



Greater Whitsunday Workforce Development Playbook

Summary

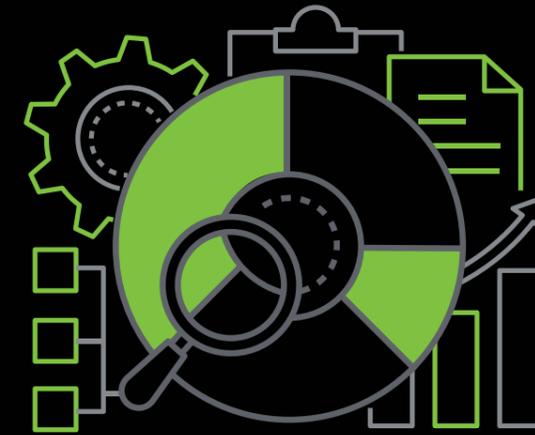
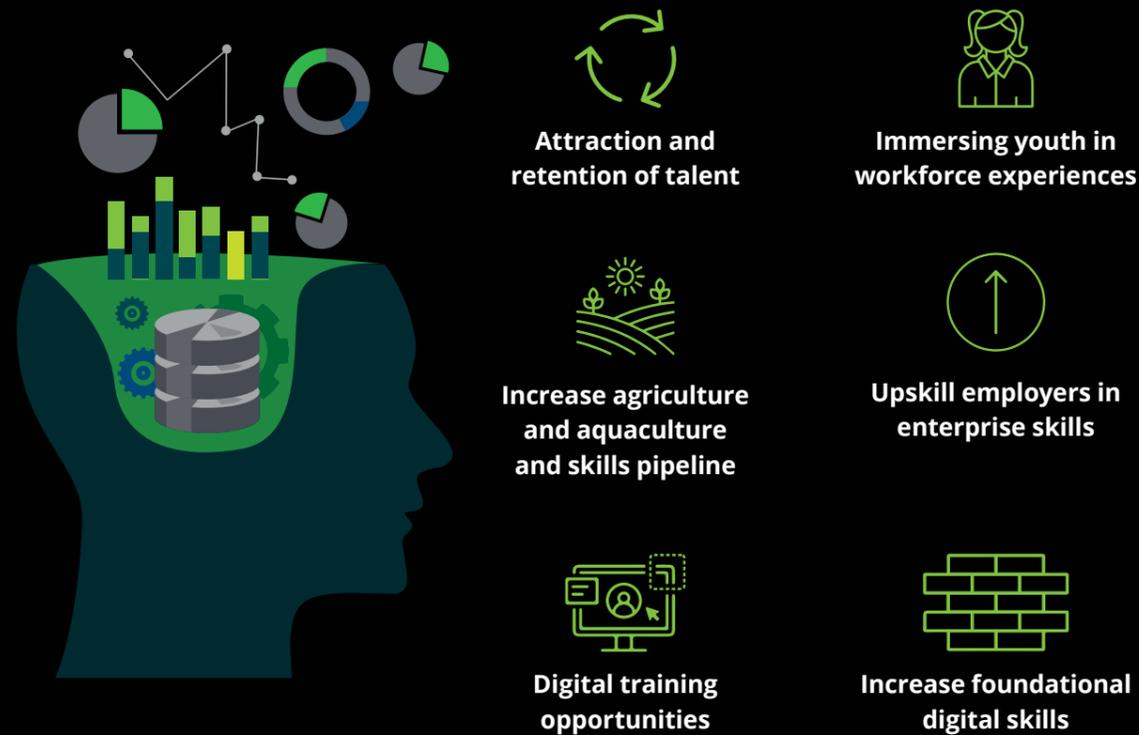
Greater Whitsunday Alliance

December 2022

Deloitte
Access Economics

Greater Whitsunday Playbook

Playbook Ambitions



Fundamental Initiatives


For Greater
Careers Expo


Chief Opportunities
Officer


Maximising Impact
for Managers

Targeted Initiatives


B2B Upskilling
Network


Digital Nomad
Program


Guaranteed Career
Pathways


Change Maker
Attraction Program

Iconic Initiatives


Greater Whitsunday
Earth Observation Hub


Future growth
Services Precinct


AgTech High
School Academy





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Executive summary

The Greater Whitsunday region is home to a thriving economy, with strengths in agriculture, mining, and tourism, and a growing technology industry to support its future growth and diversification.

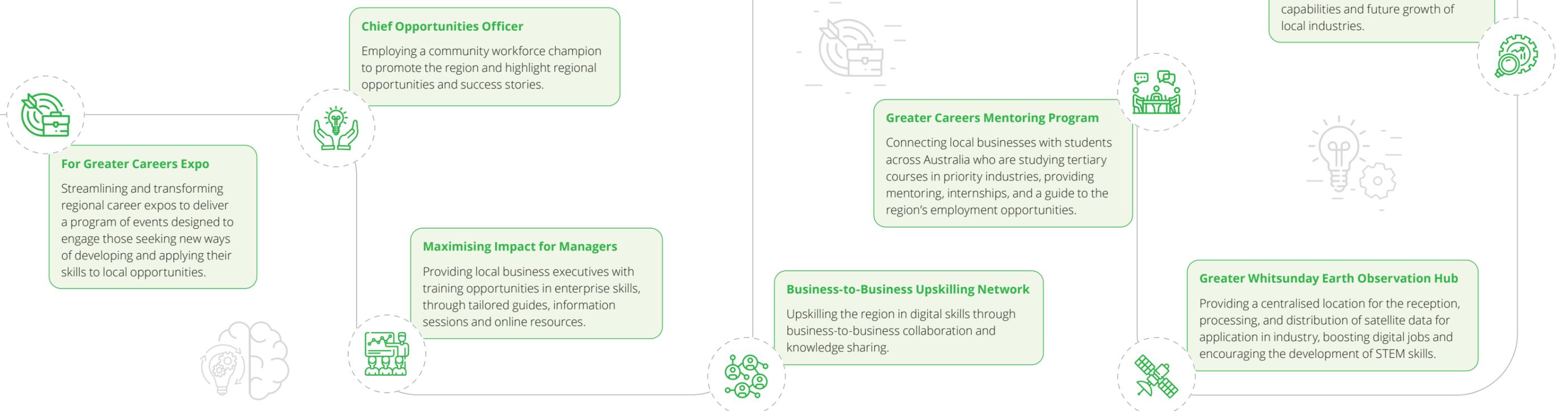
The region is an economic success story, with an unemployment rate currently lower than both the state and national averages. But a tight labour market presents its own challenges for the region.

Chief among these challenges is harnessing and redirecting the region's substantial skill base during the current period of change, towards the adoption of new and innovative technologies. In other words, for the region to remain fully employed, it needs to remain fully employable.

Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3), as the economic development organisation for the region, has been driving the agenda to deliver a range of economic development initiatives to drive prosperity. A key focus of the organisation is to further develop the region's five growth priority areas – Agriculture and Aquaculture, Aviation and Aerospace, Biomanufacturing, Mining and METS, and Tourism.

As part of GW3's ongoing commitment to developing the workforce requirements for the region, Deloitte Access Economics has been engaged to research and develop a Workforce Development Playbook to support employment and skills development in the Greater Whitsunday region.

The Playbook includes a series of 10 initiatives aimed to support the development of a dynamic, responsive, and capable workforce that meets the needs of industries now and into the future. These are:



These innovative initiatives will equip the region to continue its nation-beating prosperity as economies face the next wave of change.

Foreword

The Greater Whitsunday region is preparing for a greater future today.

Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3), the peak independent economic development organisation for the Greater Whitsunday region, is creating opportunities for the region to reach its full potential.

Our region has a total workforce of more than 85 000 people and we're changing and evolving; where traditional industries are complemented by emerging, decarbonised industries including biomanufacturing; advanced manufacturing and aerospace.

At the very core of this adaptation, is our region's people and their amazing skills and expertise. People are our greatest asset and our challenge in this changing world, is to create the best opportunity for them to have fulfilling, rewarding and meaningful careers.

The Queensland Government has partnered with GW3 to form a Regional Jobs Committee (RJC) to help drive jobs growth in the region and plan for the future. The Greater Whitsunday Workforce Development Playbook is part of GW3's ongoing leadership commitment to delivering a coordinated, regional approach to workforce development. With the expertise of Deloitte Access Economics and their research, this Playbook has been created with a place-based methodology to support employment and skills development across our region, well into the future.

The Playbook includes a series of initiatives or plays, that will not only support our region to remain one of the world's most economically diverse, but also provide innovative and disruptive solutions including workforce attraction and retention; reskilling existing workforces into decarbonised jobs and meeting the workforce needs of young people. We need to apply tomorrow's thinking to solve today's problems.

The Greater Whitsunday Workforce Development Playbook will support GW3 to lead our stakeholders and, region as a whole, to ensure our workforces remain dynamic, responsive, and capable in the face of change.



Kylie Porter

Chief Executive Officer
Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3)



Building a future fit workforce

For the region to remain employed, it needs to remain employable.

A changing workforce for future growth

Change is an economic constant, and one that shows no signs of slowing. Around the world economies and their workers are battling big trends such as a changing climate (and the world's response to it), automation, digitalisation, and the lingering impacts of the pandemic.

These trends influence structural adjustments in the workforce and fundamentally adjust the way people work and the type of jobs required.

And so, the nature of the skills demanded are shifting. Technological change and the expansion of Australia's services-based economy has slowed demand for routine-manual skills (such as repetitive assembly on a production line) and increased demand for non-routine skills (such as problem solving and managing staff).¹

These employment shifts can be perceived as unavoidable global economic forces. This has fostered education and training policies that are often reactive, rather than proactive approaches that drive favourable economic outcomes for workers.

The repercussions of this approach are beginning to emerge.

The 2022 Skills Priority List reports that around a third of occupations are in shortage (worker demand outstrips supply), with shortages most acute among high-skilled professionals (bachelor's degree or higher) and middle-skilled technicians and trades workers (VET qualification or higher).²

These shortages inhibit typical business functions and constrain the ability of businesses to innovate, adopt new technologies and global growth opportunities. The link between skills and productivity is clear.

Left unchecked, long-standing skill shortages will impact Australia's future productivity.

In fact, rising skill levels have accounted for about one-fifth of Australia's labour productivity growth in recent decades³. In this way, skills and training – whether formal or informal, tertiary level or an apprenticeship – are a vital input into creating and shaping economic growth trajectories.

Taken together, the rapid pace of change and the significant skill shortages that are emerging across the nation, mean that a reactive economic framework for workers is no longer conducive to growth.

Understanding what future skills are needed in the economy and mitigating potential gaps is crucial to a successful workforce transformation.

Great challenge, Greater Whitsunday region

The Greater Whitsunday region is home to a thriving economy, with strengths in agriculture, mining, and tourism, and a growing technology industry to support future growth and diversification. With an unemployment rate of 2.5 per cent – lower than both the state and national average – on paper the region is an employment success story.⁴ But this presents its own challenges for the region.

Alongside this low unemployment rate is a population which has not experienced any net growth since 2012 – after growing at least as fast as Queensland in the early 2000s. Adding to this dynamic, net employment changes over the past decade have been absorbed by changes in the participation rate, rather than by changes in population. The result is that the region's labour force is around the same size as it was a decade ago (100,000 workers).⁵

For these reasons, Greater Whitsunday faces several workforce challenges, including filling current vacancies, attracting and retaining talent in priority industries, and responding to future workforce needs as the economy changes.

Working towards a transformed economy

The Greater Whitsunday region's diverse economic base has always been exposed to the highs and lows of global change – due to its trade-exposed and resource-rich economy. The boom-and-bust cycles of the natural resources industry and the seasonal workforce requirements of the agriculture and tourism industries has built a workforce that is adaptive to change.

Although the industry profile of the region has changed over time, the skills of its workers remain flexible enough to adapt to new opportunities. The future challenge will be on the region's ability to harness and redirect these skills during a period of change, so that they can support the adoption of new innovative technology and maintain their employment objectives.

To prepare for these rising challenges, Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3) undertook the Future Employment Study to examine the anticipated impacts of technological transformation on jobs and skills in the region. The study found that the labour market in the Greater Whitsunday region will be fundamentally re-shaped by automation and augmentation, challenging businesses and employees alike about the nature of work. To rise to this challenge and secure the skilled workforce of the future, the study identified a need to develop a practical, integrated strategy which is informed by the region's core ambitions.

As the economic development organisation for the Greater Whitsunday region, GW3 has been driving the agenda to deliver a range of economic development focused projects to help support and promote prosperity across the region. A key focus of the organisation is to further develop the five priority areas of growth for the region: Agriculture and Aquaculture, Aviation and Aerospace, Biomanufacturing, Mining and METS, and Tourism.

The successful transformation and emergence of these industries will require a constant realignment of education and training initiatives to ensure that new graduates are trained in the areas that will lead to employment, displaced workers can be retrained to find new and rewarding employment and working professionals can access the professional development needed to support a career change or progression.



Equipping today's workers with the skills of tomorrow

As part of GW3's ongoing commitment to developing the workforce requirements for the region, Deloitte Access Economics was engaged to develop the Greater Whitsunday Workforce Development Playbook (the Playbook), to support employment and skills development in the region.

The Playbook has been conducted in conjunction with, and to build upon, the momentum of GW3's other work to support the strategic development objectives of the region. As such, this Playbook represents just one component of the total work being undertaken to develop the region, focusing solely on innovative solutions to the identified challenges facing the region regarding employment, skills and training.

The Playbook includes a series of initiatives aimed to support the development of a dynamic, responsive, and capable workforce that meets the needs of industries now and into the future.



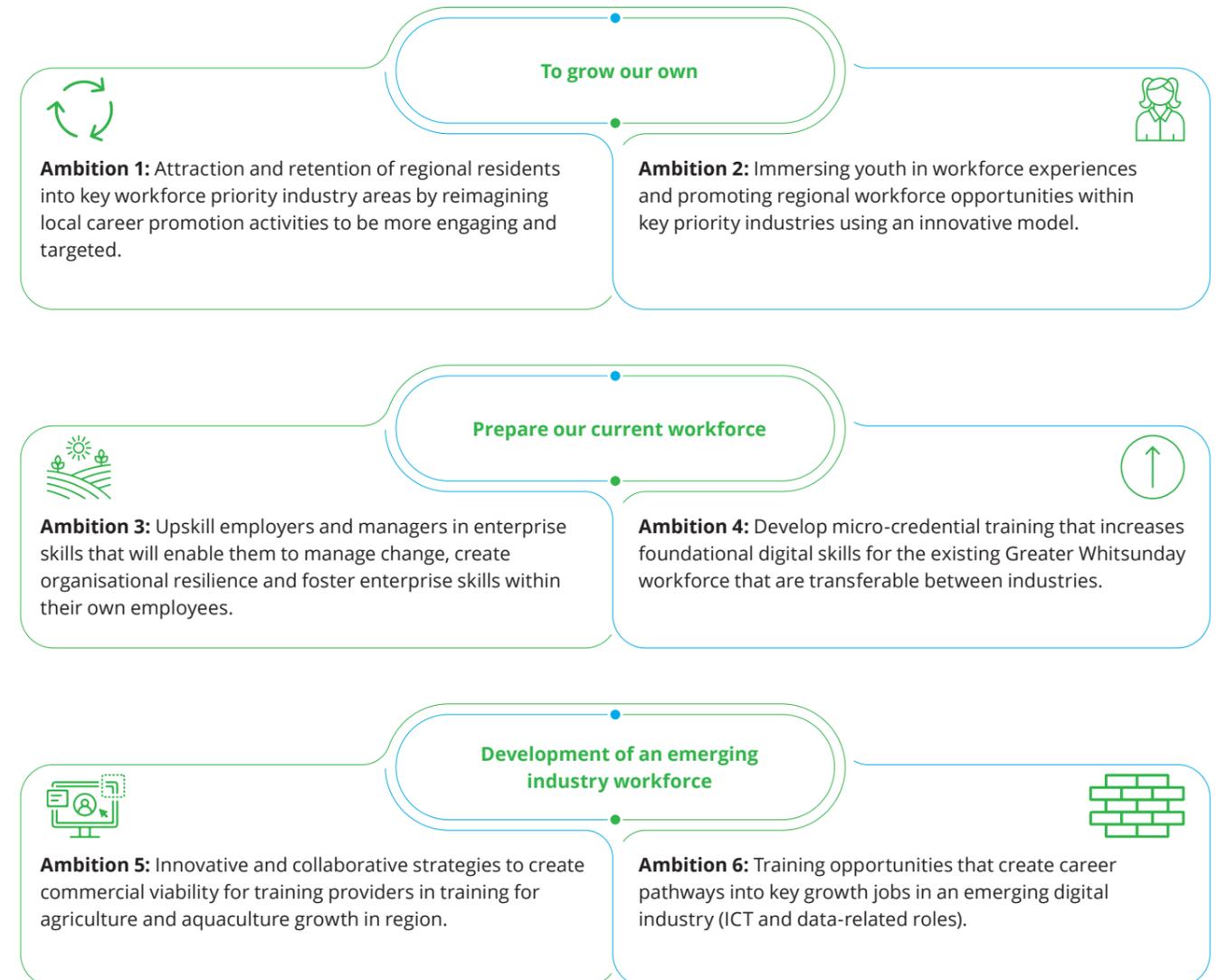
Place-based policy design

Global breadth and local depth inform a workforce strategy tailored to the region's needs.

Incorporating the region's ambitions into the Playbook

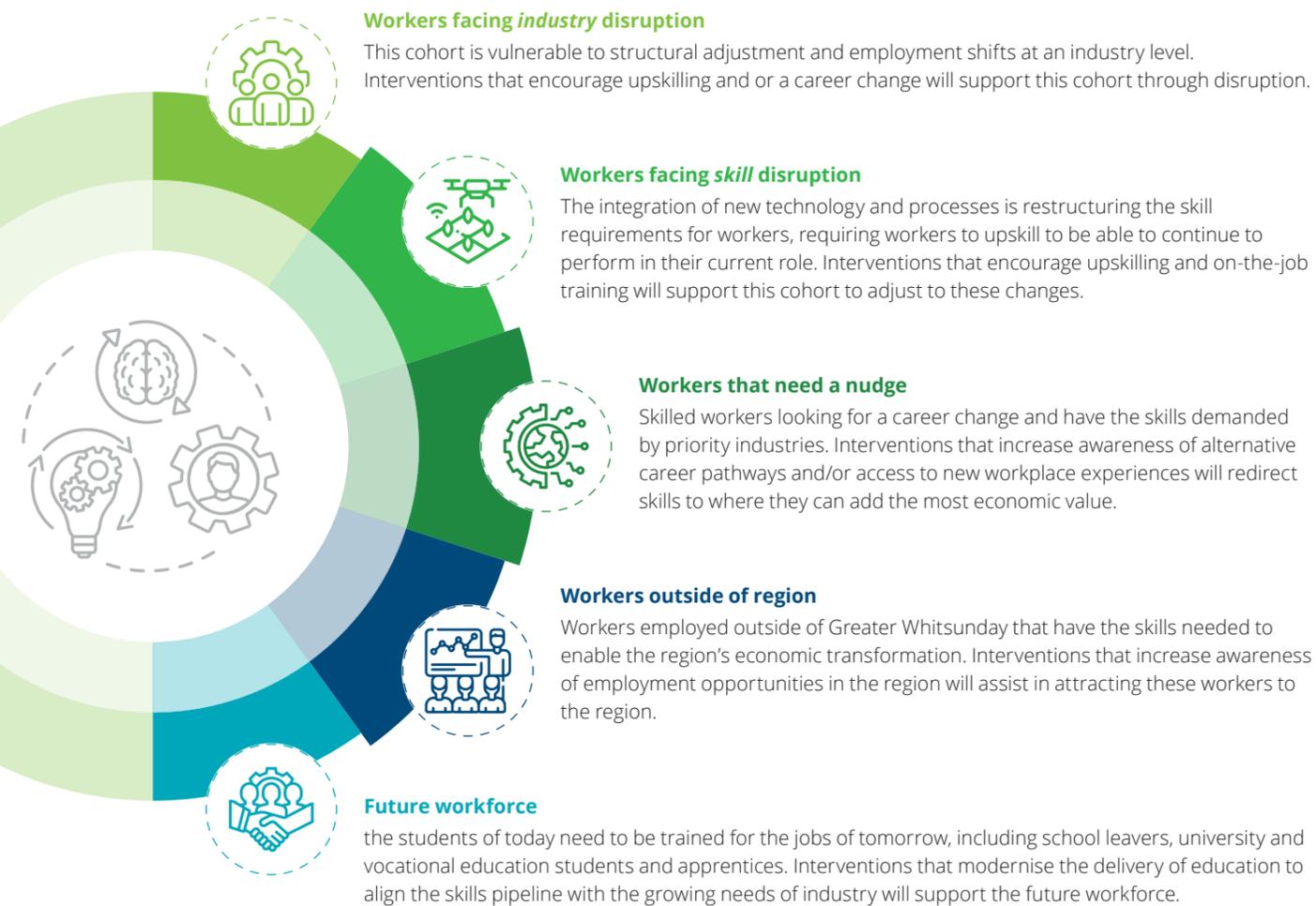
This Playbook has been tailored to respond to six key ambitions provided by GW3, the leading economic agency in the region. Based on regional research and their deep understanding of the region, GW3 along with key stakeholders, including members of the Regional Jobs Committee, have identified and articulated what the region needs in order to prepare the workforce for the changing nature of work. The Mackay Regional Jobs Committee is supported and funded by the Queensland Government.

As such, the goal of this Playbook is to identify projects that will support economic outcomes for the Greater Whitsunday region by directly addressing the following ambitions.



Identifying priority cohorts

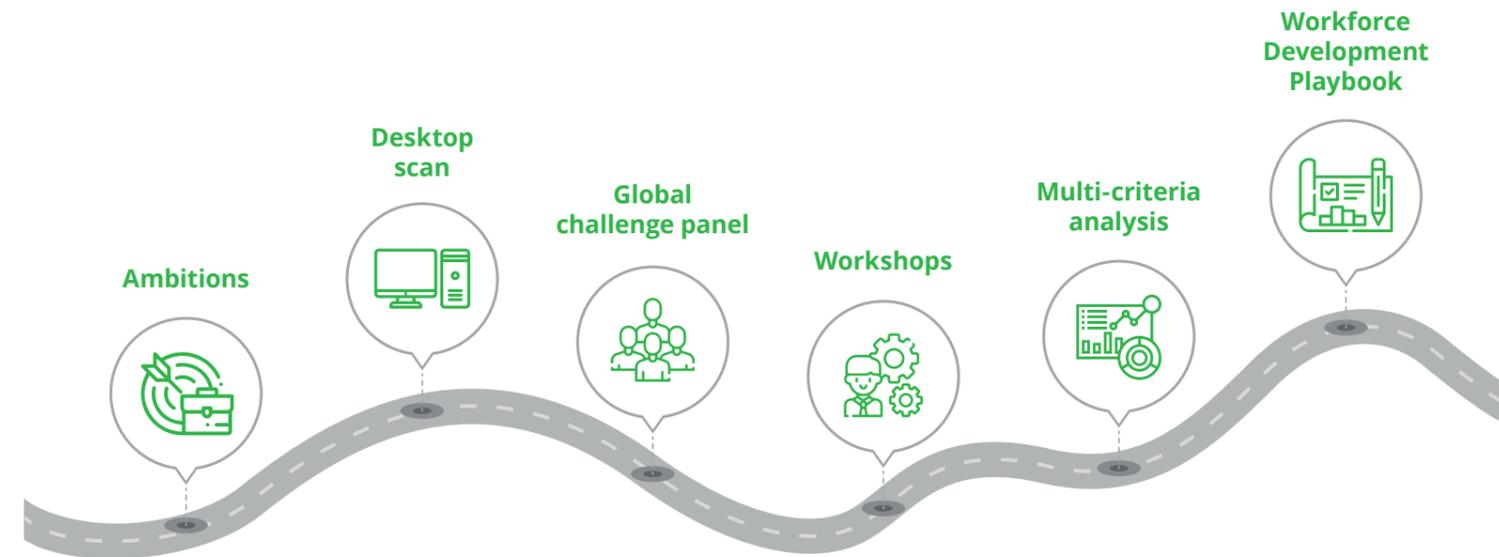
In developing the Playbook, it was recognised that not all workers will require the same strategic policy solutions. The right assistance will work to improve economic, workforce and skilling outcomes based on a 'portfolio approach' targeted to specific cohorts. Through a comprehensive research process including statistical labour market analysis, sectoral research and in-person stakeholder engagement, Deloitte Access Economics identified the following cohorts as representative of the distinct workforce challenges facing the Greater Whitsunday region:



The above priority cohorts were fundamental to the design of tailored interventions to respond to specific regional workforce challenges. Each Playbook initiative is expected to assist at least one of these cohorts to upskill, change jobs or have fulfilling careers, while positioning the region for a productive and high-growth future.

Across the globe, the trend toward a flexible workforce, coupled with people's motivation for diverse employment experiences which connect them to their desired job roles has been transformative, and was key to thinking about the workforce strategy in our current environment. Further, a recognition of the potential for individuals' transferable skillsets to enable transition into new job roles and industries was a central assumption when identifying policy initiatives.

Identifying best-practice workforce initiatives



Desktop scan

A comprehensive desktop review was undertaken to catalogue best-practice approaches to regional workforce and skills development and identify initiatives that would be suitable to address workforce challenges included in the scope of the Playbook objectives. To build this catalogue, a number of strategies were utilised in the development of this Playbook, such as identifying:

- Successful workforce initiatives implemented in other Australian regions with similar industry or workforce profiles to the Greater Whitsunday region.
- Innovative and disruptive workforce initiatives that have been implemented in national and overseas regions.
- Best practice policy principles in workforce and skills development.

As a result of vulnerability to trends such as seasonal workforces, changes in trade and the push toward decarbonisation, a number of regional areas across Australia have had to rethink the way that they work and train their workforce. While policies implemented in other regions are not necessarily suited to the context of the Greater Whitsunday region, they have provided a useful starting point to begin developing new and innovative policy initiatives.

Beyond insights gained from domestic policy and regional development, we also leveraged policies being implemented overseas. While the contexts are vastly different compared to

regional areas in Europe for example, the types of challenges faced overseas provide important insights which ensure that policy initiatives developed now are compatible with policy issues that may arise in the future. As an example, we specifically investigated policy implemented in regional Spain and Germany as part of plans to transition regional workforces which depend on coal mines, such that the regions can secure a strong economic future in the face of global trends such as automation and decarbonisation.

Finally, a literature scan was also conducted to ensure that best practice was incorporated into the development of the policy initiatives. This involved both researching academic literature and policy papers, to ensure that the policy initiatives were able to be both innovative and backed by best practice.

Global challenge panel

Deloitte Access Economics assembled a global challenge panel of Deloitte experts from Australia, Germany and the United States to help identify innovative workforce initiatives for consideration and 'challenge' the finalised list of Playbook initiatives for further refinement.

The expertise of five Deloitte Partners spanned across areas of industry transformation, decarbonisation, restructuring, education and training and tourism to ensure that the projects were scoped with a view of what works and what to consider in ensuring success. The panel was engaged prior to regional stakeholder engagement and during the finalisation of the Playbook.

Workshops

Refinement of the initiative catalogue was undertaken in consultation with GW3. This included prioritising initiatives that were strongly aligned to ambitions and rescoping some of the initiatives to ensure they built upon current workforce initiatives and are tailored to the Greater Whitsunday context.

Following this refinement, the list of initiatives was presented to key stakeholders to collect local insights, ideas and feedback. The list of stakeholders were carefully selected to bring innovative and future-focused thinking to the sessions, so that new ideas could be created through discussion. To facilitate ideation, three workshops were held that addressed:

- Agriculture and aquaculture industry growth. As one of the Playbook ambitions focused on these industries, key stakeholders from the agriculture and aquaculture industry

were invited to participate in their own workshop to discuss initiatives specific to the industry. Stakeholders were a mix of industry leaders (e.g., aquaculture, livestock and crop farmers) and training professionals (e.g., TAFE QLD).

- Demand for skills in the region. A panel of regional industry experts from across the priority areas were assembled to test whether the preliminary initiatives would support their future workforce needs and collect their ideas for further refinement of initiatives.
- Supply of skills in the region. A panel of education and training leaders in the region were brought together to test the appropriateness of the initiatives and collect ideas for further refinement of initiatives.

Multi-criteria analysis

To prioritise the initiatives that are expected to provide the greatest impact to the region, a multi-criteria analysis was conducted to assess the relative benefits of each initiative according to the stated ambitions and priorities for the region.

To allow for comparison between initiatives, an assessment framework was developed. The framework evaluates initiatives against nine weighted criteria, assigning initiatives a score out of three for each assessment criterion. An overall score is given by the sum of criteria multiplied by the relevant weight. The highest rating initiatives ultimately ended up in the Playbook.

Table 1: Assessment framework and criteria definition

Assessment Criteria	Definition
Applicable to priority areas	Applicability of the initiative to priority areas for the region
Employment potential	Scope of good employment outcomes delivered by the initiative
Skills uplift potential	Scope of skilling opportunities delivered by the initiative
High wages and secure work	Degree to which the initiative contributes to the development of high wage, secure employment in the region
Digital technology links	Role of digital technology in initiative
Use of existing resources	Degree to which the initiative improves delivery of existing resources versus creates new material for delivery
Access to funding	Ability to secure funding, informed by the size of the initial investment, and the complexity of funding arrangements required
Proven success of similar initiatives	Evidence base for intervention found in academic research and case studies
Likelihood of success	Degree to which the initiative is likely to achieve its stated aims and the broader objectives of the Playbook



The Workforce Development Playbook

The Workforce Development Playbook focuses on the skills that will be needed in the future on account of structural changes – digitisation, automation, addressing climate change – and how best to ensure workers can transition their skills in the face of new drivers of growth, but also how skills play a role in driving that new future of growth and development.

The Playbook proposes 10 skilling and job creation initiatives for the Greater Whitsunday region, to create and support viable skilling pathways for students, provide fulfilling and stable employment for workers and deliver improved standards of living for all.



Fundamental Initiatives



For Greater Careers Expo

Streamlining and transforming regional career expos to deliver a program of events designed to engage those seeking new ways of developing and applying their skills to local opportunities.



Chief Opportunities Officer

Employing a community workforce champion to promote the region and highlight regional opportunities and success stories.



Maximising Impact for Managers

Providing local business executives with training opportunities in technical and managerial skills, through tailored guides, information sessions and online resources.



Business-to-Business Upskilling Network

Upskilling the region in digital skills through business-to-business collaboration and knowledge sharing.



Digital Nomad Program

Attracting new talent to the region whilst promoting the sharing of knowledge and upskilling of local businesses in digital skills.



Guaranteed Career Pathways

Guaranteeing school-to-work, study-to-work employment, or school-to-study entry for select high school and TAFE students to fill the gap of priority skills in the region, while supporting the viability of training providers.



Greater Careers Mentoring Program

Connecting local businesses with students across Australia who are studying tertiary courses in priority industries, providing mentoring, internships, and a guide to the region's employment opportunities.

Iconic Initiatives



Greater Whitsunday Earth Observation Hub

Providing a centralised location for the reception, processing, and distribution of satellite data for application in industry, boosting digital jobs and encouraging the development of STEM skills.



Future Growth Services Precinct

Co-locating technology-focused firms and digital businesses to increase skill accessibility, and support the capabilities and future growth of local industries.

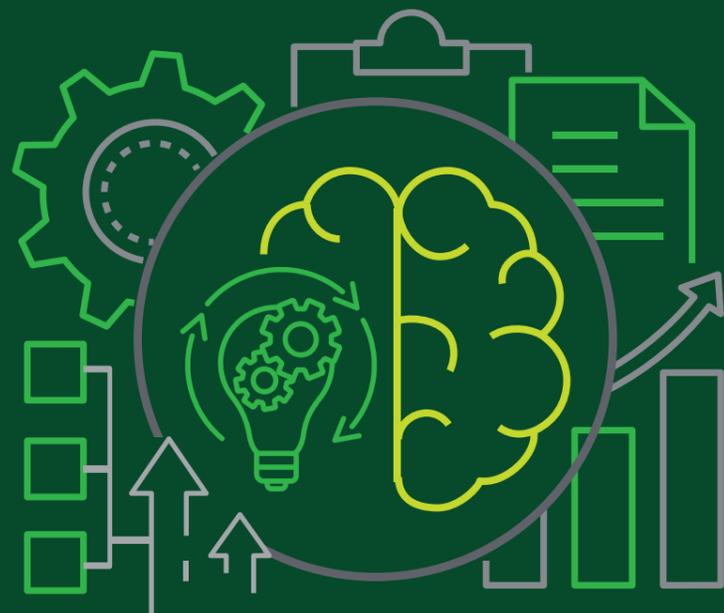


AgTech High School Academy

Designating a regional high school as an Agricultural Technology Academy under existing state or independent models to teach the Australian curriculum with a grounding in region-specific industries.

Fundamental Initiatives

Short-term projects to support the achievement of existing initiatives and regional activities.



For Greater Careers Expo



Streamlining and transforming regional career expos to deliver a program of events designed to engage those seeking new ways of developing and applying their skills to local opportunities.



The challenge

The Greater Whitsunday region is currently faced with challenges of misconceptions and misunderstanding of the career pathways and opportunities available in the region. Many people, both within and external to the region, have misguided views of a lack of career and progression opportunities. Similarly, there is little understanding as to what career opportunities in the region may look like, which can result in poor decision-making and confusion among young people entering the job market.

Career expos are a traditionally useful way to uplift the understanding of school students or career changers as to what careers are available, and what they may look like. However, while a number of expos currently operate in the region, these do not adequately inform the community of training and employment opportunities that are conducive to the future growth of the region.



The intervention

The **For Greater Careers Expo** is expected to deliver a program that speaks to the passions of both workers and students and unlocks new ways of applying their skills. To achieve this, the expo can be structured around pathways and the transferability of skills and experiences across industries and jobs (e.g., X qualification is applicable to X number of career pathways in the region). This innovative structure can help students and workers unlock career pathways they might not have considered previously and understand the steps (e.g., apprenticeship or short course) to facilitate that pathway.

The expo can be delivered in a creative format and repeated across key locations within the region, including alongside other events to attract attendees. The aim of the expo is to provide a variety of hands-on and practical experiences for students, parents, teachers, and working professionals, showcasing the day-to-day tasks involved in different jobs. A key outcome of the expo will be ensuring that attendees (i.e. students, parents, teachers or career changers) emerge 'upskilled' in their understanding of the opportunities available in the region, and the potential career paths that students, or career changers, can take.

Table 2: Key linkages to ambitions

Regional ambitions	<p>Attraction and retention of talent</p>	<p>Immersing youth in workforce experiences</p>	<p>Increase agriculture and aquaculture and skills pipeline</p>	
Priority Cohorts	<p>Workers facing industry disruption</p>	<p>Workers facing skill disruption</p>	<p>Workers that need a nudge</p>	<p>Future workforce</p>

Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Chief Opportunities Officer



Employing a community workforce champion to promote the region and highlight regional opportunities and success stories.



The challenge

The success of the Workforce Development Playbook will depend on attracting new talent to take up the jobs and skills opportunities needed to realise the region's ambitions. Further, Greater Whitsunday has a crucial demand for positive publicity in the form of a dedicated regional champion to instil a culture of economic confidence and change perceptions of career opportunities in the region.



The intervention

The **Chief Opportunities Officer** would be a full-time community workforce champion tasked with promoting the region as an outstanding place to live, work and play. The role is inspired by the creation of "Chief Optimism Officer" roles by major companies, the growing popularity of agriculture-focused social media influencers, and TEQ's award-winning "Best Job in the World" campaign.

The core functions of the Chief Opportunities Officer would involve highlighting opportunities and success stories through site tours and interviews which showcase the diversity of economic activity in the region.

Table 3: Key linkages to ambitions



Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Maximising Impact for Managers



Providing local business executives with training opportunities in enterprise skills, through tailored guides, information sessions and online resources.



The challenge

Most small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not have the resources available to develop their own online or in-person training modules to upskill their workforce in new processes and enterprise skills (e.g., structured problem solving, interpersonal skills, public speaking etc.). This gap has long been observed among employees in management and leadership roles, and is exacerbated by the difficulties faced by businesses in identifying the relevant in-person and online learning courses which are worth the time commitment, and structuring their own program of professional development.



The intervention

This initiative will provide the necessary information for managers to continue their lifelong learning journey in a world of rapid change. To support this goal, **Maximising Impact for Managers** will make strategic recommendations to businesses within priority areas through an 'upskilling guide', information sessions, and easily accessible packages of in-person and online training opportunities grouped by complementary skills, such as complex problem solving, communication skills, and leadership and management skills.

Example structure of information guide: Critical thinking and problem solving courses



Week 1
Course: Defining the problem



Week 2
Course: Navigating Ambiguity



Week 3
Course: Solving Business problems



Week 4
Course: Complex problem solving

Table 4: Key linkages to ambitions



Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Targeted Initiatives

Medium-term, small-to-mid sized projects that provide targeted interventions to address current and future regional challenges.



Digital Nomad Program



Attracting new talent to the region whilst promoting the sharing of knowledge and upskilling of local businesses in digital skills.



The challenge

Digital skills have the potential to be catalytic for productivity and innovation in a region, and in the context of rapid technological advances, these skills have never been more important. The successful integration of emerging technology into organisations is essential for streamlining processes and boosting productivity, however, this relies upon the availability of workers who have the skills to support this.

It has been estimated in the recent *Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Future Employment Study* that there will be over 3,000 jobs created within the region in the next 10 years in ICT and Engineering roles. However, it is going to be increasingly hard to fill these jobs given that there are current shortages in digital workers across the nation, and the region has, historically, had issues with attracting and retaining high-skilled digital workers. This largely stems from misperceptions surrounding the region regarding lack of digital career opportunities and pathways.



The intervention

The **Digital Nomad Program** will ensure the injection of digital skills into the region and support the uplifting of digital literacy across local businesses which have traditionally resisted the integration of technological capability.

Essentially, this program will attract digitally-trained workers to base themselves in the Greater Whitsunday region for a defined period of time – 3, 6 or 12 months. These workers would be seconded to key businesses in the region delivering on-site knowledge sharing within the business and providing in-person digital skills training to the region.

As such, local businesses in the region would benefit from a direct and tailored uplift in digital skills, supporting businesses to implement technology that suits their needs.

Table 5: Key linkages to ambitions

Regional ambitions	 Attraction and retention of talent	 Upskill employers in enterprise skills	 Digital training opportunities	 Increase foundational digital skills
Priority Cohorts	 Workers facing skill disruption	 Workers outside of region	 Future workforce	

Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Business-to-Business Upskilling Network



Business-to-business digital knowledge sharing and collective upskilling network that aims to leverage current digital skills in the region and reduce knowledge gaps over time.



The challenge

The vulnerability of skills to megatrends and global competition means that businesses and workers need to remain aware of the incremental skills needed to sustain operations and employment. The integration of digital technologies and processes is increasingly being used by businesses to boost productivity and profits. The successful integration of these technologies in organisations is dependent on workers having the necessary skills. The current skills pipeline is not expected to keep pace with the future digital demand of industry (as identified in the Future Employment Study).



The intervention

This **Business-to-Business Upskilling Network** initiative leverages the modern apprenticeship model and adapts it to a Greater Whitsunday context. The model, as conceptualised by McKinsey, involves a universal and reciprocal teaching and learning commitment within an organisation. For Greater Whitsunday, which is characterised by a fragmented distribution of digital skills, the proposed network is a collective business-led initiative which encourages and facilitates upskilling in three key ways:

1. Businesses will teach each other skills where they are strongest
2. If a true skills gap is identified among the region's businesses, a cohort of workers from across industry will undertake formal digital skills training and will feed their learnings back into the network.
3. For workers seeking to switch into digitally enabled careers, the **Business-to-Business Upskilling Network** will sponsor workers to undertake formal training, with the intention of placing them into businesses affiliated with the network.

This delivery model leverages GW3's unique role in the region to drive business collaboration and will support the region to develop a greater understanding of skills capability gaps at the individual firm and workforce level.

Table 6: Key linkages to ambitions



Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Guaranteed Career Pathways



Guaranteeing school-to-work, study-to-work employment, or school-to-study entry for select high school and TAFE students to fill the gap of priority skills in the region, while supporting the viability of training providers.



The challenge

The Greater Whitsunday region has invested significantly in developing high-quality training products that directly service the region's evolving workforce needs. However, uptake of training opportunities remains lower than is needed to transform the region's jobs and skills landscape.



The intervention

The **Guaranteed Career Pathways** initiative establishes guaranteed pathways from school-to-work, school-to-study and study-to-work. The preordained pathways can be offered through private businesses or local education and training providers.

- **Local businesses** could offer future employment (i.e., placement offered in advance of commencement) to high school graduates that are high performers in certain courses or have shown an interest in pursuing a career in a particular field. If the business is looking for higher skilled graduates, they could offer future employment to university or TAFE students as they enrol in a qualification highly demanded by the business.
- **Local RTOs** could offer guaranteed entry to priority TAFE and university courses for school students that have high grades in associated courses. For examples, all graduates from the AgTech High School Academy could have guaranteed entry into courses offered at Agriculture and Aquaculture Centres of Excellence.

By providing pathways to direct employment and training, this initiative would make priority skills and careers a 'default' option for students, building the commercial viability of training providers and boosting the supply of highly sought-after skills.

Table 7: Key linkages to ambitions



Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Greater Careers Mentoring Program



Connecting local businesses with students across Australia studying tertiary courses in priority industries, providing mentoring, internships, and a guide to the region's employment opportunities.



The challenge

The Greater Whitsunday region is currently facing critical skill shortages in industries and fields that support productive growth and innovation. Specifically, these skill shortages are in emerging, digital and cognitive industries, such as STEM fields, which struggle to attract workers away from cities. This is largely a result of misconceptions regarding available career opportunities, dissuading university graduates from pursuing jobs in the region. In addition, the region faces challenges with the retention of young workers with these skills, given that many of those pursuing these forms of careers leave the region for university and don't always come back.



The intervention

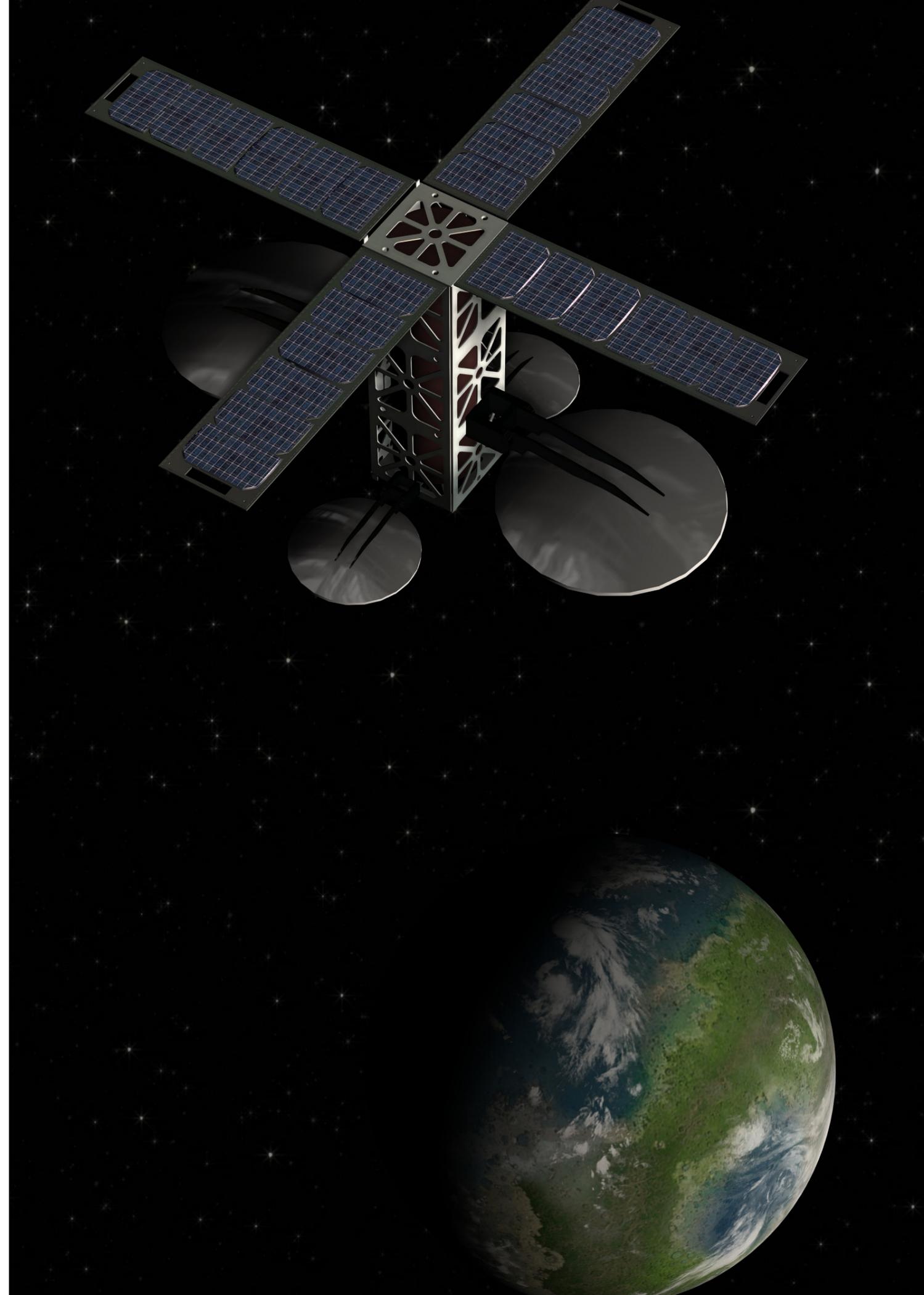
The **Greater Careers Mentoring Program** aims to connect local businesses with university students across the country who are currently studying courses that could address critical skills shortages in the region. The Program will match third- and fourth-year university students with Greater Whitsunday professionals, to receive mentoring and support for their future career development. Through mentoring, each emerging leader (student) will build a greater understanding and gain access to internships and employment opportunities in the region.

A component of the program will involve information packs or sessions regarding job opportunities and pathways in the region, to clarify the opportunities available outside of each student's provided mentor.

Table 8: Key linkages to ambitions

Regional ambitions	Attraction and retention of talent	Immersing youth in workforce experiences	Increase foundational digital skills
	Workers outside of region	Future workforce	
Priority Cohorts			

Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.



Iconic Initiatives

Long-term projects requiring significant investment, planning and government support in delivery, but essential in diversifying the region's economic base.



Greater Whitsunday Earth Observation Hub



Providing a centralised location for the reception, processing, and distribution of satellite data for application in industry, boosting digital jobs and encouraging the development of STEM skills.



The challenge

Opportunities are growing across the globe in space capabilities and systems. Nationally, a commercial market is emerging that uses Earth Observation (EO) data to develop tailored applications and solutions for industry. The strongest areas of Australian space capability are in integrating space sourced data into communications, Earth Observations from Space (EOS) and Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).⁶

The Greater Whitsunday region is well positioned to further build out its aerospace sector in earth observation capability and services. As a priority industry for the region, agriculture offers diverse opportunities to apply EO data for greater efficiency and environmental standards, while attracting space-enabled services to the region can contribute to regional employment. This also promises to increase the productivity and output of other local industries through the provision of precision data and new insights through EO and satellite positioning systems.



The intervention

A **local EO Hub** would be a central venue for the manipulation, distribution, and novel application of EO data, leading to new local jobs in data analytics and providing new ways of solving regional challenges. Creating a Greater Whitsunday Earth Observation Hub would enable priority industries, such as precision farming and mining rehabilitation, in the region to use EO satellite data, geospatial and socio-economic services to boost digitalisation, enhance local monitoring processes and increase productivity.

Locating data services at the EO Hub will develop and sustain a high-tech STEM workforce and enable world-leading Earth Observation research, innovation and the development of industry applications across the EO data supply chain.⁷ Additionally, the EO Hub services are expected to introduce data-enabled practices to local industries, boosting employment in the broader economy.

By showcasing the region's diversification into new technologies, the Hub could also inspire tourists and people visiting the region to seek local job opportunities in the future.

Table 9: Key linkages to ambitions

Regional ambitions	<p>Attraction and retention of talent</p>	<p>Immersing youth in workforce experiences</p>	<p>Increase agriculture and aquaculture and skills pipeline</p>	<p>Increase foundational digital skills</p>
Priority Cohorts	<p>Workers facing skill disruption</p>	<p>Workers outside of region</p>	<p>Future workforce</p>	

Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Future Growth Services Precinct



Co-locating technology-focused firms and digital businesses to increase skill accessibility, and support the capabilities and future growth of local industries.



The challenge

Greater Whitsunday businesses will continue to face fierce competition, both domestically and internationally, along with barriers to entry in key markets. To access new market segments and remain competitive, businesses must continue to innovate and add value. There is currently a capability gap in regional businesses to make transformative change with a high return on investment. As such, there is a need to have a regional cluster of advisory and technological services that can provide the knowledge or physical inputs to drive future growth and diversification, particularly those that support building the Greater Whitsunday priority areas and the Queensland Government's Priority industries.^{8,9}



The intervention

The **Future Growth Services Precinct** will help the region navigate these challenges by co-locating technology-focused firms and digital businesses (domestic and global) on a temporary/permanent basis to increase skill accessibility, and support the capabilities and future growth of local industries.

The Precinct would aim to fill capability gaps in transformative advisory such as carbon abatement solutions, circular processes, biotechnology, fintech services, communication technology (ICT) systems and cyber technologies managing the interface between human and digital systems. The provision of these services will create a skilled cluster of workers that can be readily deployed to solve the challenges of industry and creating new market segments.

Table 10: Key linkages to ambitions



Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

AgTech High School Academy



Designating a regional high school as an Agricultural Technology Academy under existing state or independent models to teach the Australian curriculum with a grounding in region-specific industries.



The challenge

The current skills pipeline in Greater Whitsunday is not aligned to the high levels of demand for workers in agriculture and aquaculture. While agricultural education facilities and opportunities currently exist in the region, these typically focus on agriculture specific skills (i.e. food production and distribution), rather than a full suite of skills that are applicable to the agriculture context (including maths and English). The delivery of agriculture specific skills has been identified as inspiring limited pathways into the agriculture industry, whereas delivering the full curriculum in the agriculture context is expected to inspire careers across all aspects of the agriculture industry.

In accordance with ambitions 1, 2 and 5, there is an identified need to boost enrolments in priority courses to create effective and sustainable pathways into employment in these industries, with a particular focus on developing a sustainable cohort of new entrants to the industry through cultivating the necessary skills and career interests among a significant proportion of the region's students.



The intervention

The **AgTech High School Academy** (The AgTech Academy) will see an existing high school given special designation as an 'Agricultural Technology Academy', where the Australian curriculum would be delivered with explicit reference to issues in agriculture and other primary industries (e.g. teaching percentages and ratios with an application to specific feed rates and feed conversion ratio for farmed prawns).

Unlike the current approach where agricultural education operates adjacent to the Australian curriculum, this approach integrates an agricultural context to all learning areas, linking subject learning to real-life industry experience.

The AgTech Academy will also enable future skilling and career pathways at a variety of skill levels, recognising the equal importance of traditional and tech-enabled agriculture jobs, and catering to the diverse interests and aptitudes of students. The AgTech Academy will support the greater proliferation of skilled high school graduates, targeted uplift of other schools in the region, a pipeline of enrolments in priority AgTech courses at both the TAFE and university level, and direct employment of students in agriculture jobs.

Table 11: Key linkages to ambitions



Note: Further details about the proposed interventions and Playbook methodology are contained in a supplementary document. If interested in collaborating on an initiative, contact GW3 for further information.

Delivering the Playbook: The Playbook Implementation Officer

The Workforce Development Playbook comprises a range of initiatives which differ in terms of scope, scale, and stakeholders affected. The design of the Playbook also sees initiatives leverage one another and existing initiatives in the region for maximum impact. To deliver these interdependent initiatives successfully, coordination, risk management, knowledge sharing and communication with relevant stakeholders will be crucial.

The Playbook Implementation Officer would be a central point of contact for stakeholders involved in delivery of playbook initiatives, responsible for tracking initiative progress, managing risks, contingencies, and dependencies, and advocating for additional resources or changes in approach where required to ensure successful delivery of the initiatives. The Playbook Implementation Officer would be hosted by GW3 as the corporate owner of the Workforce Development Playbook.

Based on the role objectives, the Playbook Implementation Officer would require high-level project management skills and would benefit from strong communications and administrative skills. The timeframe would be short-term (beginning in under 18 months) to ensure the role is operating in an integrated and effective way from the commencement of the first initiatives.



Limitation of our work

General use restriction

This report is prepared solely for the use of Greater Whitsunday Alliance. This report is not intended to and should not be used or relied upon by anyone else and we accept no duty of care to any other person or entity. The Workforce Development Playbook has been developed to support the development of a dynamic, responsive, and capable workforce that meets the needs of industries now and into the future. You should not refer to or use our name or the advice for any other purpose.

Endnotes

- 1 Productivity Commission. (2022). 5 Year Productivity Inquiry: From learning to growth
- 2 National Skills Commission. (2022). Skills Priority List.
- 3 Productivity Commission. (2022). 5 Year Productivity Inquiry: From learning to growth.
- 4 Deloitte Access Economics analysis, using Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data, August 2022.
- 5 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022; Deloitte Access Economics analysis.
- 6 Allen, A. C. I. L. (2015). The Value of Earth Observations from Space to Australia. CRC-SI report.
- 7 Australian Space Agency (2021). Earth Observation from Space Roadmap 2021-2030.
- 8 Greater Whitsunday Alliance. Priority Areas. <https://www.greaterwhitsundayalliance.com.au/>
- 9 Queensland Government Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. Priority Industries. <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/industry/priority-industries>



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