# MOUNT ISA REGIONAL JOBS COMMITTEE

## Local Workforce Community Forum Outcomes



**13th August 2024**

Prepared By

**Mount Isa Regional Jobs Committee**

The Mount Isa Regional Jobs Committee is proudly supported and funded by the Queensland Government.



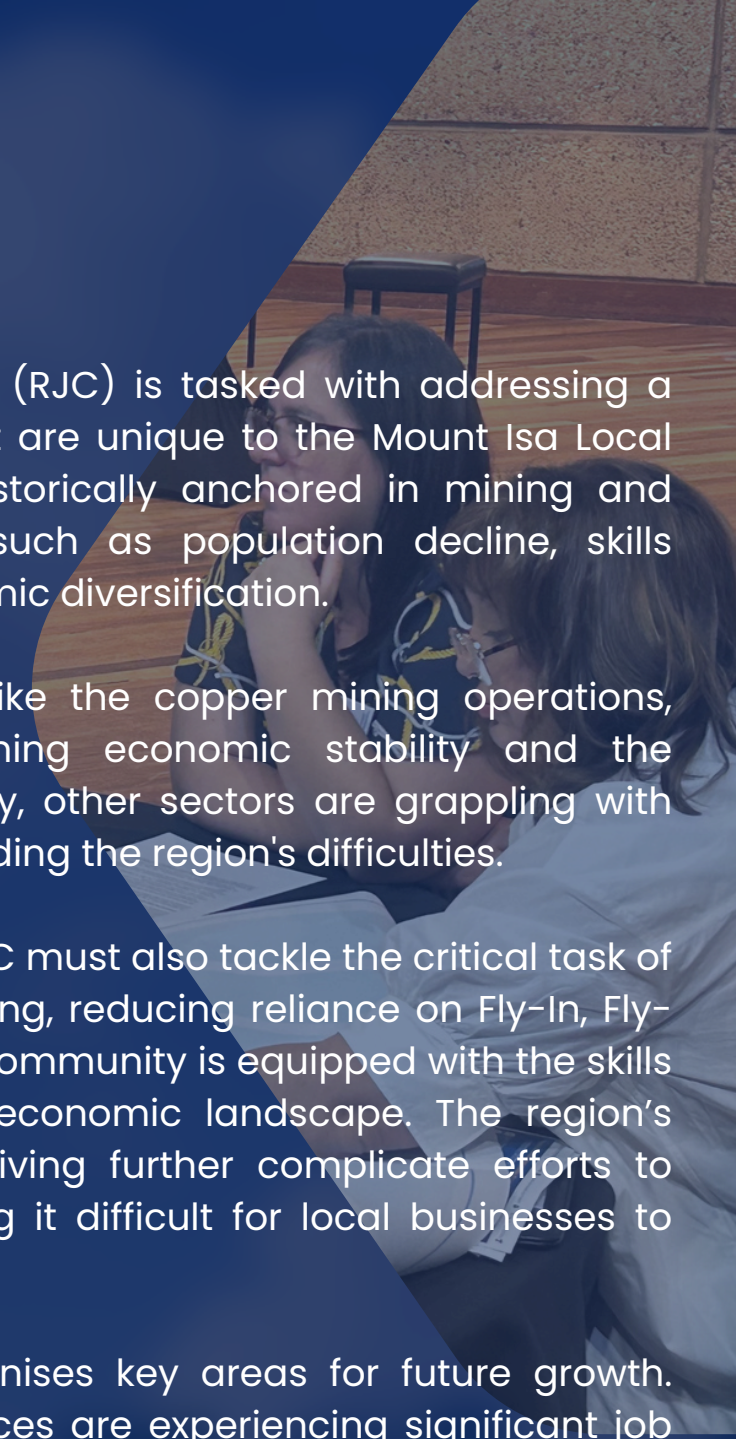
# INTRODUCTION

The Mount Isa Regional Jobs Committee (RJC) Local Workforce Community Forum, held on Tuesday, 13th August 2024, was a pivotal event in our mission to tackle the distinct workforce challenges and opportunities within the Mount Isa Local Government Area (LGA). This forum united a wide array of stakeholders, including representatives from local, state, and federal governments, community organisations, education providers, industry leaders and workforce and employment service providers, all committed to shaping the future of our region.

The forum's main goal was to create a collaborative space where participants could exchange ideas, address key challenges, and pinpoint actionable strategies for boosting economic empowerment and workforce development in Mount Isa LGA. Through focused sessions and activities, attendees engaged in productive discussions, offering valuable insights that will inform and drive the future of our region's workforce initiatives.

This report encapsulates the outcomes of the forum, providing a detailed overview of the discussions, priorities, and strategies that emerged. It captures the collective wisdom of all participants and lays the groundwork for the development of Mount Isa RJC's Annual Action Plan (AAP). The perspectives and ideas shared during the forum will be central to our efforts in crafting sustainable, locally-driven solutions tailored to the needs of our community, ensuring a prosperous future for everyone in Mount Isa LGA.

# THE PROBLEM



The Mount Isa Regional Jobs Committee (RJC) is tasked with addressing a complex set of workforce challenges that are unique to the Mount Isa Local Government Area (LGA). This region, historically anchored in mining and resources, faces significant obstacles such as population decline, skills shortages, and the urgent need for economic diversification.

The looming closure of key industries, like the copper mining operations, exacerbates these challenges, threatening economic stability and the livelihoods of many residents. Additionally, other sectors are grappling with significant workforce shortages, compounding the region's difficulties.

Beyond these immediate concerns, the RJC must also tackle the critical task of improving access to education and training, reducing reliance on Fly-In, Fly-Out (FIFO) workers and ensuring that the community is equipped with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving economic landscape. The region's geographic isolation and high cost of living further complicate efforts to attract and retain skilled workers, making it difficult for local businesses to compete and grow.

Amidst these challenges, the RJC recognises key areas for future growth. Notably, Accommodation and Food Services are experiencing significant job growth, with an 8.20% increase, creating 74 new jobs and reflecting rising demand in hospitality. Mining remains robust, with a 7.80% growth rate and 638 new jobs, driven by increased activities and investments. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Construction also show promising growth, each contributing to the region's economic resilience and offering diverse employment opportunities.

The RJC's mission is to address these challenges by fostering community-driven, place-based solutions that build a more resilient and sustainable workforce. By uniting stakeholders across sectors, the RJC aims to develop and implement strategies that not only stabilise the local economy but also create new opportunities for growth and prosperity in Mount Isa and Camooweal.

# Hopes and Aspirations for Economic Empowerment




Participants envisioned a thriving, economically empowered community in Mount Isa & Camooweal and discussed how to increase the capacity of individuals and communities to improve their economic well-being.

## Financial Literacy

Emphasised the need for comprehensive financial education to empower residents to make informed decisions.

- Financial Education for Resilience
- Support for Small Businesses
- Youth Financial Literacy
- Effective Budgeting and Cost-Saving
- Targeted Funding

## Skills Development

Focused on developing skills relevant to local industries to build a self-sustaining workforce.

- Training for Local Industries
- Building Local Capacity
- Promoting Lifelong Learning
- Access to Higher Education and Certification
- Community Engagement and Job Creation

## Access to Resources

Highlighted the importance of equal access to financial services and resources for all residents.

- Improving Access to Finance
- Support for Students and Newcomers
- Opportunities for Entrepreneurs
- Retention and Housing Solutions
- Community-Driven Program Design

## Entrepreneurship

Discussed the need for robust support systems to foster a thriving entrepreneurial culture in the region.

- Understanding the Market
- Information Sharing and Capacity Building
- Connectivity and Networking
- Support for Social Enterprises.
- Technological Skills and Support Systems

# Hopes and Aspirations for Economic Empowerment cont’




Participants envisioned a thriving, economically empowered community in Mount Isa & Camooweal and discussed how to increase the capacity of individuals and communities to improve their economic well-being.

## Economic Policies

Identified key economic policies that would support sustainable growth and prosperity.

- Addressing Population Decline
- Removing Barriers to Training and Employment
- Providing Education and Funding to Small Businesses
- Integrating New Workforce Teams

## Community Development

Explored strategies for fostering a sense of community that supports economic empowerment and growth.

- Training Community-Integrated Projects
- Assessing and Connecting Incoming Skills
- Childcare and Work-Life Balance

## Summary

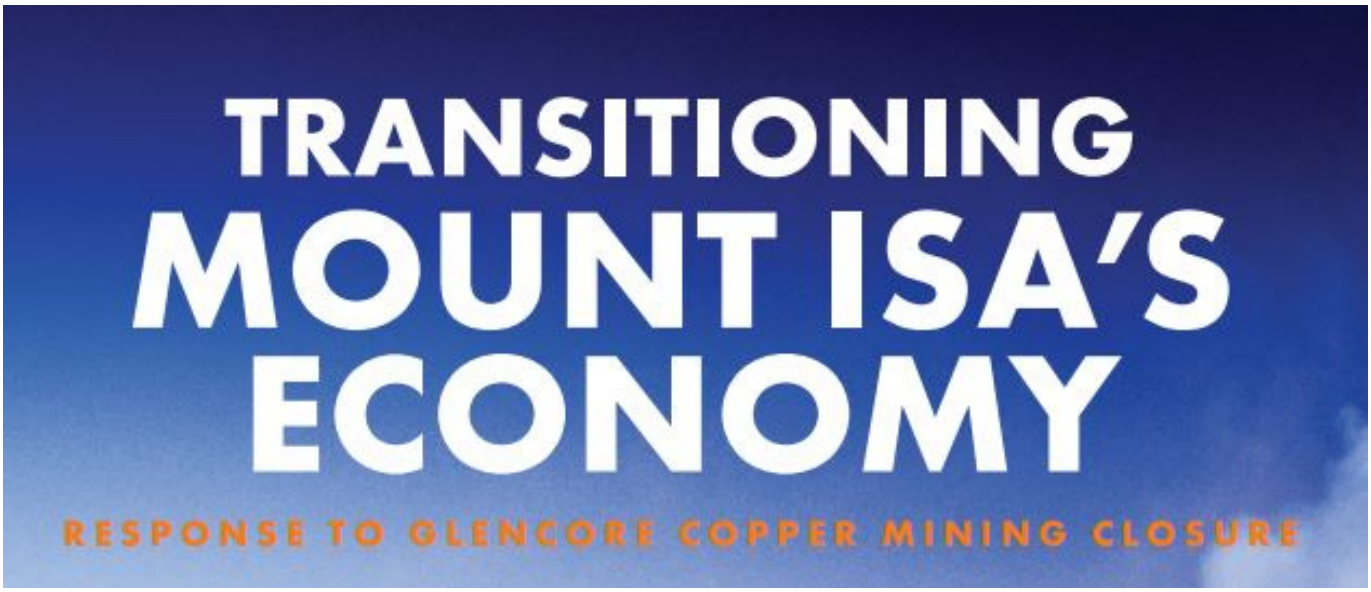
Implementing targeted strategies in Mount Isa & Camooweal will enhance financial literacy, access to resources, skills development, entrepreneurship, economic policies, and community integration, leading to a more resilient, prosperous, and inclusive community.

## Impacts

Focusing on financial literacy, resources, and skills development in Mount Isa & Camooweal will empower residents and strengthen the local economy, addressing population decline and employment barriers for a resilient community

# LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY

## COUNCIL




Transformation of the Mount Isa Economy: Discussed the ongoing transformation of the local economy, centered around six key pillars: **Tourism, Energy, Resources, Critical Infrastructure, Agriculture, Small & Medium Businesses**

These pillars are seen as essential for diversifying and strengthening the Mount Isa economy, ensuring long-term sustainability and prosperity for the region.

### KEY PRIORITIES

- Showcase Mount Isa's vibrancy through innovation and beautification
- Organize welcome events for new residents, highlighting community services
- Address the urgent need for accessible childcare to support working families

**Accountability**

Strengthen efforts in positioning, advocating, and effectively representing the city to drive impactful change and community growth

**Understanding**

Deepen analysis and strategic action on local growth opportunities to accelerate economic development and community prosperity

# STATE RESPONSIBILITY

## WORKFORCE

### Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), Funding Opportunities and Upcoming Events

DESBT delivers programs to get people back to work and support business to employ and assist jobseekers, as well as connecting people to quality training and skills to prepare them for work now and in the future.

For Current open funding opportunities refer to https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/funded

For news and events refer to https://desbt.qld.gov.au/about-us/news-and-events




## Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032

A strong and diverse workforce ready to seize today's jobs and adapt to future opportunities



# STATE RESPONSIBILITY

## DEVELOPMENT

### NORTH WEST QLD ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY

The North West Queensland Economic Diversification Strategy identifies opportunities across the resources, agriculture, tourism, business and industry sectors to support long-term sustainable growth in North West Queensland.

- enhanced investment environment
- strong supply chains
- sustainable communities

**$30M**
Mount Isa Mining Acceleration Program =
**$20.7M**
Eva Copper Mine Project
**$5.77M**
North West Phosphate
**$2.33M**
Vecco Critical Minerals Project

### MOUNT ISA FUTURE RESPONSE

$50M QLD Government investment. $20M Mount Isa Transition Fund for job creation, economic growth, and community resilience



### REGIONAL ECONOMIC FUTURES FUND

The fund supports the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan with $200 million, including $22.05 million for 19 Queensland Government and council-led projects under the North West Queensland Regional Transformation Strategy, launched on July 26, 2024. Private and community sector projects yet to be announced.

# FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

## WORKPLACE RELATIONS




### LOCAL JOBS PLAN PRIORITIES

- Maximizing employment initiatives to address skills gaps
- Creating pathways into major and growth industries
- Generating opportunities for Indigenous skills development
- Identifying pathways for young people and mature-age individuals to access labor market opportunities
- Brokering mature-age employment through collaboration

### 24-25 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Employment initiatives for fair wages, skills development, and First Nations reentry

### REDESIGNED S E E PROGRAM

Expanded literacy support for Australians over 15, including regional and remote areas

### NEW ENERGY APPRENTICESHIPS

Improved support for apprentices, with focus on women, First Nations, clean energy

### 2024 EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE EXPO

Join us tomorrow at the Civic Centre, hosted by Workforce Australia in partnership with the Department of Treaty and supported by Mount Isa City Council. Over 50 industry exhibitors will be present to help you explore career paths, connect with potential employers, and access support services from 11am (students) and 1pm (public)

# GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

## SERVICE MAPPING

The Service Mapping Activity highlighted several key gaps in Mount Isa's education, training, and employment services. By addressing these gaps and implementing the identified opportunities, the community can move closer to a future where all residents have access to the education, training, and employment services they need to succeed. These initiatives will ensure that Mount Isa's workforce is well-equipped, supported, and capable of meeting the region's economic challenges and opportunities.




### Education

Need for increased funding and community-based education programs

- **Funding and Financial Support**
- **Community-Based and Tailored Education**
- **Specialised Mentorship**

### Training

Importance of co-designed programs and flexible training options.

- **Co-Designing Programs**
- **Multi-Skills Centre**
- **Flexibility and Access**
- **Local Skill Utilisation**

### Employment

Support for apprenticeships and local mentor roles to guide workforce development.

- **Support for Apprenticeships and Traineeships**
- **Training the Trainer**
- **Service Provider Forum**

# IMPORTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES



Identify and prioritise key needs and opportunities to improve quality of life, economic growth, education, training, and employment for individuals and families in Mount Isa.

Participants were encouraged to envision a future where these priorities drive the region's development and prosperity

## 01. Housing and Cost of Living

Addressing housing challenges in Mount Isa is essential to ensure that all residents have access to affordable and adequate housing options. Additionally, efforts must be made to reduce the high cost of living associated with being a mining town, including lowering travel and flight costs, to improve the overall quality of life for the community.

## 02. Health, Wellbeing, and Childcare

Improving access to healthcare services, expanding Medicare bulk-billed services, and enhancing health services in Camooweal, particularly in areas like aged care and mental health, are vital for the wellbeing of residents. Additionally, assessing and addressing childcare needs based on demand rather than financial status is crucial to support working families in the region.

## 03. Community Engagement and Cultural Connections

Strengthening cultural ties and fostering community engagement through local initiatives is key to building a cohesive community. This includes focusing on elder care, enhancing data & digital literacy and providing mentoring programs for youth. Promoting civic pride, encouraging local involvement, and improving the communication of available resources and family-friendly activities are also critical to fostering a connected and engaged community.

## 04. Education, Training, and Transport

Expanding alternative education pathways and increasing training opportunities, particularly in Camooweal, are essential steps to support local employment and workforce development. Additionally, improving transportation options within Mount Isa and to/from the region will ensure affordable access to education and employment opportunities for all residents.




# Shaping Mount Isa's Regional Job Plan

Participants were encouraged to envision Mount Isa LGA as a thriving hub for workforce development and economic growth, discussing strategies and initiatives to achieve this vision.

## Expansion of Childcare and Flexible Work Model and Work-Life Balance

Increase childcare services and promote job sharing, flexible hours, and family-friendly policies to support working parents and improve work-life balance.

## Transparency and Information Sharing

Develop a centralized information hub and hold regular government briefings to ensure transparency and accessibility of regional activities and resources.

## Incentives and Livability

Implement tax incentives and liveability improvements to attract and retain residents, with a focus on safety and community engagement.

## Integrated and Aligned Systems

Create a coordinated system with clear accountability to achieve sustainable outcomes through collaboration across all levels of government.

## Community and Economic Development

Ensure continuous funding for successful programs and develop tailored funding criteria to meet local needs, while enhancing grassroots engagement through targeted marketing campaigns.

## Engagement and Support for Indigenous Communities

Strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities through mentorship programs, upskilling opportunities, and collaboration with industry to empower specific cohorts.

# Summary of Key Areas

- **Community Engagement:** Strengthen participation and collaboration between community members, businesses and local organisations to address workforce challenges.
- **Education & Training Alignment:** Tailor educational and training programs to meet the current and future skill demands of local industries.
- **Career Pathways Development:** Create clear, structured pathways from education and training to employment, particularly for young people and underrepresented groups.
- **Upskilling & Reskilling:** Focus on continuous learning and development to equip the local workforce with skills relevant to emerging industry needs.
- **Employer Flexibility:** Encourage local businesses to offer flexible working conditions, including part-time roles and career progression opportunities to retain talent.
- **Collaboration with Industry:** Foster stronger partnerships between education providers, local employers and industries to align workforce development efforts.
- **Support for Small Businesses:** Provide targeted support, mentorship and resources for local small businesses to grow and contribute to the region's economy.
- **Youth & Indigenous Employment:** Increase career development programs for youth and Indigenous populations, including mentoring and work placement opportunities.
- **Government Involvement:** Ensure the government plays an active role in simplifying policies, offering funding support and facilitating collaborative efforts across sectors.
- **Tourism & Economic Growth:** Leverage tourism as a key sector for economic growth by developing targeted training programs and promoting tourism-related career opportunities.

# THE WAY FORWARD

## SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

To achieve Mount Isa's priorities requires shared responsibility from all stakeholders, including government, employers, industry, individuals & families, communities, and education and training providers.



Participants were asked to envision a Mount Isa LGA where all stakeholders work together seamlessly to achieve the community's priorities

### Individuals & Families

Engage actively in community forums, promote education and family values, and participate in local initiatives

### Community

Foster clear communication, collaboration, and civic pride, while celebrating successes and welcoming newcomers

### Education & Training Provider

Tailor educational programs to Mount Isa's needs through community collaboration, early interventions, and continuous improvement, while partnering with industry and investing in local educators to align training with job market demands

### Employers/Employment Providers

Employers should prioritize flexibility in roles, collaborate with other providers, focus on upskilling and retention, and offer mentoring to support and clarify employment opportunities and pathways

### Industry

Industry should develop career pathways, engage mentors, identify growth opportunities, encourage community participation, and offer flexible working arrangements

### Government

Government should ensure community presence, simplify policies, fast-track improvements, fund training programs, and advocate for collaborative strategies across all levels.

# WRAP UP, NEXT STEPS

## CLOSE



**Thank You**

- The Mount Isa Regional Jobs Committee is proudly supported and funded by the Queensland Government.
- The Mount Isa RJC thank you for your time, insights and ideas in shaping Mount Isa LGA RJC's Job Plan

**Contact Information :**

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Further Information visit Regional Jobs Committees

**Conclusion**

The final session of the workshop focused on summarising the key outputs, discussing the next steps, and outlining how the Mount Isa Regional Jobs Committee (RJC) will use the insights and feedback gathered to develop and finalize the Annual Action Plan (AAP) for Mount Isa.

**Utilisation of workshop contributions:**

- The RJC will use workshop insights and feedback to shape future initiatives and integrate identified priorities into Mount Isa's Annual Action Plan (AAP).

**Next steps:**

- The AAP for Mount Isa will be reviewed and refined based on workshop inputs, with a follow-up RJC workshop re-scheduled for October 2024 to finalise the plan