

REGIONAL WORKFORCE ADAPTIVE CAPACITY PLAN

STRENGTHENING LITHGOW'S WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

The *Regional Workforce Adaptive Capacity Plan* sets out a framework to help Lithgow's workforce respond to change, build resilience, and prepare for future opportunities. It focuses on the skills, systems and supports needed to navigate the transition away from coal and toward a more diverse, resilient economy.

Building adaptive capacity means preparing for both expected and unexpected change – and ensuring the workforce has the flexibility, skills and support to respond. Strong relationships between employers, educators and community organisations are key to building resilience and unlocking new opportunities.

Strategic priorities

- Increase workforce participation and reduce unemployment
- Build skills in innovation, flexibility and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths)
- Strengthen collaboration between employers, educators and training providers
- Improve access to career pathways for young people, older workers and underrepresented groups
- Monitor progress through community-informed metrics

Key actions

- Establish a Lithgow Workforce Forum to coordinate efforts across sectors
- Develop and promote local career pathways, including apprenticeships and traineeships
- Expand mentoring and peer support programs, especially for First Nations people and career changers
- Support long-pathway retraining through flexible course delivery and employer partnerships
- Create targeted scholarships and incentives to encourage study in priority areas

Why it matters

Adaptive capacity is about creating the conditions for people to thrive in a changing economy. By investing in workforce development now, Lithgow can reduce vulnerability, retain talent, and build a labour market that supports long-term prosperity. This approach directly supports LEEP's Adaptive Skills Hub, Rapid Response Plan, and workforce resilience goals.



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PLANNING FOR LABOUR MARKET CHANGE AND ENERGY TRANSITION IN LITHGOW

REPORT

The *Planning for Labour Market Change and Energy Transition in Lithgow* report provides a strategic framework to guide the region through its energy transition, anticipating significant workforce impacts from the decline of coal and coal-fired power generation as Australia transitions towards net zero goals.

It outlines opportunities for industry diversification, workforce reskilling, and community resilience, with a focus on building Lithgow's adaptive capacity – its ability to respond to change by leveraging its financial, human, institutional and natural resources.

Commissioned by Lithgow City Council and prepared by the University of South Australia, the report was led by Professor Andrew Beer – one of Australia's foremost experts in regional labour market transitions. It contains five essential reports which each address a critical component of Lithgow's workforce transition, ensuring that planning is both strategic and responsive to local needs:

01 Regional Manufacturing Industry Skills and Training Audit

Identifies current and emerging skills gaps in manufacturing, helping align training programs with industry needs and investment opportunities.

02 Regional Workforce Adaptive Capacity Plan

Assesses the region's ability to respond to economic change, focusing on resilience, transferable skills, and systems that support workforce agility.

03 Long-Term Regional Workforce Plan

Provides a strategic roadmap for workforce development over the next 10–20 years, ensuring alignment with future industries and demographic shifts.

04 Long-Term Education and Training Pathways Plan

Maps out clear, accessible pathways from school to employment, helping young people and career changers navigate evolving job markets.

05 Rapid Response Plan

Ensures the region is prepared to act quickly in the event of sudden closures or job losses, minimising disruption and supporting affected workers.



The report recommends a place-based, community-led approach as key to successfully navigating major economic transformation.

