, literature and statistical data. While a number of data limitations were encountered (see appendix A), this material provided the basis for the development of an economic and social profile for the Gascoyne region. The research was then validated via a series of consultations conducted in Carnarvon, Gascoyne Junction, Denham and Exmouth. These included three forums and a number of one on one and small group interviews with the regional community, State and Commonwealth Government agencies and industry personnel, together with teleconferences. In total over 100 stakeholders participated. Appendix B contains a list of agencies and organisations involved in the consultation process.

Pre-reading for these forums and interviews included a discussion paper designed to provide background information for the consultation phase of this project. Importantly, this paper offered a basis for discussion and debate about workforce planning in the region and provided:

- an overview of selected employment trends in the Gascoyne; and
- a review of some of the key attraction and retention issues in the region.

The consultations were used to validate the priority issues facing the Gascoyne’s workforce which form the basis for actions in the Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018.
Research and analysis

Geography
The Gascoyne region represents approximately 6% of the land area of Western Australia. It covers over 135,000 square kilometres, has a coastline which extends along more than 600 kilometres of the Indian Ocean and reaches 500 kilometres inland (see figure 1).

The region encompasses four local government areas (LGA), namely the Shires of Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay and Upper Gascoyne. Key centres in the Gascoyne region include Carnarvon, Coral Bay, Denham, Exmouth and Gascoyne Junction. There are three Aboriginal communities, Burringurrah and Woodgamina in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne and Mungullah in the Shire of Carnarvon. The average distance between towns across the region is 300 kilometres. This can present challenges for the development of the region.

The Gascoyne is a region of diverse and remote landscapes with coastal reefs and outback ranges. Internationally recognised natural features such as the Ningaloo Reef, Coral Bay, the Shark Bay World Heritage Area and Monkey Mia may be found along its coastline. Inland areas include the dramatic features of the Kennedy Range and Mount Augustus.

Population
According to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing there were 9,291 people across the region of whom 1,369 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The majority of the population live in the Shire of Carnarvon which has a population of 5,787.

The population represents about 0.4% of the total State population. Between 2006 and 2011 the population grew by approximately 4.5%. During the same period the State’s population grew by 14% (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012j and 2012w).

Economy
With its numerous natural features, the region has a particularly strong tourism sector. Livestock grazing is the main land use activity and is widespread across the Gascoyne. Carnarvon’s horticulture industry is developing and diversifying. Further growth is expected through the Gascoyne Food Bowl Initiative which comprises a number of projects to further horticulture development in the lower Gascoyne River area. Mining activity is evident in the Shires of Carnarvon and Shark Bay where salt and gypsum are mined. Developments, existing and potential, in the defence and oil and gas industries provide further prospects for the region, in particular the Shire of Exmouth.

This figure is based on place of usual residence. It is worth noting that the ABS estimated resident population for the Gascoyne was 9,766 in 2012 (GDC 2013).
Figure 1: Gascoyne region

Source: Department of Regional Development, 2014
As a result, the economy of the region is regarded as diverse. Fishing, horticultural and pastoral industries ‘the food industries’, as well as tourism and mining, are major contributors to the Gascoyne economy. These industries are supported by a network of retail, administrative and trade services. Environment and natural resource management and government services also feature strongly in the region.

**Employment by industry sector**

The top five employing industries in the Gascoyne accounted for just under 50% of employment in 2011. These were: agriculture, forestry and fishing; accommodation and food services; retail trade; public administration and safety; and construction. Of note, employment was distributed fairly evenly across these industry sectors. In contrast, the industry sectors of arts and recreation services; information, media and telecommunications; and financial and insurance services each accounted for less than 1% of employment in the region.
Table 1: Gascoyne employment by industry, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry of employment</th>
<th>No. of persons</th>
<th>Percentage of employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and safety</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, postal and warehousing</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and support services</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical services</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequately described/Not stated</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas, water and waste services</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental, hiring and real estate services</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and recreation services</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, media and telecommunications</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and insurance services</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 340</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gascoyne Regional Investment Blueprint – economic opportunities

The Gascoyne region faces significant opportunities and challenges in meeting its economic potential. Research and consultations undertaken by the GDC in the preparation of the Gascoyne Regional Investment Blueprint have identified six transformational pillars that when enabled, will facilitate the Gascoyne in achieving its vision.

1. Developing industries and markets.
2. Improving regional accessibility.
3. Advancing human capacity and knowledge.
4. Encouraging innovation.
5. Developing Aboriginal and small business economic capacity.
6. Enhancing health and lifestyle.

Opportunities include: enhanced hospitality and tourism offerings; expansion of pastoral, fishing, aquaculture and horticulture industries (including value added food chains), underpinned by the optimal use of land and water, and supplying both domestic and international markets; an expanding oil and gas industry; and potential expansion of defence operations in the region. Investment in transport infrastructure will be needed to optimise these opportunities. Other challenges include labour market efficiencies and communications connectivity.

It is anticipated that a common theme to all of the transformational pillars will be the critical imperative of human capacity building to support the economic and social future of the region. At present a comprehensive picture of future skills demand in the region is not available. During development of the Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018, stakeholders were surveyed on current and anticipated occupational shortages in the region. The results are included as appendix C. Due to the low response rate, demand for specific occupations now and into the future will need further investigation. Once released, the Blueprint will provide further insights on the likely areas of skills growth.

For example, should the aspirational population targets of just over 15,700 residents by 2026 and 23,000 by 2050 be realised, the quality of health, aged care and child care services will be paramount. Education and training will be critical in supporting economic development in the region, not only in terms of ‘job-readiness’ but also higher order skills such as leadership, entrepreneurship, critical thinking and problem solving.
The following sections explore in more detail Gascoyne’s current and future workforce challenges and opportunities in the context of economic aspirations of the region. Issues are grouped into the five strategic goals of the *Skilling WA*.

**Workforce participation**

**Skilling WA: Strategic goal 1**

Increase participation in the workforce particularly among the under-employed and disengaged, mature-aged workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other under-represented groups.

This goal relates to addressing issues which act as barriers to people entering or remaining in the workforce, including the under-employed and those disengaged from the workforce. In the Gascoyne, unemployment rates vary considerably across the region, reflecting different economic, age and social profiles. For example:

- as at December 2013, the Upper Gascoyne had the highest unemployment rate (15.1%) compared to the regional average (7.2%). However, this is for a very small number of workers so its statistical validity is questionable. In contrast, Exmouth had the lowest unemployment rate (2.5%); and
- the unemployment rate, based on the 2011 Census, for Aboriginal people in the Gascoyne was 18.6% compared with 2.9% for the non-Aboriginal population and 4.4% for the total population in the region. There is an urgent need to address this imbalance.
**Targeted skilled migration**

**Skilling WA: Strategic goal 2**
Supplement the Western Australian workforce with skilled migrants to fill employment vacancies unable to be filled by the local workforce and address those factors which support a growing population.

This goal relates to addressing issues which impact on the growth and composition of the State’s population including overseas and interstate migration. In the Gascoyne region this includes:

- extensive use of seasonal workers, including backpackers, in the key industries of tourism and horticulture;
- the use of 457 visa holders for skills shortages areas such as the engineering trades; and
- the need for a more flexible skills migration policy to enable businesses to recruit suitably qualified employees, particularly in the tourism and food industries.

The 2011 Census revealed that approximately 48% of the region’s population were living at the same address in 2011 as in 2006, and that 461 and 317 people moved in from elsewhere in Australia and overseas respectively. Consultation indicated that out-migration, particularly of the non-Aboriginal population occurs primarily due to a perceived lack of career pathways, educational and employment opportunities in the region.

**Attraction and retention**

**Skilling WA: Strategic goal 3**
Attract workers with the right skills to the Western Australian workforce and retain them by offering access to rewarding employment and a diverse and vibrant community and environment to live in.

This goal relates to addressing issues affecting the attraction of people into Western Australia, especially regional Western Australia and encouraging them to stay. In the Gascoyne region:

- the high proportion of smaller businesses, particularly those with less than 10 employees, are more acutely affected by skilled labour shortages than larger organisations and face issues including the rising cost of wages, attraction of new staff and high staff turnover;
- tourism and horticulture feature strongly, but are not industries which provide high salaries and wages. As a result, the region generally has a lower income profile than the national average;
- the availability of suitable and affordable housing and adequacy of public services act as a barrier to effective attraction and retention of workers and hence to improved regional development, business activity and job creation; and
• an increasing trend of out-migration of young people has significant ramifications for the Gascoyne as it creates difficulties in attracting and retaining young people to fill skilled job vacancies and apprenticeship positions.

Skills development and utilisation

**Skilling WA: Strategic goal 4**

Provide flexible, responsive and innovative education and training which enables people to develop and utilise the skills necessary for them to realise their potential and contribute to Western Australia’s prosperity.

This goal relates to addressing factors impacting on the level of training participation by those in the workforce and those yet to enter the workforce. In the Gascoyne region:

• Certificate level qualifications are most common for residents, accounting for almost half of the population with post-school qualifications;
• Bachelor Degree level and Advanced Diploma and Diploma level qualifications account for the next largest shares (19.5% and 15.9%);
• availability and access to quality education post Year 10 is perceived to be an issue in retaining young people in the region; and
• there is a need for greater commitment to a workforce development culture by many of the region’s key industries.

Planning and coordination

**Skilling WA: Strategic goal 5**

Plan and coordinate a strategic State Government response to workforce development issues in Western Australia.

This goal relates to addressing issues which impact on the ability of the State, industries and enterprises to strategically manage the development of their workforce. In the Gascoyne region:

• the prospect of an additional 400 hectares (initially) of irrigated land as a further stage of the Gascoyne Food Bowl Initiative represents a significant increase in horticulture production which is likely to have major social and economic multiplier effects on Carnarvon and the surrounding region, including workforce implications; and
• the ongoing off shore liquefied natural gas production and construction projects, possible future developments in defence and Exmouth’s proximity to the Pilbara may result in a significant increase in the region’s population and workforce. Capacity planning, such as the provision of adequate water supply will be important should this eventuate.
_summary of priority issues

The following provides a summary of the key workforce development related challenges for the region, confirmed through consultation forums, one on one and small group meetings:

- perceptions relating to the availability and quality of access to education, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education as well as career pathways;
- out-migration of young adults (followed by their parents and families - who are experienced workers);
- competitive salaries and wages in other parts of Western Australia resulting in a clear income differential between the local and State average;
- the quality and affordability of accommodation;
- challenges in securing local labour and appropriate skills;
- the seasonal and transient nature of parts of the labour force;
- availability and access to childcare services;
- low labour force participation and high unemployment rates for Aboriginal people; and
- availability and access to air services.

The following sub-sections explore these key workforce development related challenges in more detail.

_access to education, VET and higher education

Education (particularly secondary and tertiary education) services are seen as lacking across the region and are a major driver of the loss of young adults from the Gascoyne. A key labour force challenge is ensuring that education and training opportunities are available and accessible. Education and training are key to ensuring student skills are matched to current and future labour needs. Consultations highlighted issues around literacy, numeracy, general comprehension and work readiness. Stakeholder consultation also indicated some limitations within government schools in providing access to VET. Flexible VET course options should be examined.

Education services are provided via a variety of means across the region. Both government and private schools are available as well as the School of Isolated and Distance Education and the Carnarvon School of the Air.

The 2013–14 State Budget through the Royalties for Regions program allocated $5 million to the redevelopment of the Carnarvon Senior High School (Projectlink 2013).
Stage 1 is complete with the amalgamation of two existing primary schools and the senior high school into Carnarvon Community College and includes a new trades training centre. As with any major change, consultations in Carnarvon highlighted the need for ongoing communication strategies to both inform and engage the local community on the recent changes and the future direction of the College.

The Durack Institute of Technology has campuses in Carnarvon and Exmouth. It provides a range of vocational training and community courses including off-campus courses for those in other areas of the Gascoyne (Department of Planning 2012, Department of Regional Development and Lands 2011 and GDC [n.d.]).

It is worth noting that:
• access to higher education is limited to external study only;
• Year 11 and 12 study is only available in Carnarvon and Exmouth through the Carnarvon Community College and Exmouth District High School; and
• currently there is no opportunity in the region for mature-age students to undertake university entrance or Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) programs, although Tuart College in Perth offers online courses to post-compulsory age students and tertiary entrance can be gained through Certificate IV and Diploma courses at Durack Institute of Technology.

As the regional centre for the Gascoyne, it is important Carnarvon provides future access to a broader range of academic and vocational opportunities through the Carnarvon Community College and the expansion of courses offered by Durack Institute of Technology. In turn, this would support human capacity building and the needs of the local economy.

It would be useful to re-examine an initiative previously explored by the GDC in 2003 to enhance the role of education and lifelong learning and support pathways to appropriate education solutions through a Carnarvon Learning Centre. The general intent and proposed activities remain relevant today, particularly in promoting access to higher education courses that align to industry career pathways relevant to the Gascoyne region.

**Out-migration**

The Gascoyne region experiences difficulties in retaining young adults, particularly those undertaking secondary and tertiary education and training. The perceived quality of education facilities, particularly secondary schools, is a key concern for the community and also for those planning to come to the region. Numerous studies have shown that the transition from primary to high school and from school to work or tertiary studies are when high rates of out-migration occur by individuals and their families.

There has been considerable research into the demographic shifts affecting the region and how this might impact on the labour market. The key demographic changes include a net loss of young people. In the Gascoyne region only 9.0% of the population were aged 15–24 years in 2012, compared to 13.7% across Western Australia (ABS 2012j and 2012w).
Education facilities are therefore a critical piece of social/community infrastructure and an important issue for labour force attraction and retention. Perceptions facing rural areas include (Pelusey, Hatch and Tonts 2010):

- limited education opportunities after Year 10;
- more limited Year 11 and 12 course options than metropolitan schools;
- limited tertiary education options; and
- higher rates of teacher turnover and less experienced teachers.

Addressing these perceptions in the Gascoyne region will be important in assisting with labour force attraction and retention and reducing youth out-migration.

Competitive salaries and wages

One of the major challenges facing the public and private sector in attracting and retaining labour is the capacity to pay competitive salaries and wages. In 2011, 55% of all households in the Gascoyne region had a gross weekly household income of $1 000 or more, compared to 62% across the State (ABS 2012j and 2012w). While the Gascoyne’s high Aboriginal unemployment and resulting welfare dependency need to be considered, the relative income differentials can be attributed to a number of factors:

- farm incomes have decreased in relative terms across Australia over the past two decades, which has major direct impacts on median incomes in regions with a heavy dependence on farming;
- many businesses in the Gascoyne, because of their close links to horticulture, have not been able to increase their wages in line with the State average;
- there has been a shifting geography of trade in agricultural regions with increasing amounts of business being conducted in larger regional centres, often bypassing local economies. This has led to a contraction of many private enterprises and restricted wages growth; and
- rapid increases in wages elsewhere, particularly in those regions with strong resource sectors, has contributed to a significant increase in the Western Australian average when compared to the median incomes in the Gascoyne.

It is worth noting that in 2011 the median weekly household income in the Gascoyne was $1 167 compared to $1 415 across the State. While the State median monthly mortgage repayments were $1 950, Exmouth and Carnarvon reported median weekly household incomes of $1 181 and $1 146 respectively, with median monthly mortgage repayments of $2 000 and $1 517 respectively (ABS 2012j and 2012w). In addition, the 2013 Regional Price Index indicates that the cost of living in the Gascoyne was 10% higher than that in the Perth metropolitan region (Department of Regional Development 2013).

Quality and availability of accommodation

Affordable and suitable housing is crucial to accommodate the unskilled and semi-skilled workforce required for seasonal work in tourism, hospitality and horticulture. As indicated above, more households are under pressure to pay a high proportion of their incomes on housing, particularly in Exmouth.
According to the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia (2013) the value of houses and land has increased across the region. For example, house prices in Exmouth increased by 12.3% and the Carnarvon urban area grew by 12% over 10 years, compared to an 8.9% increase for regional Western Australia. Over the same period, land prices in Exmouth increased by 19.8% and Carnarvon urban area by 10%, compared to 6.8% for regional Western Australia.

Current and expected pressure on housing is as a result of increased tourism, the need to service the resource sector and the second tier service industries such as transport and trades which supply the resource sector. It is likely that the Gascoyne will face challenges in the provision of housing for the government and private sectors across the region. These are mainly due to the geographic spread of the region, compounded by high commodity prices in the building sector and the great distance from building suppliers (GDC 2010). An additional challenge for the provision of affordable housing is the region’s cyclone rating, with building code requirements increasing building costs significantly.

In response to housing being identified as a critical regional issue, the GDC secured funding through the Regional Development Council to develop the Gascoyne Affordable Housing Strategy. The Commission is now working with the Department of Housing and LandCorp to identify the housing needs in the region and to thus create demand and supply forecasts. The aim is to address critical shortages in housing for essential service workers, low income earners, retirees and seniors across Gascoyne communities (GDC 2013).

**Securing local labour and appropriate skills**

Figure 2 indicates that the highest level of schooling achieved by the majority of residents in the Gascoyne was Year 12 (33%). This was lower than the Western Australian rate of 49%.

---

**Figure 2: Highest level of schooling comparison Gascoyne and Western Australia, 2011**

Source: ABS Census, 2012j and 2012w
Post school qualifications across the region in 2011 are presented in figure 3. Approximately 18% of the region’s population with post school qualifications had Bachelor Degree or Postgraduate level education. For Western Australia, as a whole, it was 31% (ABS 2012j and 2012w).

**Figure 3: Post school qualifications comparison Gascoyne and Western Australia, 2011**

![Bar chart showing post school qualifications comparison](chart.png)

Source: ABS Census, 2012j and 2012w

There is a need to ensure a steady supply of labour in the region by ensuring that education, training and employment pathways are established, together with a range of career opportunities.

It will be important to enhance links between the region’s key industries and education providers leading to a more highly skilled and better qualified regional workforce. This in turn will assist with the attraction and retention of young people and families in the region.

In addition, the population of the Gascoyne is slightly older and ageing faster than the Western Australian average. Twenty one per cent of the workforce was aged 55 years and over and 44% was aged 45 years and over in 2011 (ABS 2012j). The loss of labour, skills and knowledge would be considerable if the majority of those aged over 55 years left the workforce in the next five years. However, the standout in 2012 was Shark Bay with over one in every eight residents of retirement age. This ageing can and will decrease the relative size of the labour force available to new businesses and industries.
In considering the age profile of the Gascoyne it is evident that some industries are at greater risk due to the ageing of the population. Significantly, the majority of these industries are the key industry employers and also represent those industries with the largest economic impact. For example, in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 54% of workers are aged 45 years and over and 31% are aged 55 years and over (ABS 2012j).

**Seasonal and transient labour force**

Human capacity building is a serious issue for the Gascoyne’s major employers who regularly cannot attract or retain skilled workers, impacting the sustainability and commercial viability of regional business and industry. As a result, many of the Gascoyne’s industries including tourism and horticulture are characterised by the use of seasonal workers to supplement their workforce. Whether a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) would assist industry is worth considering.

Education and training is an important contributor to building the human capacity of the region. An opportunity exists to improve the alignment between training and key regional industries, particularly in tourism and horticulture, by increasing investment in the development of the region’s workforce. In turn, this would increase productivity and result in employment and career pathways that would better attract and retain workers in the Gascoyne. Regional economic growth is increasingly becoming dependent on integrating tertiary education and research with innovative, knowledge intensive industries and a dynamic small business community. The availability of a skilled residential workforce could significantly enhance potential investment in the region particularly by the resource sector.

**Availability and access to childcare services**

Regional consultations indicated the limited availability and cost of childcare is restricting parents, particularly women, from participating in the workforce. It also has implications for attracting and retaining families in the region. In addition, there is some suggestion that the lack of Aboriginal childcare workers is contributing to the low take up of childcare services by Aboriginal parents.

There are approximately 650 children in the region under 5 years of age, of which over 150 are of Aboriginal descent and almost 1 200 between the age of 5 and 14 years, of which over 340 are of Aboriginal descent. There is one main provider of childcare in Carnarvon and the introduction of national quality assurance requirements, including new higher qualification levels has seen the closure of many family day care centres in Exmouth.

The Department of Local Government and Communities (DLGC) supports the development of regional education and care services through the Regional Community Child Care Development Fund. Consultation with the DLGC indicated that they are currently undertaking the development of a *Regional Children’s Services Plan* in the Gascoyne through this fund. This project will undertake regional analysis and identify gaps in service provision.
High Aboriginal unemployment
The need to improve Aboriginal employment is a priority issue. Low rates of participation in the labour force are often combined with very high unemployment rates. In areas of high unemployment, it is not uncommon for participation rates to fall as individuals withdraw from the labour market on account of the low levels of success in finding work (Siegal and Swanson 2004).

Low participation rates can reflect a degree of self-exclusion from the labour market. However, unemployment rates reflect external exclusion whereby persons willing to be employed are unable to gain work. According to Gray, Hunter and Lohar (2011), this exclusion can be due to:
• human capital (that is, lower education and skill level);
• ill-health and disability;
• locational disadvantage and access to services;
• arrest and interactions with the criminal justice system;
• discrimination;
• job retention and labour demand; and
• job search behaviour and labour supply.

Aboriginal people comprise an above average share of the Gascoyne’s residential population and are not evenly distributed across the Gascoyne. Almost one in every five residents (18.3%) identified themselves as Aboriginal in 2011 compared to State (3.7%) and national averages (3.0%), highlighting the important role of Aboriginal people in the Gascoyne population. The largest number reside in the Carnarvon LGA (1 107 persons in 2011), accounting for 19.1% of the local population and 81.8% of Aboriginal residents of the Gascoyne. In contrast, Exmouth (2.1% of local residents) and Shark Bay (8.5%), have lower proportions of Aboriginal residents. However, the highest proportion, adjusting for total population size, is in the Upper Gascoyne, where more than three in every five residents are of Aboriginal descent, many of them living in remote communities.

It is also worth noting that approximately 50% of the regional Aboriginal population is under 25 years of age, compared with 27% of the non-Aboriginal population. Only 12% of Aboriginal persons have completed Year 12 or equivalent compared with 33% for the entire Gascoyne population (ABS 2012j).

The Gascoyne region has a low labour force participation and high unemployment rate for Aboriginal people. According to the 2011 Census:
• the labour force participation rate for Aboriginal people was 46% compared with 71% for non-Aboriginal population and 62% for the total population in the region;
• the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in the Gascoyne was 18.6% compared with 2.9% for the non-Aboriginal population and 4.4% for the total population in the region; and
• in terms of employment, 37.1% of Aboriginal people aged 15 years and over were employed (employment to population ratio). For the non-Aboriginal population the ratio was 69.0% and 59.5% for the total population (ABS 2012i and ABS 2012v).
The Aboriginal unemployment rates in the Gascoyne indicate that a number of external factors, such as lack of qualifications and socio-cultural differences, may contribute to the unemployment rate and low participation rate in the region. In particular, the Aboriginal community in Carnarvon requires targeted support to address systemic issues which manifest themselves in poor education and employment outcomes, including long term unemployment. Literacy, numeracy, general comprehension and work readiness issues are seen as critical areas of focus for improving Aboriginal employment and workforce participation.

There is a view that employment options and social and economic conditions would improve if Aboriginal communities were afforded the opportunity to develop more social and commercial enterprises in keeping with their traditions and culture. Examples cited include the supply of bait for the wild-dog program and building on the success of recent research into the health and medical benefits of the Gubinge fruit tree experimental program. Whilst the Western Australian Aboriginal Economic Participation Strategy was developed for the whole of State, with a number of initiatives agreed upon at a national level, any appropriate initiatives listed in the strategy related to addressing high rates of long term Aboriginal unemployment should be considered for Carnarvon’s Aboriginal community, which requires targeted support.

Other areas highlighted during the consultations include:
• income tests connected to the eligibility for housing acting as a disincentive for individuals to take-up or retain their employment. Transitional housing models, such as the scheme recently piloted in the East Kimberley should be given consideration;
• the need for seamless and continued mentoring services that are linked to an individual rather than a program, to assist in successfully sustaining employment;
• leveraging existing Aboriginal community activity that could lead to increased business start-ups and local employment opportunities;
• strategies to enable more Aboriginal people to be employed in local government should be investigated; and
• the limited number of Aboriginal people employed by State Government agencies, particularly where services are being provided directly to Aboriginal families.

Availability and access to air services
Air services and airports are important to the region given its distance from Perth and other major centres, its growing tourism industry and the potential for more resource industry development. Other services and industries such as health services and the pastoral industry also rely on air services.

Currently there are direct flights between Perth and Exmouth (Learmonth), and Carnarvon and Denham with some of these only available on alternate days. In addition, there are very limited intra-regional flights and no connections between Exmouth and Carnarvon or Denham.
Consultations indicate that this limited access and connectivity of air services is a critical issue for the growth of business, employment, incomes and the broader economy that needs to be addressed. Consistent comments were received about this lack of connectivity and interface within and beyond the region. In addition, costly air services for Carnarvon and inadequate terminal facilities were seen to have an adverse effect on tourism and attracting fly-in fly-out workers and their families to the region.

**Other observations**

The adequacy of access to general practitioner services, particularly in peak tourist season was identified as an issue in Exmouth and Denham.

A common concern expressed by stakeholders is that government sector services are being increasingly delivered outside the region (Geraldton and Karratha).

The status of Carnarvon as a regional centre needs to be confirmed as the regional headquarters of key government services. This is an important consideration as it impacts on the identity of Carnarvon, the provision of employment opportunities and the town’s ability to attract and retain its workforce.
Future workforce needs for the Gascoyne region

**Economic drivers for future labour force demand**
A range of major investment projects are currently underway that present opportunities for the Gascoyne economy, these are identified below.

**Carnarvon Horticulture Expansion (Gascoyne Food Bowl Initiative)**
Carnarvon is growing its horticultural precinct through the provision of new land and water resources for irrigation expansion, including water infrastructure development and sustainable soil, water and catchment management practices. The initiative is seen as a key driver for the Carnarvon horticultural industry to reach a production scale that will support export markets, and therefore increase opportunities for existing and new producers to market their produce both domestically and internationally. The first stage is a proposed 400 hectare expansion of the horticulture industry, with a further expansion of 400 hectares of irrigated land envisaged in the future.

Highlights reported in the August 2014 *Gascoyne Food Bowl Initiative* newsletter include:
- drilling and water tender contracts have been awarded with targets identified and access paths cleared;
- a contract for the electrification of the existing northern borefield has been awarded to Horizon Power and works have commenced;
- the infrastructure corridor for the existing northern borefield has been completed; and
- economic studies on developing new and target markets investigating existing and new market opportunities, and to consider the impacts of growth on industry development are being developed.

**Carnarvon Airport redevelopment**
According to a media release from the Shire of Carnarvon on 12 May 2014, the Carnarvon Council adopted a planning report that will enable the redevelopment of the Carnarvon Airport precinct within the existing 340 hectare site. A tender to undertake geotechnical and preliminary design assessments for the airport development has been awarded. Strategies for redevelopment of the airport includes realignment and relocation of the existing airstrip towards the east of the site, which is expected to enable up to 1 400 mixed density residential lots along with industrial and commercial land development over a 20 year horizon. The Shire President acknowledged that there could potentially be an alternative airport site on reserved land to the north of the town.
Nimitz Street residential development
As part of an ongoing attempt to address affordability in Exmouth, there are 15 residential lots in stage one of Nimitz estate being offered for sale via an exclusive pre-release. Development of the estate is dependent on market demand.

Ningaloo Centre
The $30 million plus Ningaloo Centre project is funded through the State Government’s Royalties for Regions (Gascoyne Revitalisation Fund), the Regional Development Australia grant program and a Shire contribution. The Ningaloo Centre will be a multi-purpose building providing a centralised resource for scientific research, education and community engagement with a new visitors centre, library, museum, convention centre, cafe and children’s playground. It will function as a major facility for scientists studying the Ningaloo Reef and Cape Range national parks. The Ningaloo Centre is expected to generate economic growth for Exmouth, including a boost in tourism and an increase in employment opportunities.

Exmouth Boat Harbour expansion
The Exmouth Boat Harbour is set to undergo a major $20 million upgrade, extending the service wharf with the construction of a heavy lift facility and additional moorings. The two year upgrade funded through the Royalties for Regions program will offer significant economic benefit to the wider Gascoyne region, and will further promote a diversified local economy. The project is expected to create approximately 140 new jobs for current operators and the wider community. As the only harbour between Carnarvon to the south and Dampier to the north, the project will further strengthen Exmouth’s ability to supply and service the resources sector, including off shore oil and gas. The construction phase of the upgrade is scheduled to commence in 2015–16.

Future projections
Employment forecasting, particularly in regions with small and volatile populations is difficult. For example, in the Gascoyne occupational projections and forecasts have been subject to and may continue to feel the influences of:
• fluctuations in the agricultural (including pastoral) market;
• the comparatively small population and hence a smaller local workforce;
• the income differential between the local and State average;
• the immediate and flow-on effects of a series of severe weather events in recent years (floods in 2010 and fires in 2012) on the tourism sector in particular; and
• the high Aboriginal population in Carnarvon and the need to address issues of meaningful employment.

Consultations have highlighted a number of considerations related to future labour force requirements including, but not limited to the following opportunities.
• The Department of Agriculture and Food’s ‘Seizing the Opportunity in Agriculture’ initiative is likely to result in skill demands with projects involving horticulture, biosecurity and diversification and support of the beef industry, including Aboriginal pastoral ventures, all of which have implications for the Gascoyne labour force.
• Rio Tinto’s Dampier Salt is planning to expand its Lake MacLeod operations. It is intended to increase annual salt production. Should this occur, there is a reasonable expectation the workforce will increase to meet production levels.

• The Gascoyne region is strategically located to support and facilitate the development of major off shore oil and gas deposits with the centre of Exmouth already fulfilling the role of a strategic hub for existing operations. The growth in investment expected in the medium term has the potential to underpin future economic growth in the region providing employment, supply chain opportunities, training and economic engagement opportunities during both construction and operational phases.

• Exmouth is strategically positioned in closer proximity to major South East Asian centres than Darwin, providing defence with a rapid response capability. Any expansion of defence operations in Exmouth would provide a critical mass of employment, population and expenditure activity. This is analogous with Darwin and Townsville on a smaller scale.

• Pending investment decisions, the Coburn Mineral Sands Project situated just outside the southeast edge of the Shark Bay World Heritage Property is ready to commence. Gunson Resources Limited has indicated that the total workforce to be employed at the site is expected to be 173.

• The population age profile of the Gascoyne is older than the State average. This is expected to underpin growing demand for health, medical and welfare based services (including retirement accommodation and aged care). This is particularly the case in Shark Bay.

It is also worth noting that the Gascoyne region may be expected to compete for workforce requirements from other regions such as the Mid West and the Pilbara.
**Gascoyne workforce development – the way forward**

**Action plan**
In order to address the workforce challenges and opportunities in the Gascoyne a series of priority actions have been developed. These draw on inputs from stakeholder consultations and have been refined through the input of the Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance and nominated lead agencies to ensure both relevance and practicality of action implementation.

Implementation of the 23 priority actions (some of which are inter-related) will be overseen by the Alliance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Skills development and utilisation - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.1       | As a matter of priority the Gascoyne Development Commission initiate a staged establishment of Industry Education, Training and Career clusters (IETCs) in the region’s key industries including:  
• food (horticulture, fishing and pastoral);  
• tourism (including hospitality);  
• resources;  
• environment and natural resource management; and  
• government services.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission |
| 1.2       | Each IETC, with the support of the Gascoyne Development Commission, to develop regional industry career pathways linked to accredited qualifications which can be delivered by regional schools, training providers including Durack Institute of Technology, the proposed open learning university centre or a combination as appropriate.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission |
| 1.3       | The Gascoyne Development Commission to investigate the feasibility of establishing an open learning university centre which would promote access to higher education courses that are aligned to the industry career pathways developed by the IETC.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission |
The rationale for actions 1.1-1.3 relates to the need to enhance links between the region’s key industries and education providers leading to a more highly skilled and better qualified regional workforce. This in turn will assist with the attraction and retention of young people and families in the region. The membership of each IETC will need to include representatives from the following (with industry representatives to be appointed as cluster Chairs):

- industry;
- schools;
- Durack Institute of Technology;
- Employment Plus, the region’s Regional Jobs and Community Program (RJCP) provider;
- the proposed open learning university centre;
- Aboriginal community;
- government agencies; and
- others as appropriate.

It is important that Carnarvon Community College, Exmouth District High School, Shark Bay School and St Mary’s College actively participate in the IETCs and provide Year 11 and 12 programs where possible, which are linked to the industry career pathways.

Employment Plus will need to actively participate in the IETCs and where possible, align their employment and training activities with the industry career pathways.

It is essential that all the regional key stakeholders take an active role in supporting the work of the IETCs.

### 1.4

Durack Institute of Technology, under the direction of the IETC, and as required, to undertake feasibility studies on the future training needs of Exmouth, based on confirmed industry investment decisions in areas which may include:

- tourism and hospitality;
- training relevant to the resource sector;
- natural resource management in partnership with the Department of Parks and Wildlife;
- marine industry; and
- aquaculture.

**Lead agency:** Durack Institute of Technology

**CONTEXT**

Potential industry growth and development in and around Exmouth must be assessed to ensure that any training and workforce development needs likely to arise from confirmed projects are identified early. This will allow Durack Institute of Technology to align training programs, subject to cost efficiencies with the key needs of local industry.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Skills development and utilisation - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Carnarvon Community College to commence investigating the concept of links with industry to include VET in Schools opportunities in the proposed expansion of the horticulture industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead agency: Carnarvon Community College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTEXT**

It is worth investigating the concept of links with industry to include VET in Schools opportunities given the intended expansion of the horticulture industry and the importance being placed on the region’s Food Bowl Initiative. Currently the Carnarvon Community College’s new trades training centre only intends to offer construction and engineering trades related training.

| 1.6       | The Department of Education is committed to exploring flexible ways by which students in the Gascoyne region can access accredited training programs which contribute to the new requirements of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). |
|           | Lead agency: Department of Education                          |

**CONTEXT**

Stakeholder consultation indicates some limitations in the Department of Education schools in the Gascoyne region to provide access to vocational education and training. Examination of this issue by the Department of Education will continue to assist schools to enhance their VET course options.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Workforce participation - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The Shires of Carnarvon, Shark Bay, Exmouth and Upper Gascoyne in collaboration with the Department of Local Government and Communities, through the Regional Community Child Care Development Fund, to analyse the: • adequacy of childcare services in Carnarvon, Denham and Exmouth; and • need for childcare services in Gascoyne Junction with the support of the Shire of Upper Gascoyne. Lead agencies: Shires of Carnarvon, Shark Bay, Exmouth and Upper Gascoyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The Department of Local Government and Communities to encourage the development of funding applications for initiatives/pilot projects that contribute to increasing the uptake of traineeships, including Aboriginal traineeships, in the Gascoyne under the Regional Community Childcare Development Fund initiative. Lead agency: Department of Local Government and Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Durack Institute of Technology to research the demand for accredited childcare training programs and the opportunity to provide them through flexible delivery arrangements. Lead agency: Durack Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTEXT**

Regional consultations indicated that the limited availability and cost of childcare was restricting parents, particularly women from participating in the workforce. It is worth noting that childcare is currently not available in Gascoyne Junction. In addition, there is some suggestion that the lack of Aboriginal childcare workers is contributing to the low take up of childcare services by Aboriginal parents. The lack of affordable childcare has implications for attracting and retaining families in the region.

2.4 The Shires of Carnarvon, Shark Bay, Exmouth and Upper Gascoyne to ensure that Aboriginal employment strategies in their workforce plans encourage greater Aboriginal participation. Lead agencies: Shire of Carnarvon, Shark Bay, Exmouth and Upper Gascoyne

**CONTEXT**

The number of Aboriginal people employed in the local governments is variable. The inclusion of strategies designed to promote Aboriginal employment would enhance the experience of Aboriginal communities in engaging with local government.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Workforce participation - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.5       | The Alliance to consider which of the initiatives listed in the *Western Australian Aboriginal Economic Participation Strategy* are relevant to address systemic issues relating to the high rate of long term unemployment in the Carnarvon Aboriginal community and if appropriate, work with local, State and Commonwealth agencies to promote and support their implementation in the region.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance |

**CONTEXT**

Carnarvon’s Aboriginal community requires targeted support to address systemic issues which have resulted in high rates of long term unemployment. Whilst the *Western Australian Aboriginal Economic Participation Strategy* was developed for the whole of State with a number of initiatives agreed upon at a national level, any initiatives listed in the strategy related to addressing high rates of long term Aboriginal unemployment should be considered for Carnarvon’s Aboriginal community.

| 2.6       | The Alliance with the assistance of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs’ Chief Operating Officer, to examine the issues within the Burringurrah community which are limiting participation in the region’s workforce. The Alliance is to monitor the relevant agencies’ activity against those issues, to complement the work of the Commonwealth’s Remote Jobs and Community program provider in the Burringurrah community.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Workforce Development Alliance |

**CONTEXT**

Regional consultations identified significant concern with what appears to be dysfunctional aspects of this community which manifest themselves in poor education and employment outcomes.

| 2.7       | The WA Public Sector Commission to encourage State Government agencies located in or servicing the Gascoyne region to include recruitment strategies which lead to increased employment of Aboriginal people particularly where front line services are being delivered to the Aboriginal community.  
Lead agency: Public Sector Commission |

**CONTEXT**

Regional consultations have indicated that there are a limited number of Aboriginal people employed by State Government agencies particularly where services are being provided directly to Aboriginal families.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Workforce participation - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>The Department of Housing to give consideration to the introduction of the transitional housing scheme (piloted in the Kimberley) in the Gascoyne region. Lead agency: Department of Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTEXT**

The Department of Housing is currently evaluating the East Kimberley Development Package Transitional Housing Program which has been operating in Kununurra since September 2012. The outcome of the evaluation (including identification of potential funding models) will inform the potential expansion and/or replicability of the model in other regions. The income tests related to the eligibility for housing is often seen to act as a disincentive for individuals to take-up or retain their employment and this transitional housing program is a strategy to address this issue.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Attraction and retention - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>The Department of Housing to review the affordable housing needs in the Shires of Carnarvon, Exmouth, Shark Bay and Upper Gascoyne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead agency: Department of Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTEXT**
Under the State Government’s *Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing*, the Department of Housing delivers a range of affordable housing options across WA and engages with local government as part of this process. Consultations in these shires indicated that the limited supply of affordable and appropriate housing (including owner occupier and rentals) is significantly impacting on families being attracted to the region.

| 3.2       | The Gascoyne Development Commission in collaboration with the Shires of Carnarvon, Exmouth and Shark Bay and other regional industry stakeholders, to work with the Department of Transport in the development of a Gascoyne aviation services strategy and consider the workforce development implications of this. |
|           | Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission             |

**CONTEXT**
Consistent comments were received about the lack of connectivity and interface within and beyond the region. Costly air services for Carnarvon and the inadequate terminal facilities were seen as having an adverse impact on tourism and acting as a deterrent for fly-in fly-out workers and their families to live in the region. A Gascoyne aviation services strategy would take into account the need to service the region’s major towns and passenger travel costs.

| 3.3       | The Shires of Exmouth and Shark Bay in collaboration with the Department of Health, to review the adequacy of general practitioner services in Exmouth and Denham and identify options to attract private medical practices. |
|           | Lead agencies: Shires of Exmouth and Shark Bay           |

**CONTEXT**
Waiting times to see a general practitioner in Denham and at the Exmouth Hospital sometimes extends to several weeks. The availability of readily accessible health services is an issue for families particularly in the peak tourism season.
## Attraction and retention - recommended priority actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Carnarvon Community College to develop and implement, as a matter of priority, a community communication and engagement strategy.</td>
<td>Carnarvon Community College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONTEXT
Consultations in Carnarvon highlighted the need for recent changes in the future direction of the college to both inform and engage the local community. The strategy should consider how community engagement can be sustained to enable the college to enhance community support and involvement and to further build the college’s reputation and intention to become an Independent Public School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Lead agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The Department of Education is committed, when funding permits, to complete stages 2 and 3 of the Carnarvon Community College.</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONTEXT
Completion of the college will encourage community acceptance of the community college concept and emphasise its importance as a significant regional resource.
The Gascoyne Development Commission to consult with regional industry to determine the need and support for a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA).

Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission

CONTEXT

It is evident that many of the Gascoyne region’s key industries including tourism and horticulture, will continue to rely on a seasonal workforce and skilled migration to complement other strategies to fill the labour gaps. Whether a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) would assist industry is worth considering.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ID</th>
<th>Planning and coordination - recommended priority actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5.1       | The Gascoyne Development Commission to collaborate with the Departments of Agriculture and Food, Regional Development, Water and Planning in the identification of any direct and ancillary workforce implications as a result of the possible future development of the additional 400 hectares (initially) of irrigated land in Carnarvon as a further stage of the Gascoyne Food Bowl Initiative.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission |

**CONTEXT**  
The prospect of an additional 400 hectares represents a significant increase in horticulture production which is likely to have major social and economic multiplier effects on Carnarvon and the surrounding region, including workforce implications.

| 5.2       | As the Water Corporation addresses future water requirements in the Gascoyne, it provides advice to the Alliance through the Gascoyne Development Commission on activities which may have workforce implications to allow the Alliance to assess project implications for workforce requirements.  
Lead agency: Water Corporation |

**CONTEXT**  
Advice received during the consultations indicated that any significant increase in the Gascoyne’s population would require desalination facilities to be established to process either sea or artesian water sources.

| 5.3       | The Gascoyne Development Commission in collaboration with other relevant State Government agencies, to identify any direct and ancillary workforce implications as a result of Exmouth becoming a major services centre for the resource and/or defence sectors.  
Lead agency: Gascoyne Development Commission |

**CONTEXT**  
The ongoing off shore liquefied natural gas production and construction projects, possible future developments in defence and Exmouth’s proximity to the Pilbara may result in a significant increase in the region’s population and workforce. Planning will be important to prepare for the region’s capacity to respond to such an eventuality.
Appendix A: 
Data limitations

Where available the most recent government and industry data have been used in the plan. However, there are a number of limitations associated with the availability and accuracy of data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census being the most notable. There are well known concerns with the accuracy of some Census data in rural and remote areas. Where possible, alternative sources of data have been used or the trends and patterns have been cross-checked during regional consultations.

The data used were mostly derived from the ABS 2011 Census, labour force and business data and from the Commonwealth Department of Employment’s Small Area Labour Market data. In addition, published secondary sources of data and information have been used such as that available from the Gascoyne Development Commission, the former Department of Regional Development and Lands now Department of Regional Development, Regional Development Australia, Department of Planning, Department of Training and Workforce Development and a number of private sector reports.

Considerable caution must also be exercised when using Aboriginal labour market data from the ABS Census. The ‘net undercount’ for Western Australia’s Aboriginal population in 2011 is estimated to have been around 20%. While the ABS does have a methodology to adjust for this, it is only applied to basic counts of Aboriginal persons, but not to any labour market related Census variables. Also there are cultural considerations and other difficulties related to collecting information from a small and highly dispersed group of people. This means that any Census labour market data for Aboriginal people (particularly in the more remote/ traditional communities) may have a higher than average error rate.

As the Gascoyne is statistically a small region its data sets are often small and volatile. Caution should be used in analysing and interpreting the data, including any projections, as these are not necessarily as rigorous as larger data sets would be.

It should also be noted that some sources combine the data for the Gascoyne with the Mid West region thus making some statistical analysis less reliable and less accurate for the individual regions.

* Please note that some of the percentages presented in this document may not total 100% due to rounding.
Appendix B:
Gascoyne consultation list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Family Law Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquanorth Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill – Mental Health Carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Western Hospitality Inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Aboriginal Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Community Charitable Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Community Men’s Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Community Women’s Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Development Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Family Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Medical Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Tourism Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Trustees Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centacare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Carnarvon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Exmouth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevron Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Department of Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services, Health and Education Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowling Giudici and Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durack Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical, Utilities and Public Administration Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMU Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Automotive Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth District High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth Visitors Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial, Administrative and Professional Services Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FutureNow Creative and Leisure Industries Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne Asset Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granny Glasgow Education and Care Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunson Resources Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milyuranpa Banjyma Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mungullah Community Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novotel Ningaloo Resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and Community Youth Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Industry Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and Personal Services Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army – Employment Plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark Bay Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Carnarvon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Exmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Shark Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Shark Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Upper Gascoyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Agriculture and Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Child Protection and Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Health (Western Australian Country Health Service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Local Government and Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Parks and Wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Regional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Training and Workforce Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Department of Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Police Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wurrakaj Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuggoo Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forums (26 and 27 March 2014)**

*Carnarvon Aboriginal Reference Group (CARG)*

- Aquanorth Aboriginal Corporation – John Oxenham
- Bayiyungu Aboriginal Corporation – Paul Baron
- Carnarvon Aboriginal Congress – Maria Poland
- Carnarvon Community Charitable Trust Aboriginal Corporation – Jenny Walsh
- Carnarvon Community Men’s Group Aboriginal Corporation – Jalba Dann
- Carnarvon Development Aboriginal Corporation – Beverley Ladyman
- Carnarvon Medical Services Aboriginal Corporation – Aileen Mitchell
- Carnarvon Trustee Aboriginal Corporation – Kathleen Musulin
- Former Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Larina Burke
- Milyuranpa Banjyma Aboriginal Corporation – Roddesa Mitchell
- Ukkakaga Corporation – Merle Dann
- Yuggoo Aboriginal Corporation – Susan Oakley
## Carnarvon Non-Government Organisations Network (CNGON)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Person(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Family Law Service</td>
<td>Susan Oakley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally III – Medical Local Partners in Recovery</td>
<td>Ross Monaco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Family Support Services</td>
<td>Julee Nelson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Medical Services Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>Aileen Mitchell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Community Men’s Group</td>
<td>John Oxenham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Community Women’s Group</td>
<td>Ella Oxenham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon PCYC – Gloria Quinn and Benita Donda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centacare – Tracey Armstrong and Santosh Shende</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMU Services</td>
<td>Jackie Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre</td>
<td>Wil Nayar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Larina Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne Asset Maintenance</td>
<td>Natalie Perry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mungullah Community Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>Leisha Norling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Employment Plus</td>
<td>Sylvia Bush</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Carnarvon Human Services Agency Group (CHSAG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Person(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Education Manager</td>
<td>Margaret Maxwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
<td>Elise Ronan and Kym Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Child Protection and Family Support</td>
<td>Sandra McGhie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Employment</td>
<td>Wayne Murray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Health Gascoyne</td>
<td>Helen Webb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Housing</td>
<td>Ted Duke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
<td>Larina Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne Development Commission</td>
<td>Paul Niesler and Kim Pervan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire of Carnarvon</td>
<td>Charlie Brown and Vivienne Tonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Police</td>
<td>Paul McComish and Jane Gillham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Gascoyne regional community identified occupation list

As part of the qualitative research undertaken for this project, a survey instrument was deployed to capture Gascoyne community views on skilled occupations in the region:

• that are likely to be in critical demand (i.e. crucial to industry operations, growth and development and/or could seriously harm business viability if not addressed); or
• where employers are unable to fill or have considerable difficulty filling vacancies due to skill shortages.

While the survey instrument was distributed widely, the response rate was low. The survey results are therefore not conclusive and can be considered broadly indicative only.

An analysis of the nominated occupations indicates services to support families and communities in the Gascoyne region are considered important. It should be noted that:

• while teachers featured strongly in the survey results (pre-primary school teachers, secondary school teachers, teacher of English/other languages, vocational education teachers, special education teachers and middle school teachers), it is likely that this is a function of high rates of teacher turnover and less experienced teachers rather than a shortage of teachers, leading to community perceptions of inconsistent quality and/or substandard offerings;
• health services and related professional services are relatively accessible in Carnarvon and generally people are well serviced in Exmouth, except in peak seasons. While there is a desire by the Gascoyne community to increase the range of health services provided in regional towns, stakeholders also understand that more resources in smaller towns may not necessarily be economically feasible;
• the identified need for a given occupation may be town or sub region-specific and may not necessarily indicate a critical shortage. One example is ‘butchers and smallgoods makers’ which may actually be covered by alternative services provided by supermarkets; and
• while it could be argued that hospitality occupations could be filled by seasonal workers or backpackers, some difficult to fill positions in hospitality require skilled workers, such as chefs and bakers and pastry cooks. These positions are significant to the tourism and hospitality industries.
The following presents a summary of the occupations identified by 45 stakeholders in the Gascoyne community as being of high priority.

- Butchers and smallgoods makers: 18
- Pre-primary teachers: 17
- Social workers: 16
- Chefs: 16
- Ambulance officers and paramedics: 15
- Cooks: 15
- Dental practitioners: 15
- Secondary school teachers: 15
- Indigenous health workers: 14
- Solicitors: 14
- Teachers of English to speakers of other languages: 14
- Vocational education teachers: 14
- Special education teachers: 14
- Middle school teachers: 14
- Health and welfare services managers: 14
- Child care centre managers: 14
- Bakers and pastry cooks: 13
- General medical practitioners: 13
- Welfare workers: 12
- Welfare, recreation and community arts workers: 12
- Financial and insurance services: 12
- Dieticians: 12


Gascoyne workforce development plan 2015–2018: Executive summary


Department of Training and Workforce Development 2014, Performance and evaluation statistics – TRS data [unpublished]


For further information or to provide comment on the plan, please contact:

State Workforce Planning
Department of Training and Workforce Development
T: 08 6551 5000
E: rwd@dtwd.wa.gov.au