**Advice to providers to support targeting pre-accredited delivery   
to priority learner groups**

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**Loddon Mallee Regional Council area**

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| **REGIONAL CONTEXT** |
| The Loddon Mallee Regional Council covers a geographic area from fifty kilometres north of Melbourne to North Western Victoria and the New South Wales / South Australian borders. There are ten Local Government Areas (LGAs) with provincial centres of Gisborne, Bendigo, Echuca, Kerang, Swan Hill and Mildura. Some LGAs are reliant on their agricultural and horticultural sectors and worry about the long-term availability and cost of water. Others are reliant on their hospitality and tourism sectors and worry about the long-term viability of tourists and visitors commuting to them. All are seeking new employment opportunities by endeavouring to attract new industries to their area.  The Loddon Mallee Southern Region is growing in population; the economic profile is changing and so is the means of rural production. The uneven distribution of both population and economic growth across the region requires support for smaller communities. Loddon Mallee Northern Region is a renowned food bowl for Australia. Water policy reform and climate change will continue to impact on the region’s economy.  **Key drivers of change**  **Political**  Governments are facing increased public pressure to lower unemployment rates and increase workplace participation rates.  **Economic**  The increasing volatility, complexity and ambiguity of a rapidly changing world, is having a significant impact on the economic landscape of Loddon Mallee.  The north is a renowned food bowl, where fertile soils, warm climate and access to irrigation give the region a competitive advantage in food production and manufacturing. Most of the south is made of up of rural land, a significant proportion that is used for diverse agricultural productions. The City of Greater Bendigo plays a central role with the provision of high level services, particularly health and tourism, with easy access for freight and passenger transport.  However, there are parts of the region where growth has been slower, both population and economic, requiring support for smaller communities.  **Socio – cultural**  There is a growing mismatch between skills demanded by fast-changing job markets and the skills possessed by the under-employed, vulnerable workers and the unemployed.  Half of the Local Government Areas have a population under 20,000, which creates a thin market for the Learn Local providers in these areas; this increases the vulnerability of these organisations. Additionally, there is likely to be limited pathways into further training and employability opportunities in these smaller rural areas.  Loddon Mallee has a significant indigenous population, particularly in Mildura, Greater Bendigo, Swan Hill and Campaspe. Similarly, there is a substantial population of recently arrived culturally ad linguistically diverse communities across the region, particularly from Myanmar, Northern Africa and the Middle East. The provision of a culturally safe and inclusive Learn Local learning environment is paramount to effective engagement with these cohorts.  With five of Loddon Mallee’s LGAs within the bottom quartile of the SEIFA index, intergenerational disadvantage presents a myriad of challenges for many Learn Locals.  **Technology**  Sweeping digitisation provides both challenges and opportunities for Learn Local providers. Mechanisation is removing many workplace manual handling skills and increasing the requirement for workers with digital literacy and technological nous. Learn Local providers will need to be agile to embrace technology and maximise opportunities for their learners.  **Environmental**  With agriculture and horticulture playing a pivotal role in the economy, Loddon Mallee faces increased vulnerability from the impact of climate change. Water management, soil degradation, affordable energy, and adapting to extreme weather events create the environment for solution-focussed approaches. Innovative problem-solving is urgently required to implement and develop specific action plans to deliver a low-carbon, climate-resilient world. The place of pre-accredited STEM focussed literacy and numeracy courses and the accompanying A Frames will be essential.  Partnerships with public-private experts may be needed to build the capacity of providers with knowledge and expertise to build confidence to embrace this area. Consequently, accredited courses and pathways need to be created that focus on innovative problem-solving to implement and develop specific action plans to deliver an advanced technology, low-carbon, climate-resilient world. |

The data below indicates how effectively pre-accredited delivery in 2015 (latest publicly available data) was targeting priority groups



**Additional information on individual priority groups**

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| **YOUNG MOTHERS, WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK AND WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPEREINCED FAMILY VIOLENCE** |
| Regional intelligence indicates that women who are affected by family violence and women returning to work are an emerging learner sub-group of this cohort  Both women affected by family violence and those returning to work may lack the skills and confidence to engage  Learn Local organisations should carefully consider whether they have expertise to provide for women experiencing family violence. Partnering with specialist services may address this issue.  Pre-accredited training delivery in 2018 should prioritise both *women who have been affected by family violence* and *women returning to work,* and therefore see evidence in delivery of pre-accredited training to these sub-groups in 2018 |

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| **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS** |
| Regional intelligence indicates there has been an increase in eligible culturally and linguistically diverse learners in the region, particularly in Greater Bendigo  Investigate the potential for a *blended learning model* that incorporates both face-to-face and online components to support CALD learners facing barriers such as specific childcare needs or travel barriers  Network/partner with organisations such as migrant resource centres that will assist CALD learners to build their skills, confidence and pathways to further education, training and/or employment. |

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| **LEARNERS WITH DISABILITY** |
| Within this cohort, Regional Council would like provision to prioritise programs tailored to *people who have experienced mental health issues*, and therefore see an increase in delivery of pre-accredited training to this sub-group in 2018.  The data indicates people with a disability are over-represented across the region  Care should be taken to employ appropriately skilled and qualified people to deliver programs to this cohort  Programs that will assist learners with disability to pathway into other education or employment are preferred over those with only an engagement or participation focus. |

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| **YOUNG PEOPLE (15 -19) DISENGAGED FROM WORK AND/OR SCHOOL** |
| The data indicates little or no training to this group in most LGAs. The Regional Council is seeking an increase in pre-accredited training to disengaged youth (17 years or age and over) across all LGAs with a priority focus on Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander, Buloke and Loddon. There should be no enrolment of learners who are still enrolled at school  Apart from Greater Bendigo and the Macedon Ranges Shire, the youth demographic is declining in all other LGAs  Department of Education and Training staff in Loddon Mallee only support a Re-engagement School Exit Form for a student where the rigorous learning program is in place. |

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| **EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS** |
| * The data indicates that Early School Leavers comprise a significant learner cohort except for Greater Bendigo. Increased pre-accredited training to Early School Leavers in Greater Bendigo is required. * Greater Bendigo has secured several initiatives that may alternatively cater for early school leavers (Transition to Work, JVEN, Skills and Job Centres and RECONNECT) * Opportunities exist for Learn Locals, to form informal and formal partnerships with key personnel from these initiatives * Volatility in the agriculture and horticulture sectors across Loddon Mallee, combined with the rapidly changing nature of employment (part-time, casual, under-employed) and mechanisation of workplaces may see this cohort growing in the future with the generally lower skill base early school leavers have. |

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| **INDIGENOUS LEARNERS** |
| Engagement with Indigenous Organisations (for example, meeting with community elders and families to explain what is on offer and the benefits) by Learn Local can result in indigenous learners enrolling in pre-accredited training.  An increase of pre-accredited training to Indigenous people in Swan Hill where this cohort is under-represented  An increase of pre-accredited training to Indigenous people in Buloke, Gannawarra and Loddon where past delivery has been negligible. |

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| **UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE** |
| Volatility in the agriculture, horticulture, mining and manufacturing sectors across Loddon Mallee, combined with the rapidly changing nature of employment and mechanisation of workplaces has resulted in an increase in the unemployment rate (2016 census data will provide current numbers)  Five of Loddon Mallee’s LGAs are within the bottom quartile of the SEIFA index  Intergenerational disadvantage presents a myriad of challenges for many Learn Locals  Accompanying this cohort, mental health issues can emerge as people find themselves in uncharted life situations, particularly newly unemployed (anecdotal data from parts of Loddon Mallee)  An increase of pre-accredited training to unemployed people in Buloke is needed. |

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| **VULNERABLE WORKERS** |
| The data indicates most LGAs are not catering for vulnerable workers; however vulnerable workers may be accommodated within other priority cohorts  Extended drought, workers unable to find employment due to workplaces closing, redundancies, seasonal employment opportunities, often dependant on the weather factors, lack of choices or pathways in small rural communities all generate vulnerability for workers.  An increase of pre-accredited training to Vulnerable Workers is justified across all LGAs, with a priority focus on Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander, Buloke and Loddon where this cohort is under-represented. |