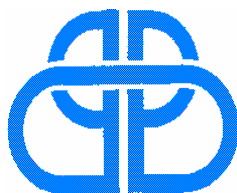


“SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES WORKS”

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS FORMATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-09



**SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES
DEVELOPMENT BOARD INC.**

Prepared by

**Southern Flinders Ranges
Employment and Skills Formation Network**

SouthAustraliaWorks
linking people, skills and jobs



Department of
**Further
Education
Employment
Science and
Technology**

INTRODUCTION

This plan represents a broad strategic platform from which the Southern Flinders Ranges Employment and Skills Formation Network (SFRESFN) will deliver improved labour market outcomes over the next three years.

This document builds on a previous plan developed by SFRESFN by signalling future priorities more clearly alongside Objectives and linked Targets. Separate Annual Action Plans will be produced each year providing detailed information on proposed activities, projects and programs to deliver on the Objectives and Targets contained in this document.

The SFRESFN is a vehicle for collaboration and for the first time brings together the region's regional development, employment, education, training and social inclusion agendas into a shared focus.

The following reflects our shared commitment: -

Our Vision

“The Southern Flinders Ranges labour market operates efficiently, with expanded work and learning opportunities for all, fulfilling industry and community needs”.

Our Mission

“To coordinate delivery of improved labour market outcomes through collaboration.”

About the Network

The Southern Flinders Ranges Development Board Inc. (SFRDB) under contract to the Government's *South Australia Works* initiative has a lead role in forming and supporting SFRESFN. The Network was established in April 2004, as a key component of *South Australia Works in the Regions*.

The SFRESFN consists of representatives from the community, industry, Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies and service providers from the education, training and employment sector. The Network meets regularly to identify solutions, share information, build alliances and monitor progress on our shared vision.

The Network's activities are coordinated through an Executive Committee including SFRDB and DFEEST officers with a nominee of the SFRDB in the role of SFRESFN Chairperson.

Since its inception, the SFRESF Network has shifted its emphasis from the establishment of a solid foundation and research base to the emerging program implementation essential to meet the employment and training needs of both industry and the community. The initial ESFN Strategic Plan established 4 key strategic themes that have formed the basis for the current Plan.

Collaboration between Network members has been vital in the development of the 2006-09 Objectives and is reflected in projects involving multiple service delivery organisations. The Network's values reinforce our collaborative approach to employment and skills formation.

Our Values

- *Activating value for all*
- *Market responsive expertise*
- *Courage to collaborate*
- *Honouring one's commitment to outcomes*

Achievements of the Network

In the first 18 months of *South Australia Works in the Regions*, the Southern Flinders Ranges committed \$463,000 of project funds. These funds, together with substantial contributions from project partners, have assisted 161 people into training and or work opportunities. Initiatives supported during 2004-05 resulted in a total of 54,200 accredited training hours delivered throughout the region.

Pre-employment training aimed at readying people for employment in high demand sectors has been a successful strategy for the SFRESFN. Our commitment to assisting entry level training has also merged with local schools through Network support for vocational training for students in their final year of schooling. The result has been smoother transitions to work for school leavers and better skilled and work ready employees for local employers.

SFRESFN has supported a range of innovative projects aimed at helping marginalised and disengaged groups enter training and work. 17 indigenous residents have entered traineeships and apprenticeships, 15 disengaged youth have progressed successfully through the Boystown Off-School Campus Education Program and IT training and mentor support has helped a group of parents begin the transition back to the paid workforce.

Network members worked to support the Spencer Gulf and Outback Australian Technical College (ATC) proposal which includes plans to establish an ATC node in Port Pirie commencing in 2007. This work reflects the Network's focus on addressing the emerging labour and skills challenge driven by rapid resource sector growth.

Engaging the Community and Forming Partnerships

A feature of the Network approach is to address regional employment and training needs by engaging the community and forming partnerships with key stakeholders. The Network hosts regular events, and forums aimed at stimulating discussion on labour market issues and promoting a collaborative approach to labour market intervention. Two-way flow of information and ideas gained from engagement has contributed to the quality of Network planning and implementation.

Examples of events and communication activities include: -

- Forums focussed on Youth and Mature Age workforce
- Community ESF Planning workshop
- Network member surveys
- Network and SFRDB Newsletters
- Southern Flinders Ranges.com website
- Employer Breakfast forum
- Youth, Aboriginal and Disabilities standing committees

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND SKILL FORMATION DIRECTIONS

Overview of the Regional Profile

The Southern Flinders Ranges population at 22,571 represents 1.5 per cent of the State (ABS 2001 Census). The region has experienced a gradual decline in population since the 1970s albeit at a low rate and based on current projections, is expected to experience further population decline (Estimated Residential Population, June 2004).

The Southern Flinders Ranges encompasses the Local Government Areas of Port Pirie Regional Council, District Council of Mount Remarkable and Northern Areas Council (part). The city of Port Pirie with a population of 13,263 is the centre for regional services and manufacturing. The remainder of the region is predominantly rural based and serviced by smaller towns including: - Crystal Brook, Gladstone, Laura, Wirrabara, Booleroo Centre, Melrose and Wilmington.

The region has a higher than State average concentration of younger people (0 – 14 years) and people aged over 55 years. The region has a lower than average share of people considered within the core working age group (15 to 54 years). This reflects an extended period of structural change within the SFR economy and labour market whereby outward migration of students and younger workers was driven by stagnant labour demand. Recent evidence suggests this trend has slowed in response to improving labour demand and strong growth prospects for the resources sector.

Commonwealth Quarterly Labour Market data (DEWR Dec 2005) indicates a current unemployment rate for the Southern Flinders Ranges region of 5.4 per cent. This compares favourably with the State average of 5.1 per cent.

Unemployment - Southern Flinders Ranges (DEWR December 2005):

▪ Port Pirie Council (City)	6.8 %
▪ Port Pirie Council (Districts)	4.9 %
▪ Mount Remarkable	2.2 %
▪ Northern Areas Council	2.8 %
▪ SFR Total	5.4 %

Unemployment levels have fallen sharply since 2001. Port Pirie experienced the most significant decline falling from 12.5 per cent in March 2001 to 6.8 per cent in Dec 2005.

2001 Census data indicated very high levels of youth and indigenous unemployment. In 2001 SFR youth unemployment at 28.9 per cent was more than 10 percentage points higher than the State and indigenous unemployment at 45.6 per cent was more than double the State average.

Both youth and indigenous rates of unemployment are likely to be significantly lower than for 2001 in line with a general decline in regional unemployment, however, no data is available to confirm the current level of youth and indigenous unemployment. Nonetheless, local evidence suggests that youth and indigenous unemployment remains much higher than for the general workforce and will remain a major focus for labour market intervention in the immediate future.

The Southern Flinders Ranges remains one of South Australia's most important manufacturing regions notwithstanding an overall decline in jobs associated with manufacturing compared to previous census periods. The region's largest employing industries based on the 2001 Census are listed below.

Employment by Industry - Southern Flinders Ranges (ABS 2001):

- Retail Trade 15.9 %
- Manufacturing 14.6 %
- Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 13.2 %
- Health and Community Services 11.9 %

While the proportion of residents with non-school qualifications increased between 1996 and 2001 Census, 68.1 per cent of the Southern Flinders Ranges workforce reported holding no qualifications in 2001. This is in comparison to 58.1 per cent of the State's population.

Both Contract of Training (COT) commencements and Vocational Education and Training (VET) decreased in the region by 5.0 per cent and 12.1 per cent respectively between 2003 and 2004 (NCVER, 2005). During the corresponding period State COT commencements increased by 2.4 per cent and State VET decreased by 0.1 per cent. These measures suggest the region is performing relatively poorly at creating employment and training opportunities for trainees and apprentices.

A number of studies (SACES 2000) confirm that SFR and particularly the city of Port Pirie has a relatively high level of welfare dependency. 34.3 per cent of residents in the region were in receipt of Centrelink payments, compared to the State average of 26.4 per cent (Centrelink, 2003).

The Southern Flinders Ranges is considered more disadvantaged based on income, welfare dependency, educational attainment and unemployment compared to the State and the majority of other SA regions. Recent evidence indicates improving socio economic circumstances for the region, however, this positive trend is not unique to the SFR and therefore our relative performance is likely to remain at some relative level of disadvantage. The extent or otherwise of SFR's relative improvement will be confirmed at the August 2006 national census.

Strategic Issues and Trends Influencing the Southern Flinders Ranges

The SFRESFN has identified a range of strategic level issues and trends that have been taken into account in forming the 2006-09 Strategic Plan. Some of the important drivers influencing this Plan are outlined below:

- Economic and business conditions within the region have improved measurably since our last planning phase in 2004. This has resulted in improving labour demand.
- The outlook for the region is very promising and particularly for those sectors of our economy with links to the resources sector. The region and particularly Port Pirie is well placed to benefit from rapid growth in exploration, mining and mineral processing during the life of this plan.
- Unemployment rates in the region have fallen sharply since 2001 and are mirroring State and National trends for the first time in two decades. There is emerging evidence of labour shortages in some skilled areas.
- Despite improving labour market conditions overall, there remains entrenched and chronic levels of unemployment within youth and indigenous groups. A combination of family based social circumstances and low employment demand for unskilled workers are contributing factors for disadvantaged groups.
- The number of residents not in the workforce and in receipt of disability and parenting support pensions is high and represents a significant potential source of labour to satisfy future growth. Federal Government policies are likely to act as an incentive for these groups to re-enter the labour market over the next three years.
- The national skills challenge is evident now in the region and will intensify as a strategic priority for employers in the medium to long term. Attracting and retaining skilled workers will be increasingly competitive for all regions. Maximising the skills development of local young people will emerge as an important strategy for regions wanting to achieve their growth potential.
- The numbers of residents entering apprenticeships and traineeships is not keeping pace with current and predicted demand for trades and other skills. Barriers to increasing Contracts of Training exist for young people and employers. Barriers include the lack of status for the trades compared to tertiary education for students and perceived low training wages. Employers appear reluctant to invest in apprenticeships and at this point are adopting a “just-in-time” approach by recruiting experienced tradespeople from competitors or other regions.
- Lack of public transport and child care services limit labour mobility and will hamper efforts to capture the benefits of labour demand linked to remote exploration and mining growth. The factors also hamper intra regional mobility.

- Ageing of the workforce and the pending retirement of the region's "baby boomers" may exacerbate skills shortages over the next 5 years. Attention to retaining mature aged workers or at least transferring their skills to younger workers will dampen the impact of this trend.
- Schools, TAFE and non-Government organisations (NGOs) are increasing cooperation aimed at providing students with more efficient transitions to vocational training and work place experiences. Hybrid School/TAFE delivery in the final year of school for many students will significantly improve school to work transitions.

Links to South Australia's Strategic Plan

The *Southern Flinders Ranges Employment and Skills Formation 2006-09 Strategic Plan* closely aligns with the objectives and targets of South Australia's Strategic Plan, and subsequently, the Southern Flinders Ranges Development Board Inc. Strategic Plan and the Department for Further Education Employment Science and Technology Strategic Plan.

A feature of the 2006-09 Plan is its commitment to a target driven approach. A combination of South Australia's Strategic Plan targets and locally developed targets link directly with the 4 Objectives in this Plan.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS FOR 2006-09

The *Southern Flinders Ranges Employment and Skills Formation 2006-09 Strategic Plan* is organised under 4 Objectives with each linked to several clear targets that will define performance over the life of the Plan. Enabling Strategies have been developed to further refine the Network's initial direction and emphasis on activity. Our enabling strategies are contained and explained briefly within this document.

Each year during the life of the plan an Annual Action Plan and budget detailing programs, initiatives and projects will be developed by the Network and its Executive Committee.

The following Objectives reflect the strategic direction of the Southern Flinders Ranges Employment and Skills Formation Network. Following sections will provide further detail on our measurable performance targets and enabling strategies.

Our Objectives

- 1. Coordinated Approach**
- 2. Enhanced Skill Base**
- 3. Seamless Transitions**
- 4. Targeted Interventions**

Our Objectives and Targets – A Snapshot

Objective	Target
<p>1 Coordinated Approach</p> <p><i>“A coordinated approach maximising partnerships and collaboration between community, industry, labour market services and government.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employment Growth</i> • <i>Regional Unemployment Rate</i>
<p>2 Enhanced Skill Base</p> <p><i>“An enhanced skill base to build and maintain an expanded, more efficient and competitive workforce.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Non-School Qualifications</i> • <i>Tafe Participation Rate</i> • <i>Total accredited training hours</i> • <i>Mature age worker retention</i>
<p>3 Seamless Transitions</p> <p><i>“Seamless transitions through education, training and employment.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>University Participation</i> • <i>Contract of Training Commencements</i> • <i>VET in School participation rate</i> • <i>Average duration of unemployment</i>
<p>4 Targeted Interventions</p> <p><i>“Targeted interventions for disadvantaged and marginalised groups to reach their potential.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Youth unemployment rate</i> • <i>Aboriginal public sector employment</i> • <i>Aboriginal unemployment rate</i> • <i>Proportion of long term unemployed</i> • <i>Participation rates for people with a disability and parents returning to the workforce</i>

South Australia Works in the Regions aims to provide leadership and support in regions that optimises learning and work outcomes and opportunities.

The Southern Flinders Ranges Employment and Skills Formation Network (SFRESFN): -

Vision: “The Southern Flinders Ranges labour market operates efficiently, with expanded work and learning opportunities for all, fulfilling industry and community needs”.

Mission: “To coordinate delivery of improved labour market outcomes through collaboration”.

Objective 1: **Coordinated Approach** – maximising partnerships and collaboration between community, industry, labour market services and government.”

Targets:

- Match the State employment growth rate within 3 years
- Maintain the SFR unemployment rate within 2 percentage points of the State average for the next 3 years

<p>Strategy 1: Establish and maintain effective collaborative networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review SFRESF Network membership and stakeholder relationships ○ Conduct industry / business forums, community forums and sub-contractor forums ○ Identify and partner with other networks 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic</p> <p style="text-align: right;">✓</p>
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<p>Strategy 2: <i>Monitor and evaluate labour market issues and trends</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify existing sources of labour market data ○ Identify data needed to inform decision making ○ Develop data sets to monitor SFRESFN Targets ○ Establish links to sources of data needed ○ Conduct local research ○ Maintain central point of collated data ○ Inform further Strategic Planning 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
<p>Strategy 3: <i>Contribute to workforce development in partnership with industry</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify and prioritise target industries ○ Establish improved communication with industry ○ Participate in industry led employment and training initiatives (eg ATC and Skills Centres) ○ Contribute to resource sector workforce planning 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>



<p>Strategy 4: Maximise communication and information flows within and outside the Network</p> <p>▪ 2006-09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Promote the 2006-09 Strategic Plan – “Southern Flinders Ranges Works”○ Promote Annual Action Plans○ Host regular employer and stakeholder briefings and workshops○ Develop regular communication tools○ Guest speakers attending Network meetings○ Undertake field visits to visit project activities	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
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Objective 2: Enhanced Skill Base – build and maintain an expanded, more efficient and competitive workforce

Targets:

- Increase the proportion of SFR residents with qualifications from 31.9 % to 35 % by 2011
- Increase the level of TAFE participation by 15% over 3 years
- Increase total accredited training hours delivered in the SFR by 10% over 3 years
- Maintain the current proportion of mature aged workers (over 55 years) in our workforce to 2011

<p>Strategy 1: <i>Encourage employers to invest in their workforce skills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify industry priorities ○ Promote life long learning culture ○ Support proposals aimed at up-skilling and retention 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
<p>Strategy 2: <i>Retention of skill base in the region.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on retention of mature aged workers beyond traditional retirement age ○ Support initiatives that transfer skills within the workforce ○ Support initiatives aimed at minimising outward migration of skilled young workers 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓ (all cohorts)</p>

<p>Strategy 3: <i>Assist employers to attract skills into the region</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify skills shortages and priorities ○ Provide support for SA Skilled Migration Program ○ Support initiatives aimed at promoting SFR as an attractive place to live and work 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
<p>Strategy 4: <i>Encourage employees to value skills and qualifications.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote the value of skills and qualifications within the community ○ Support improved career guidance programs ○ Promote a life long learning culture within the workforce 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>

Objective 3: Seamless Transitions –Seamless transitions through education, training and employment

Targets:

- Increase the number of SFR students entering tertiary level education by 10% within 3 years
- Increase the number of Contract of Training commencements by 10% over the next 3 years
- Increase the number of individuals undertaking Vocational Education and Training by 15% over the next 3 years
- Reduce the average duration of unemployment by 10% over 3 years

<p>Strategy 1: <i>Contribute to school-to-work transitions, focused on students in their final year of school.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribute to existing hybrid School/TAFE VET programs ○ Identify opportunities to expand VET programs beyond traditional trades focus ○ Support employer and student participation in SBNA system ○ Support Port Pirie Node proposed with USG & Outback ATC 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic</p> <p>✓</p>
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<p>Strategy 2: Support models to increase traineeships and apprenticeships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner with regional government agencies and local government to maximise trainees entering the Government Youth Traineeship Program ○ Support proposals that coordinate increased uptake of traineeships and apprenticeships within the business sector. 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓ (all cohorts)</p>
<p>Strategy 3: Support alternative learning pathways for individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify existing alternative learning pathways and service providers and evaluate effectiveness ○ Continue support for innovative and successful models for alternative pathways 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓ (all cohorts)</p>

Objective 4: *Targeted Interventions – Targeted interventions for disadvantaged and marginalised groups to help individuals reach their full potential.*

Targets:

- Reduce the youth unemployment rate to within 7 percentage points of the State average within 3 years
- Increase the number of SFR Aboriginal people in public sector employment by 10% within 3 years
- Reduce the indigenous unemployment rate to within 15 percentage points of the State average within 3 years.
- Decrease the number of people who are long term unemployed by 10% over 3 years
- Support 75 people with a disability and 50 parents to re-enter the paid workforce over 3 years.

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> <i>Assist disengaged and marginalised youth to engage in the community</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify disengaged and marginalised youth and support engagement by service providers to identify needs and opportunities ○ Promote collaboration among agencies involved in youth related interventions ○ Support individual and collaborative projects aimed at re-engagement ○ Support initiatives that integrate interventions at the family or household level 	<p><u>Targets</u> 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
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<p>Strategy 2: <i>Support programs aimed at increasing participation of disadvantaged individuals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on assisting people with a disability to enter or re-enter the paid workforce ○ Focus on assisting parents returning to the workforce ○ Support initiatives aimed at assisting mature aged unemployed re-enter the workforce 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
<p>Strategy 3: <i>Expand re-engagement, employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build relationships with agencies specialising in employment and training support to indigenous people ○ Engage with other groups and agencies involved in improving indigenous people's well being with a view to developing integrated models for intervention and support ○ Continue to support innovative projects that deliver tangible outcomes for indigenous re-engagement, training and work 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>

<p>Strategy 4: <i>Utilise public sector employment as a first work entry point for Aboriginal people</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006-09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote demand for indigenous traineeships with regional state and local government agencies. ○ Establish collaborative partnerships with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aboriginal Employment Programs ▪ Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program ▪ Government Youth Traineeship Program ○ Continue to support coordination of public sector agencies seeking indigenous trainees to maximise annual uptake and efficiencies associated with a group traineeship approach 	<p>Targets 15-24 : 40+ : Indigenous : Other : Strategic ✓</p>
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