

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 3 - Employment

DEEWR Question No. EW0134_14

Senator McKenzie asked on 4 June 2013, Hansard page 39

Question

Loddon-Mallee issue 10

Senator McKENZIE: In relation to the Loddon Mallee plan, specifically around Murray-Darling Basin issues and issue 7 within the plan, the recruiting of horticultural and agricultural workers, I would like an update on that. If we go to issue 10 in the Loddon-Mallee plan, the strategies identified there go to a range of economic diversification, et cetera. In relation to the second strategy of promoting and encouraging place based initiatives designed to reskill workers to capitalise on future opportunities, could you flesh out how that one has been going. Ms Cornish: In the Loddon Mallee RESJ plan, it does acknowledge that further work might be required to assist those communities to prepare for any challenges with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Some of the strategies such as reskilling workers to capitalise on future opportunities, the RESJ coordinator is collaborating with the JSA providers and the DEET providers as well as the RTOs, and is looking at training strategies to retrain workers potentially affected by those water reforms. Senator McKENZIE: Fantastic. Given that this potentially could end the implementation of these strategies in June next year, I would just really like to know how many have been reskilled as a result of the strategies, and I would like an update on issue 10 in addition to issue 4, the tertiary education and training. Ms Paul: That is for the Loddon Mallee? Senator McKENZIE: Tertiary education training all, and for Loddon Mallee issue 10.

Answer

In response to your request for an update on Issue 4 in the Loddon Mallee RESJ plan, concerning tertiary education and training, this update has been provided in DEEWR Question on Notice EW0131_14.

For completeness, an update for Issue 7 was provided by Ms Cornish at the Budget Estimates hearing on 4 June 2013 at Hansard page 39.

An update on Issue 10 in the Loddon Mallee RESJ plan, being *communities adjusting to the economic and community effects of drought; current economic conditions and the proposed Murray–Darling Basin Plan*, is provided below.

The primary purpose of RESJ Coordinators is to ensure regions can access and gain maximum benefit from suitable Government initiatives; and look for opportunities to solve local problems in education, skills and jobs development through better connections of stakeholders and/or programs. The Loddon Mallee RESJ Coordinator has promoted and encouraged place-based initiatives designed to re-skill workers to capitalise on future opportunities, for example the RESJ Coordinator:

- commenced working with local stakeholders on the Swan Hill Region Workforce Development Strategy Committee in late 2012. The committee is focussing on meeting current and emerging skill shortages in:
 - health, aged care and nursing;
 - manufacturing and welding;
 - agriculture and food processing; and
 - community services, early childhood and welfare
- has facilitated two Early Childhood Education and Care Industry Roundtables in 2012. One in Bendigo and the other in Echuca–Moama, with 54 and 32 stakeholders, respectively, attending representing unions, early childhood education and care service providers, employment agencies, registered training organisations, tertiary institutions and all levels of government. The aims of the forums were to identify workforce development issues for the sector and to develop regional strategies to address those issues. The RESJ Coordinator is supporting the implementation of the strategies identified by the roundtables.
- is a member of the Agrifoods National Regional Initiatives Regional Steering Group for Loddon Mallee that aims to attract, retain and train people in the skills that are needed by employers in agriculture and related industries throughout the region. The RESJ Coordinator supported the Jobs Summit that launched this initiative in Boort, Victoria on 16 April 2013.

The RESJ Coordinator has also participated in key industry meetings, for example:

- arranging a meeting with senior management of the Murray Valley Wine Growers Association, wineries and the Victorian Department of Primary Industry to discuss communication challenges facing wine grape growers, particularly in regard to computer literacy. The RESJ Coordinator is assisting the Murray Valley Wine Growers Association through connecting the Association to relevant programs available under the Australian Government Skills Connect such as the Workplace English Language and Literacy program.