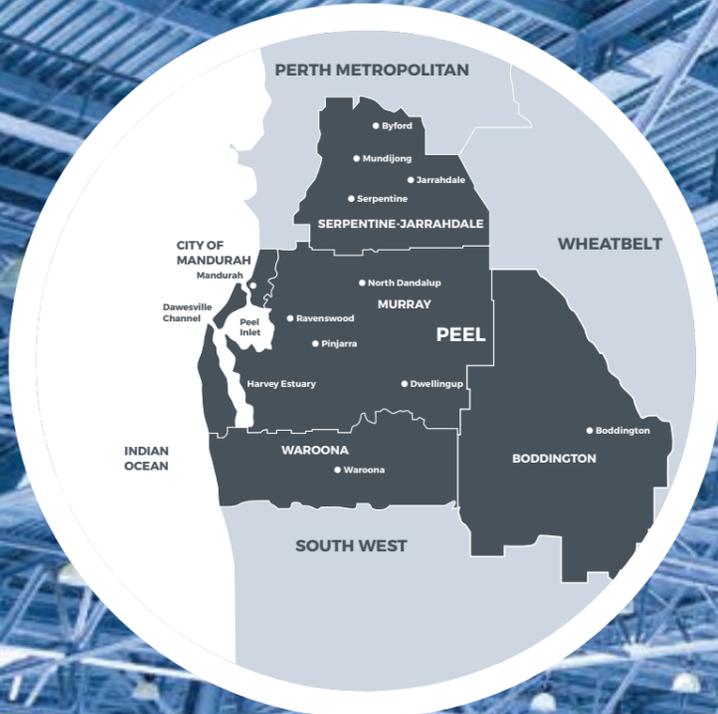




# Transform Peel Workforce Skills Analysis Report Summary



PROGRESSIVE | PROSPEROUS | DYNAMIC



# CONTENTS

<b>1. OVERVIEW</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. CURRENT STATUS, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. Workforce of the Peel	4
2.2. Work Readiness	4
2.3. 'Multi-skills' requirement and adaptability	4
2.4. Negative perception of Agri-business employment pathways	5
2.5. Lifelong learning, re-skilling and up-skilling	5
2.6. Current workforce development activities in Peel	6
<b>3. FUTURE WORKFORCE IN TRANSFORM PEEL</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. Priority Workforce and Skills Needs	7
<b>4. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1. Promotion and marketing	11
4.2. Investment in STEAM provides workforce foundations; STEAMI is even better	12
4.3. Current Peel workforce is not yet ready for Transform Peel	12
4.4. Alignment of training, education offerings to industry and business needs	12
4.5. Job Matching Services	12
<b>5. RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSFORM PEEL WORKFORCE PLANNING</b>	<b>13</b>



This report was produced by SDF Global Pty Ltd (Dr Dorothy Lucks, Maria Price and Charlotte Jones). SDF would like to thank the Peel Development Commission and the many stakeholders for their contribution. This initiative is supported by Royalties for Regions.

**For further information please see:**

[www.transformpeel.com](http://www.transformpeel.com)  
[www.peel.wa.gov.au](http://www.peel.wa.gov.au)

**Peel Development Commission: (08) 9535 4140**





# 1. OVERVIEW

Transform Peel is a 35 year multi-stakeholder development program to establish an innovative primary industry hub comprising three initiatives: the **Peel Food Zone, Peel Business Park** and **Peel Integrated Water Initiative**.

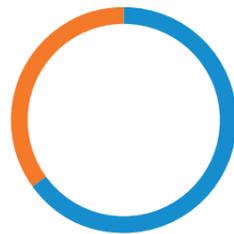
Transform Peel has received approval from the State Government to proceed with the Activation Phase of the program and received \$49.3 million of Royalties for Regions funding which will contribute to detailed design and early implementation activities including key headworks. Following activation, it is intended that private sector investment will drive the initiatives and achievement of intended outcomes.

The Peel Development Commission with other key partners in the Peel Workforce Development Alliance recognised the need to identify the likely skills profiles, job pathways, and education, training and business support requirements for prospective employment generation through Transform Peel. This was particularly in relation to food and agriculture industries, which are a major focus for Transform Peel.

The study, recently completed by SDF Global Pty Ltd, involved discussion with 156 representatives of industry, schools, universities, local employment organisations. It also included a study of the most recent employment trends and opportunities.

The study found that across the Transform Peel initiatives and possible scenarios, the jobs created are likely to comprise a full range of skill levels and will depend on the businesses that establish themselves within the business park and food zone. It is difficult to predict the exact jobs that will be generated as research indicates that approximately 65% of the jobs in 2050 will be jobs that do not exist today.

65%



Of the jobs in 2050 will be jobs that do not exist today

However, there were some common characteristics and skills that employers demand, that can be the focus of targeted workforce development. These include work readiness in terms of work ethic, attitudes, willingness to learn and communication, as well as basic skills and understanding in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and information communication technology (ICT).

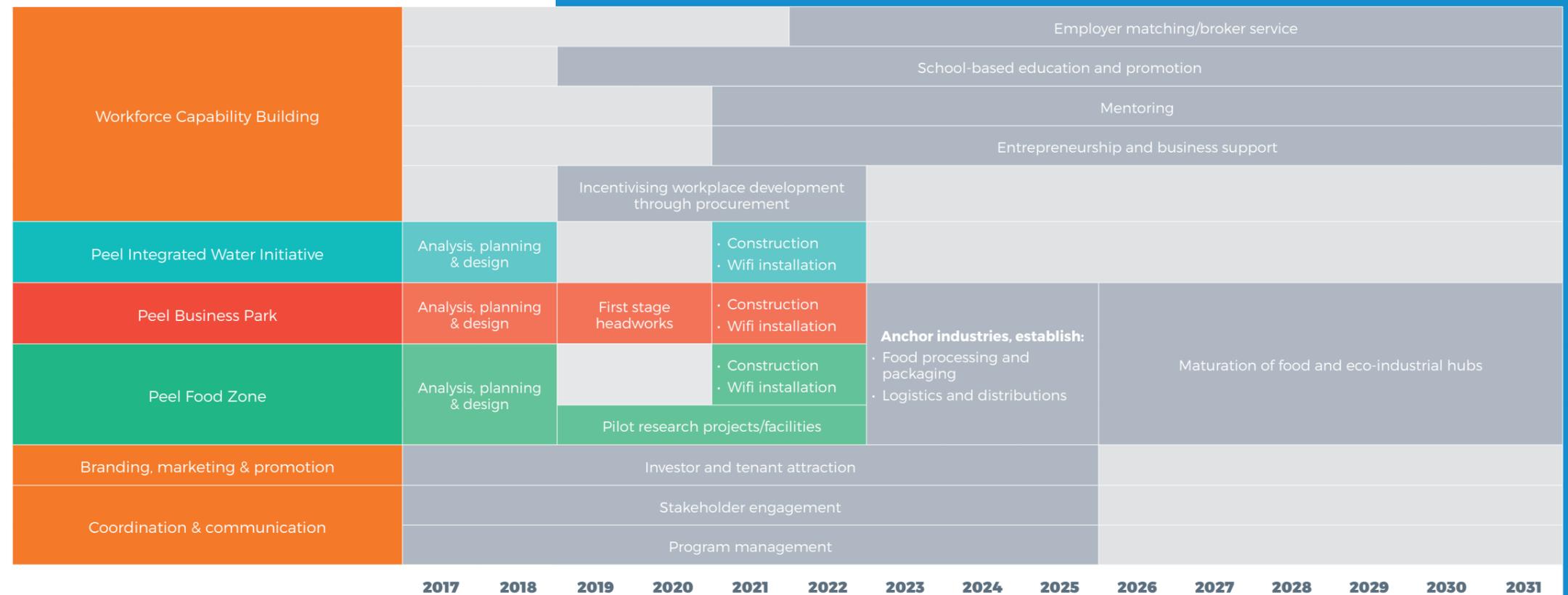
Other overarching trends relevant to Transform Peel are that the workforce will need to be generally higher skilled, as well as more multi-skilled and adaptable in a rapidly changing context.



**35**  
Year multi-stakeholder development program

**3 parts**  
Peel Business Park, Peel Integrated Water Initiative & Peel Food Zone

**\$49.3m**  
Royalties for Regions funding



**Figure 1. Indicative Timeline for Transform Peel to 2031**  
Source: Transform Peel Workforce Skills Needs Analysis Study team, 2017

## 2. CURRENT STATUS, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



### 2.1. Workforce of the Peel

The Peel region comprises the City of Mandurah and Shires of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Murray, Waroona and Boddington with a total resident population of 131,893 in 2015. The region has experienced rapid population growth; increasing by 31.4% in the decade 2005 to 2015<sup>1</sup>. Population growth in Mandurah in particular has been driven by lifestyle-based migration, rather than employment driven. As a result, approximately 28.6% of those living in the region work in the Perth metropolitan area<sup>2</sup>.

A major challenge for the region is persistently high unemployment, particularly among young people<sup>3</sup>. Mandurah currently has the second highest unemployment rate in Australia at 11.5% and a youth (ages 15-24) unemployment rate of 16.9%<sup>4</sup>. Workforce participation is constrained by a lack of career aspirations and work readiness among young people as well as poor linkages of training and education sectors with industry<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016. 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia. Population Estimates by Local Government Area (ASGS 2015), 2005 to 2015.  
<sup>2</sup> Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2015. Peel Workforce Development Plan 2015-2018.  
<sup>3</sup> Department of Regional Development, 2014. Peel: A region in profile 2014.  
<sup>4</sup> Department of Employment, 2016. SA4 – Area Profile Data, September 2016. ABS Labour Force Survey.  
<sup>5</sup> Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2015. Peel Workforce Development Plan 2015-2018.

### 2.2. Work Readiness

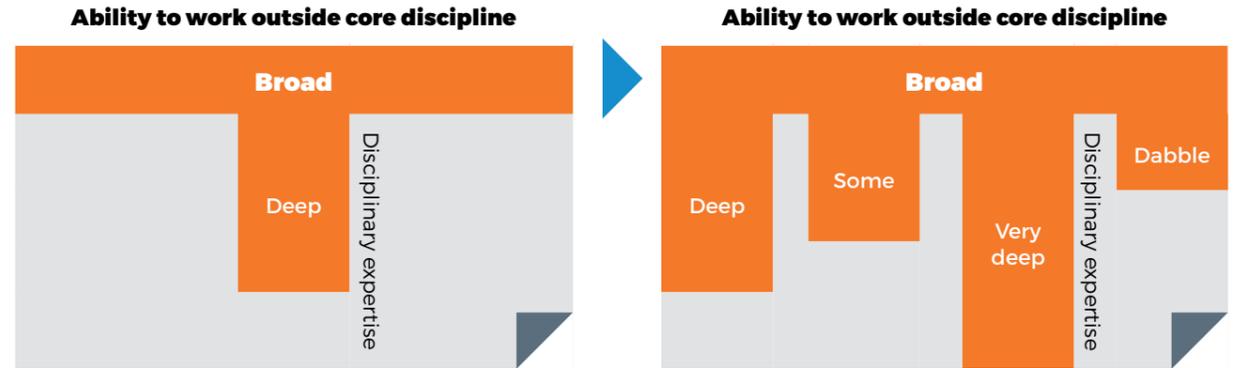
There was a strong level of agreement among key stakeholders that there are certain characteristics and skills that are foundational for employees across all industries and types of jobs to ensure that employees are ready to operate successfully in the work environment. In terms of characteristics, those commonly mentioned included: a positive attitude, willingness to learn, work ethic, integrity, resilience, initiative and critical thinking.

Common skills or abilities for work readiness mentioned were the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of situations, good customer service, creativity, understanding of basic workplace health and safety (WHS), ability to collect, analyse and communicate data and information, good organisation and project management skills, basic finance skills, basic technology skills, problem solving, cultural sensitivity, and working as part of a team. In this respect, work readiness does not equate to job readiness, as the latter relates to specific skills for that position. A work ready applicant may not have the full range of skills required for the specific job but would have a basic level of knowledge and a positive attitude to learning that provides a basis for job-ready training and skills development.

### 2.3. 'Multi-skills' requirement and adaptability

Employers and job requirements are changing to demand multi-skilled workers, meaning that today's and future school leavers will need to not only have foundation work readiness skills and a specific qualification, but most likely they will be required to have at least two other qualifications or skill bases to be readily employable. For example, they may need to have skills in (i) minor trades, (ii) mechanics and (iii) basic business to be of value to a food producer. In factory situations, workers are expected to be workplace health and safety (WHS) certified, have a white card and have evidence of science or technology knowledge. Please refer to Figure 2<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Bridgstock, R 2015. KEY-shaped people, not T-shaped people – disciplinary agility and 21st century work. [www.futurecapable.com/?p=102](http://www.futurecapable.com/?p=102)



**Figure 2. Shift from 'T-shaped people' to 'key-shaped people'**  
 Source (adapted): Bridgstock, R 2015. KEY-shaped people, not T-shaped people – disciplinary agility and 21st century work. [www.futurecapable.com/?p=102](http://www.futurecapable.com/?p=102)

### 2.4. Negative perception of Agri-business employment pathways

Stakeholders in this study agreed that there is a general lack of interest in agriculture-related employment across the Peel community and a perception that the agriculture industry does not provide viable employment or career paths. Agriculture is perceived by many in the general community to be a sector that relies upon low cost, manual labour and therefore offers little financial gain and limited career pathways. This has resulted in the majority of the local labour force in agriculture comprising of immigrants, new Australians, backpackers or being solely run by family owner-operators.

### 2.5. Lifelong learning, re-skilling and up-skilling

A trend of importance is that the workforce is increasingly characterised by a lack of 'skills stability', so in the future workers of all skill levels will need to be more regularly re-skilled and up-skilled<sup>7</sup>. This calls for the fostering of a 'culture of lifelong learning' to ensure ongoing employment mobility.

<sup>7</sup> World Economic Forum, 2016. The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



131,893  
 Peel region total resident population in 2015

31.4%  
 Peel region population growth in the decade 2005 to 2015

## 2.6. Current workforce development activities in Peel

The region has a wide range of primary, secondary and tertiary education opportunities available through schools, vocational education and training (VET) providers, a Murdoch University satellite campus, apprenticeships, traineeships and on-the-job training.

### 2.6.1. School-based learning

Stakeholders across all industries engaged throughout this study emphasised the important role that both primary and secondary school education have in setting young people up for their engagement in the workforce. Schools have a strong influence on young peoples' attitudes towards work in general, as well as towards particular industries such as agriculture or science. However, limited offerings of ATAR subjects available in some public high schools within the region can be a constraint on student's aspirations.

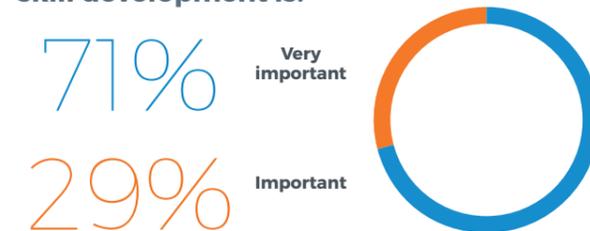
### 2.6.2. Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VET is offered in the Peel through a combination of schools, private registered training organisations and South Metropolitan TAFE. There are currently limited offerings focused on specific horticulture and agricultural skills development within the region. Concerns regarding the quality of training were reported by industry engaged in this study. The declining number of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements within the Peel was also highlighted, with a number of students having to travel to Rockingham, Fremantle or Thornlie for block release training.

### 2.6.3. Tertiary education

There is no local comprehensive university in the Peel with the Murdoch University's Mandurah Campus offering the successful nursing program, post graduate counselling, and enabling programs for local students who do have ATAR admission or Certificate IV entry. Local students of all ages must move or commute to the metropolitan area to study. In future a first year 'university college' has been suggested, which would allow linkages to Transform Peel, for example through Work Integrated Learning and Internships.

## A survey of businesses believed investment in skill development is:



### 2.6.4. Work-based skills development

While there are some challenges, employers and industry representatives engaged indicated they place a high level of importance on development of their workforce and are generally able to provide them with the required skill development. A survey of businesses found:

- 71% believed investment in skill development is very important and 29% important.
- External education or training options are available that suit the needs of their business (13% strongly agree, 73% agree)
- Businesses are able to support employees to access external education or training (40% strongly agree, 47% agree)
- Businesses provide employees with on the job training (40% strongly agree, 47% agree).
- Common challenges faced by businesses in developing the skills of their staff were the cost involved (86% of respondents); time constraints (79%); and willingness of staff to undertake training (36%).

### 2.6.5. Entrepreneurship

The future workforce in Australia is likely to be increasingly made up of self-employed owner-operators<sup>8</sup>. As such, Transform Peel employment is likely to be mainly generated from a collection of small to medium sized enterprises rather than several large enterprises, and many of these are likely to be new and start-up businesses.

Mentoring is particularly important to support entrepreneurialism. In Mandurah this is mainly delivered by Business Foundations with funding from the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC). Other entrepreneurial support and development programs are run through the City of Mandurah and Make Place.

<sup>8</sup> Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), 2015. Australia's future workforce?



## 3. FUTURE WORKFORCE IN TRANSFORM PEEL

The current status, trends and activities in employment and in workforce development outlined in the previous section, as well as the vision and objectives for Transform Peel give indications of what the future workforce will look like in Transform Peel. This is a complex picture, as at this early stage of the program the nature of the industries and businesses that will establish in Transform Peel remains uncertain. This will affect the types of jobs that will be generated, and the skills and qualifications they require.

To aid in analysis, four scenarios were proposed for how the focus and industry make-up of Transform Peel may eventuate:

- Mixed industry and food**, involving a passive uptake of tenancies with some inclusion of food production and processing as well as a range of other light industries;
- Food-based cluster**, a more specialised and high technology food production, processing and marketing hub;
- Technology-based cluster**, and
- Alternative specialist hub** (or 'game changer') scenario.

Each scenario would be expected to have different anchor tenants and accordingly a different profile of the skills and jobs required to make up the workforce. However, there are also some key foundational skills and characteristics that are required of all workers, and some jobs such as in construction and the Integrated Water Initiative that will be likely across any scenario. The scenario most aligned with the Business Case for Transform Peel and the Peel Regional Investment Blueprint is Option B: Food-based cluster. This option is aligned with the visions for the Business Park and Food Zone to comprise an innovative agri-food and agri-processing hub supported by transport and logistics and other ancillary businesses (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Industry scenarios for Transform Peel

<b>Foundational skills and characteristics</b> Some skills and characteristics are required for employment across all industries and jobs.			
<b>Construction/ Headworks</b> Required for all new industry establishment across the business park, food hub and integrated water initiatives. Includes both establishment of common use trunk infrastructure and construction of private infrastructure for individual businesses.			
A. Mixed industry and food	B. Food-based Cluster	C. Technology-based Cluster	D. Alternative specialist hub
<p><b>What</b> Business Park + Light industrial zone comprising mixed industries, including some increase from current in agriculture and horticulture sectors with a slow and passive uptake of technology.</p> <p><b>How</b> Passive uptake of available land and resources in the business park and food zone with minimal intervention.</p> <p><b>Who</b> Mainly small to medium enterprises in logistics, small scale food production, wholesaling, other mixed light industry.</p>	<p><b>What</b> Specialised, high value food production, processing and marketing hub encompassing the food zone and business park. Servicing mainly international but also high value local markets.</p> <p><b>How</b> Targeted intervention/ incentives through Transform Peel for high-tech, innovative food-based industries to establish in the food zone and business park, and to support the technology adoption.</p> <p><b>Who</b> Variety of food producers adopting emerging technologies, supported by food processing and wholesaling businesses in the business park.</p>	<p><b>What</b> High-tech food production and processing combined with other, naturally clustered technological industries.</p> <p><b>How</b> Targeted attraction of pioneering food technology developers and support for R&amp;D. Eventual transfer of technology emerging from food production and processing to other industries which can then be attracted to cluster in the area.</p> <p><b>Who</b> Variety of food production and processing businesses plus technology-based businesses that leverage of tech adopted in food zones (e.g. packaging, pharmaceuticals).</p>	<p><b>What</b> Alternative, 'game-changer' industry development led by a large-scale anchor industry that is high value, specialised, cutting edge (e.g. businesses adopting 'circular economy' approach – designing/ manufacturing products specifically to be re-purposed once used).</p> <p><b>How</b> Specific attraction of one anchor tenant in a specialised industry, enough so that support industries are encouraged to establish to leverage on the opportunities presented.</p> <p><b>Who</b> Large-scale anchor tenant with supporting small to medium businesses (e.g. suppliers, buyers, technicians etc).</p>

### 3.1. Priority Workforce and Skills Needs

Across the Transform Peel initiatives, the jobs created are likely to comprise a full range of skill levels and will depend largely on the businesses that establish themselves within the business park and the food zone.

This section outlines the priority workforce and skills needs that will be required for the food-based cluster identified in the scenarios as the most aligned with the objectives of the Transform Peel program and the skills and conditions that will be required regardless of the scenario that eventuates.

#### 3.1.1. Food-based cluster

The food-based cluster would require substantial skills development and shifts for the region's workforce as it is a considerable departure from the current industry profile. In food production, the key skills would include traditional agriculture skills (e.g. operating and maintaining machinery, manual labour, horticulture and animal husbandry, finance and project management). However, there would also be the requirement for some additional skills such as the requirement to use and maintain technology that changes rapidly. Data analysis and presentation skills would also be important. The focus of this scenario on adopting emerging technologies also means that research and design skills will be critical. There is potential for a higher proportion of highly skilled and professional jobs in this scenario.

This scenario would also include innovative food processing and value-adding that would require similar skills to the production side. It would also require skills in economics, manufacturing and food handling and processing skills. Across the production and processing elements, this scenario would be innovative in its use of cutting edge technologies in resource use efficiency as well as in waste minimising. This element may require some specific skills in supply and operation of renewable energy technologies, water use specialists, and agricultural extension workers. Where mutually beneficial industries establish collectively and share some resources (e.g. infrastructure or energy, waste products directed to other production industries), specialist skills in partnerships and communication would also be required.

Marketing and promotion skills will be very important to the success of the food-based cluster. Profitability, and thus employment generated through food production businesses, depends highly on their access to high value markets. In order to access niche, high value and international markets in addition to local markets, this will require a sound understanding and marketing of the competitive advantage of the region and individual producers. Some examples of comparative advantage for Australian produce include high quality and food safety, and good labour standards. In line with this, quality monitoring and control is also an important skill area which is currently in demand and underrepresented in the existing agricultural workforce in WA. This requires development of specific knowledge and skills in quality management and bio-security, particularly to tap into niche international markets.

Over and above the standard utility headworks to the Peel Business Park, it is envisioned that there will be three key areas of demand for common use infrastructure (and some additional on-site utility services): i) food manufacturing/processing, ii) food production and iii) industrial ecology/technology (eco industrial precinct). Common use infrastructure identified to date against these areas are:

- **Food manufacturing/processing:** laboratory facilities, industry teaching/training rooms, workers accommodation, school based training facilities, labour mobilisation
- **Food production:** horticulture – new technology (glasshouse) training facility, new technology trial project, cold storage facilities, bio-security facilities, school based training facilities, labour mobilisation
- **Food production:** animals – veterinary facilities, abattoir facilities, bio-security facilities, school based training facilities, labour mobilisation
- **Eco industrial precinct:** waste to energy capabilities, solar, energy storage, grid connection, local water supply, local waste water treatment facility

### 3.1.2. Foundational Skills

Foundation skills are those that are considered essential for successful workforce participation. They cover the English language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) – listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy and use of mathematical ideas. These are supported by the skills and knowledge expected to be learned through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education throughout formal schooling. Alongside these foundation skills are employability skills, such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life<sup>9</sup>. These skills are often transferable from one job to another and can also include ability to work independently, as part of a team, be a leader, organise, manage time, listen, present and use diplomacy etc. Additional skills viewed to be important by stakeholders were customer service, effective communication, data analysis and visualisation, and understanding of basic workplace health and safety (WHS). These foundational skills are complemented by foundational characteristics of individuals including a positive attitude, willingness to learn, work ethic, integrity, resilience, initiative and critical thinking.

There are also some professional skills and occupations such as business management, finance and accounting, project management, legal support for business that would also be required across all scenarios.

### 3.1.3. Construction

#### Headworks & Construction

Construction of the trunk infrastructure and general construction for the business park and food zone will require specific skills such as engineering and design, project management and logistics, trades, manual labour, materials supply and installation etc that is standard with infrastructure projects. According to stakeholders these are the jobs and skills that are most readily available in the existing workforce. Therefore, it will be important to capitalise on the existing workforce as well as use the opportunity presented by the headwork's construction to engage new workforce entrants, and those who require up-skilling or re-skilling from the local workforce.

Depending on the scale and type of businesses there may also be opportunities for local manufacturing industries.

#### Peel Integrated Water Initiative (PIWI)

This initiative is currently in an early stage of scenario modelling that will determine the approach to be taken. As such, there is some uncertainty around the volume and type of jobs that may be generated associated with PIWI, and the jobs associated with both construction and ongoing implementation of PIWI will depend on the approach taken and technologies adopted to implement the initiative. However, there are likely to be some construction and manufacturing jobs associated with any infrastructure that needs to be constructed for PIWI that will require a skills mix consistent with that described above. Other jobs specific to PIWI may include soil scientists and water scientists (both field and laboratory based), hydrologists, natural resource management and land management professionals, environmental scientists, agriculture extension and education specialists, sales and marketing consultants specialising in sales of agriculture water supplies, and trades such as drilling, plumbing and general maintenance of infrastructure.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The importance of including workforce development in Transform Peel was confirmed by stakeholders and by wider evidence of changing workforce requirements for the industries that are most likely to engage with Transform Peel. However, stakeholders also highlighted that there is a need for increased intensity and focussed action to strengthen workforce development, without which the current regional workforce is not ready to capitalise on the opportunities that Transform Peel will present.

Being a long-term program, Transform Peel could take shape into several different scenarios. The anchor tenants and supporting businesses that establish associated with each scenario will determine the workforce and skills that are required. Therefore, it is not possible at this early stage to specify the exact and certain workforce and skill development needs or how they should or could be addressed.

Nevertheless, there were some clear, general characteristics of the workforce that are relevant regardless of the industry profile for different scenarios. The Transform Peel workforce is likely to comprise the full range of skill levels across a number of different industries, and generally need a broader base of skills than today's workforce for more multi-skilled jobs.

There are also a number of key points in workforce development programming where there are opportunities to plan and action workforce development activities for Transform Peel. These are summarised in Figure 4 with their placement reflecting the aspects of employment and workforce development pathways that they will aim to address or influence.

### 4.1. Promotion and marketing

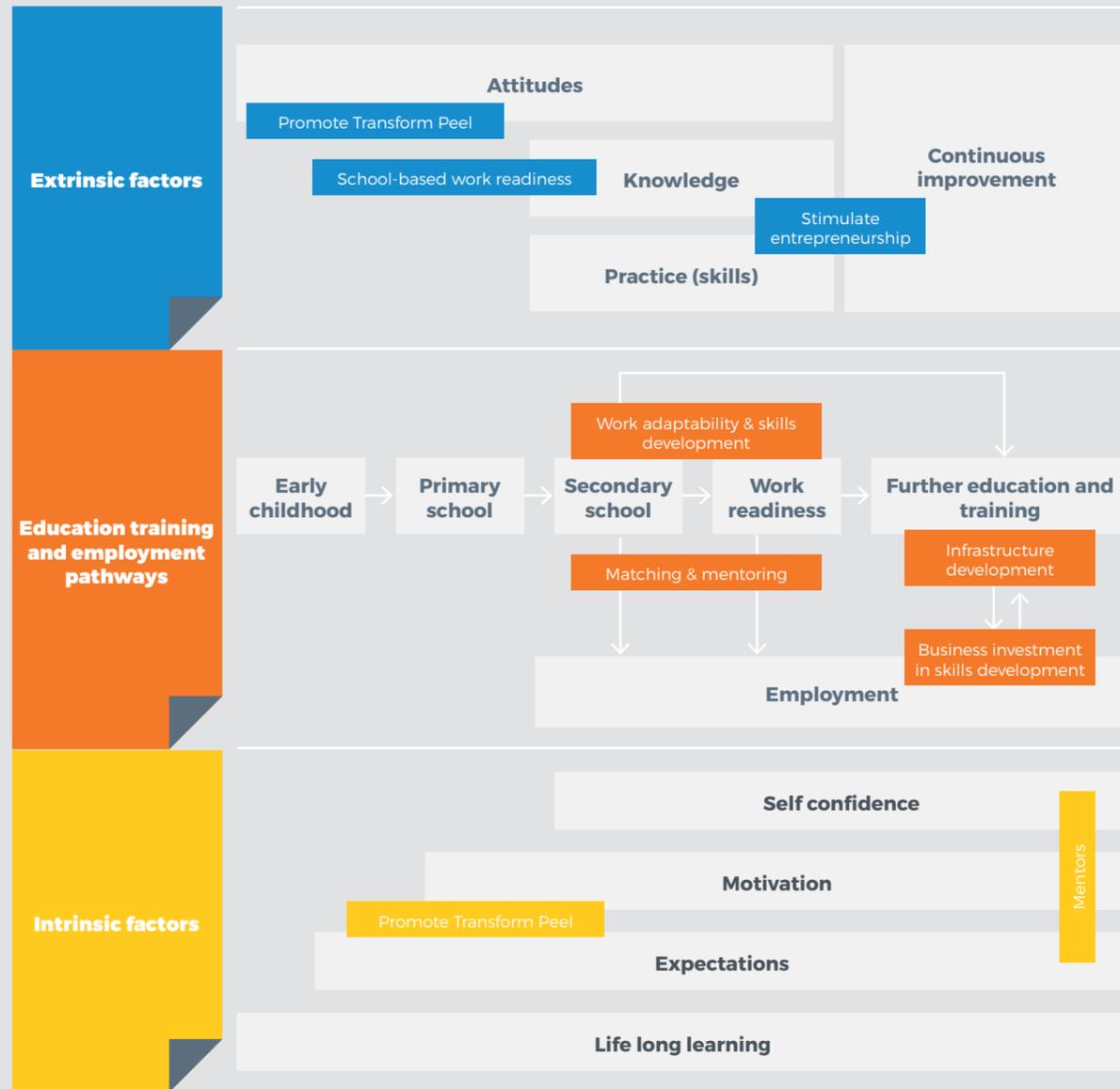
The success of Transform Peel in employment generation and workforce development will depend on a high level of buy-in and commitment among stakeholders and the community. Thus, a combined sector long term promotion and marketing campaign is required promoting positive food production opportunities for the workforce, particularly targeting the existing workforce through current work search avenues. The promotion of agriculture as a kick start to a more versatile diverse career is required with a focus on the general shortage in agriculture workers nationally and globally and that once basic skills have been established, there is a wide range of opportunities in the agriculture sector and associated industries.



In addition, parents, teachers, students and the broader community require targeted approaches. Agriculture and horticulture needs to be embedded into the school curriculum with early positive promotion of agriculture, food production and water required in primary schools, middle school and high schools. In upper school, VET coordinators and careers advisors need to be informed on the range of jobs and career opportunities there are in these industries in order to provide relevant advice and pathways to students. The number of career pathways offered through agriculture is diverse including jobs for university graduates such as biochemistry, agriculture engineering, in field agronomy, industrial relations and policy advice.

Appropriate branding for Transform Peel will be critical, it will need to portray elements such as selling locally, fresh food, locally produced, creating jobs, and particularly creating a new generation of jobs. Strong community ownership will need to be fostered to get the community on board to lead and own the initiative in partnership with the government. Local businesses need to be encouraged to embrace the culture of mentoring and employing the local unemployed as a means to widen the pool of skilled staff for their own businesses. Promotion and facilitation of a stronger relationship between regional employers and training organisations will help to increase the skills base, decrease unemployment and assist in alleviating the associated challenges those situations bring.

<sup>9</sup> The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), 2012. Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTese), National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults.



**Figure 4. Model of employment pathways and recommendations**  
Source: WSNA 2017.

#### 4.2. Investment in STEAM provides workforce foundations; STEAMI is even better

Overall, the capacity of the current workforce to meet the skills needs of Transform Peel is likely to be limited by a lack of sufficient and appropriate skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); particularly around understanding, interpreting and communicating data. The STEM to STEAM movement (which also includes Arts) has been growing over the past several years and is surging forward as a positive mode of action to meet the needs of a 21st century economy. The emerging economy requires more than STEM, it requires application, creation and ingenuity. STEAM is a way to take the benefits of STEM and complete the package by integrating these principles in and through the Arts, allowing students to connect their learning in these critical areas.

Regional industries are already identifying the need for employees to be ICT aware and competent, and particularly able to quickly master new technologies or versions of programs. The likely profile of industries that will be attracted to Transform Peel will see a rise in the demand for ICT knowledge and skills. So there is potential for STEAM to become STEAMI to incorporate the importance of ICT as a critical requirement for tomorrow's job seekers.

#### 4.3. Current Peel workforce is not yet ready for Transform Peel

Stakeholders engaged in this study affirmed the need for Transform Peel as a viable opportunity to bring employment to the Peel region. The demand for food-based products, particularly high quality, processed and innovatively packaged foods is confirmed by both global trends and both national and export demands. However, this study has clearly found that there are workforce gaps and weaknesses, particularly in work-ready skills for school leavers as well as technology-responsive skills for the existing and prospective workforce. A positive attitude towards work also is an important area for continuous improvement and multi-skilling of the workforce according to industry's continuously changing needs.



#### 4.4. Alignment of training, education offerings to industry and business needs

Training, education and workforce development activities are not always well aligned with industry and business needs. This is particularly the case for small businesses in the region who find it more difficult to influence offerings. It is also recognised that publicly supported offerings may be constrained by higher level policy or regulatory agendas that are broader than the specific needs of local companies.

Additionally, training and education bodies need to seek out, develop and nurture private sector partnerships and good relationships to ensure an ongoing and willing amount of placement and partnership to develop a suitably equipped workforce.

#### 4.5. Job Matching Services

Matching of employee job requirements and job seeker skills has been identified as a major gap in the Peel region. Local businesses explain that they are willing to employ regional staff but cannot find or attract the staff that they require. Job matching services need to improve to ensure that the employer is provided with a suitably qualified staff member, trainee or apprentice. Employment service agencies do attempt to make connections with local businesses but are often limited by funding and trying to find placements for their long term unemployed, who may not meet the employers' requirements.

There are also opportunities for utilising third party organisations to source the right people for traineeship roles, ensure work readiness through up-front training and retention of trainees through improved support mechanisms.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSFORM PEEL WORKFORCE PLANNING

This study identified and acknowledges that there are already many initiatives related to workforce development within the Peel that are working well and these will need to be expanded and strengthened to meet the workforce needs of the future. The recommendations are designed to intensify and focus activities in relation to the specific needs of Transform Peel.

For each recommendation there are some immediate and longer term actions that can be progressed. The recommendations will require proactive engagement and partnership with regional stakeholders including industry, government and community.

The recommendations and actions will be maintained, monitored and built on through the Peel Workforce Development Alliance with the Peel Development Commission continuing to take a lead role in facilitating the development of a skilled workforce capable of taking up the opportunities presented by the Transform Peel program as a key initiative of the Peel Regional Investment Blueprint.

### Recommendation 1

#### Promote Transform Peel

A concerted effort is required to overcome negative perception of agriculture-based industries. Awareness of the Transform Peel project is low which presents an opportunity to prepare branding of Transform Peel in a way that has a clear connection to the vision for the project.

#### Recommended actions:

- Increase awareness of the Transform Peel brand and initiative, through broader community wide marketing and promotion.
- Attend activities and events of regular agricultural industry groups to introduce and provide updates on the Transform Peel initiative.
- Promote a variety of job futures at local festivals and events, particularly focussing on Transform Peel industries.
- Transform Peel needs high level champions to passionately lead the initiative. There is a need to

coordinate linkages between industry and local Members of Parliament to gain commitment for Transform Peel and the workforce development actions required for successful achievement of employment outcomes.

- Advocacy and lobbying where required e.g. to influence training funding models that enable skill sets/micro-credentialing.
- Continue early conversations with relevant agencies regarding food and agriculture export chains and investment opportunity to build links for export-related opportunity identification and development.
- Continue to engage with Landcorp and relevant agencies to develop a clear local employment strategy for the headworks construction phase of the Peel Business Park.

### Recommendation 2

#### Encourage work adaptation and skills development towards Transform Peel emerging opportunities

The workforce now and into the future will need to be multi-skilled and continuously up-skilling and re-skilling; to be "key shaped not T-shaped people" (see Figure 2). More information will be required to promote multi, transferable skills. There is also a general across the board requirement for higher skill levels and the need for better understanding of STEAM and ICT.

#### Recommended actions:

- Promote the need for students to be multi skilled and adaptable to employers' changing requirements through promoting the T-shaped people model as a standard requirement to meet future employer demands.
- STEAM is an integrated approach to learning which will require an intentional connection between standards, assessments and lesson design/ implementation. Continue to work with DTWD, local schools and the Department of Education to emphasise the importance of STEAM and ICT for the future workforce.

### Recommendation 3

#### Transform school based work readiness and skills development for Transform Peel

For Transform Peel industries, a workforce is required that has positive attitudes and resilient foundation skills such as a willingness to learn, work ethic, integrity, resilience, initiative and critical thinking. Core competencies need to be significantly strengthened within the workforce in basic skills such as good customer service, creativity, understanding of basic WHS, ability to collect, analyse and communicate data and information, good organisation and project management skills, basic finance skills, basic technology skills, problem solving, cultural sensitivity, and working as part of a team.

Taking a proactive approach to influencing the education and training on offer will be important to ensuring enrolments and course completions relevant to industry needs. Good practice principles are available for school-based training pathways and already include the provision of comprehensive information to students and parents, effective collaborative partnerships between schools, VET providers and industry<sup>10</sup>. Yet, specific information is likely to be required to engage with parents to support the choice of a student to work towards an agri-foods career.

#### Recommended actions:

- Regularly attend education, training and employment networks and events to raise awareness of future jobs and technology relevant to the Transform Peel program.
- Connect with the Peel Workforce Development Centre to ensure they are aware of careers and new technologies in agriculture likely to present future workforce opportunities for Peel residents.
- Encourage Peel region high schools to engage with existing initiatives that promote careers in agriculture such as Muresk Institute's activities for high schools.
- Engage with primary schools and encourage them to incorporate food and agriculture education into their curriculum from early years of primary school.
- Design a school-based promotion package for Transform Peel (tailored for primary school and high school) that can leverage from engagement with education packages around food and agriculture.

- Facilitate discussions between the Department of Education, Agriculture Curriculum division and Peel schools to encourage offerings of agricultural curriculum in the Peel.
- Local innovators in farming supported to enable opportunity for visits/tours by students to automated greenhouse businesses and other intensive farming businesses to showcase technology.
- In the long term, advocate for a first year 'university college' to be created, and if this eventuates facilitate opportunities for work integrated learning and internships for students with Transform Peel businesses.

### Recommendation 4

#### Motivate business investment in local skills development

Industry and businesses are committed to developing skills and taking on employees that need development, however need some support and incentives to engage. It is important for the Peel community to capitalise on the training and employment opportunities that Transform Peel will provide by using the project activation and implementation as workforce development opportunities in themselves.

#### Recommended actions:

- Encourage local businesses to take on employees to assist in local unemployment issues through the development of a hire local policy and movement.
- Encourage successful contractors for head works to make provision within the proposals/ tenders to employ a fixed number of job entry level traineeships and apprenticeships across several fields in the business park at the headworks stage (i.e. electrical, plumbing, civil works etc).
- Undertake a regular survey of businesses in the Peel region to assess their workforce requirements and compare data over time to adjust workforce development strategies and determine their outcomes.

<sup>10</sup> Group Training Australia, 2014. Good Practices Principles: Work Exposure and Work Placement Programs in Schools Involving Group Training Organisations.

## Recommendation 5

### Stimulate Peel entrepreneurship

Given the current profile of the Peel region, any local start-ups to support Transform Peel are likely to be small to medium enterprises. The current level of business skills in the region is low. Working with the Chamber of Commerce, City of Mandurah and other business support organisations would promote the business opportunities available within Transform Peel and encourage local tendering and supply where possible. Provision of start-up incubation and support as part of a proposed research facility in the Peel could be complemented in the interim by virtual incubator support, similar to the current space at Make Place. This virtual facility could provide conducive surroundings, market connections and other support for new businesses to be successful in building a "critical mass of new businesses"<sup>11</sup>.

#### Recommended actions:

- Investigate local interest in development of a database or network of business mentors/consultants that are willing to give their time to help businesses address road blocks and participate in informal round tables for problems solving in local businesses.
- Liaise with Department of Premier & Cabinet's Office of Science to explore opportunities for collaboration in the 'Science and Agribusiness Connect' initiative such as research exchanges.

## Recommendation 6

### Matching and mentoring for real work requirements

The barrier consistently raised across all stakeholders is the level of fragmentation in the education, training and employment support sectors and how this is exacerbated in the agri-food industry due to the negative perception and lack of knowledge about developments in the sectors. Similarly, businesses lack the time and resources to search for the ideal staff and invest in their skills development. Consequently, there was clear demand for a simple and timely matching and skill development service that could communicate employer requirements and provide better information on the skills of the prospective workforce. This is a critical recommendation because without the connections between employers and prospective employees, work towards the other recommendations may not achieve their full potential. However, it is important to note that this fragmentation is a systemic issue relating to Federal and State level systems. As

such, while local solutions are important they will also need to be paired with advocacy to influence change at State and Federal levels to ensure local solutions can be successful and sustained over time.

#### Recommended actions:

- Consider and plan for a broker service between tenants, training/education sector and job-seekers: MOUs and ongoing engagement with anchor tenants to support them to employ locally and build workforce capability.
- Consider mechanisms to fund a development officer and workforce development centre in the Peel Business Park during the business initiation phase to partner with businesses to employ suitable local people and continue to build local workforce capability.
- Investigate ways to improve job matching services, particularly for those exiting education, training or further education.
- Work collaboratively on solutions to engage Aboriginal people in the opportunities presented by Transform Peel.

## Recommendation 7

### Infrastructure requirements

Immediate workforce skill development needs identified do not require additional infrastructure for implementation however it is recognised that Peel schools and training providers may require investment in STEAM resources as recommendations 2 and 3 are explored. There is an opportunity for optimisation of existing facilities through a model of shared use and cooperation between industry and training providers.

As the Peel Business Park progresses consideration should be given to the development of common use infrastructure through an on-site multi-functional centre that could be utilised by both industry and education or training providers. A fee for service facility is suggested incorporating teleconference, training rooms, laboratories, meeting rooms and a promotional centre for Transform Peel. Additionally, an opportunity exists for a joint venture between industry, TAFE and government to develop a glasshouse training and pilot production facility to support and promote the emerging glasshouse industry.

#### Recommended actions:

- Work to meet common use training needs as they arise, for example work with industry, TAFE and government to develop a training centre for the emerging glasshouse industry in WA.

<sup>11</sup> Office of the Chief Economist, 2015. Australian Innovation System Report. Australian Government. Department of Industry and Innovation.





[www.transformpeel.com](http://www.transformpeel.com)

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