



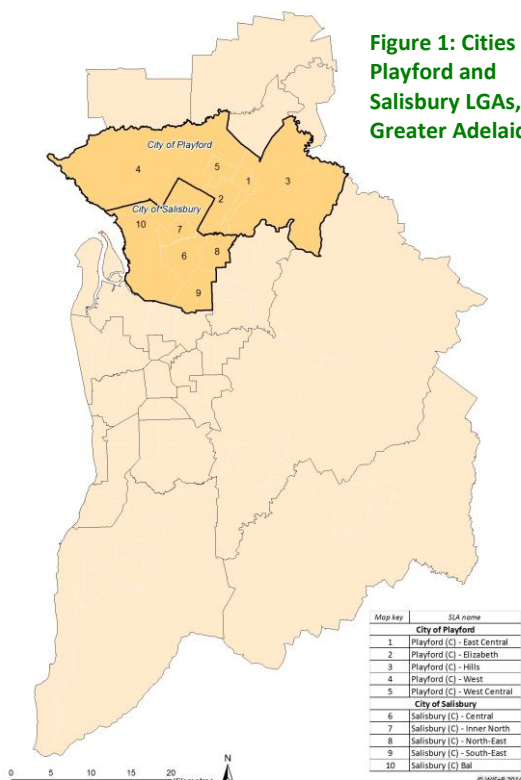
# Our changing workplaces

## Workplace Futures Survey

### Playford and Salisbury, November 2013

The Workplace Futures Survey commissioned by The Stretton Centre and undertaken by the Australian Workplace Innovation and Social research Centre (WISer) provides industry, government and NGOs with a regular snapshot of the changing demand for skills, workplace innovation and employment and investment intentions of workplaces in Playford and Salisbury in South Australia. It is the first longitudinal survey of its kind to be undertaken in South Australia and is designed to inform workplace and workforce development decision making. The first WFS survey administered in November 2013 provides a baseline, having been conducted prior to the announcement of the 2017 closure of GM Holden. Respondents from 451 establishments (with over 12,500 employees participated in the survey) - a response rate of 12.5%.

**Figure 1: Cities of Playford and Salisbury LGAs, Greater Adelaide**



### Employer sentiment

Central to business performance is employer sentiment. Results showed:

- Employers were relatively optimistic about their expectations for **growth** with one in two employers expecting moderate business growth and nearly 9% expecting strong growth to November 2014.
- Overall, employers were cautiously optimistic in their **intentions to invest** in the next 12 months (to November 2014) with 12% expecting a strong increase and a further 40% indicating a moderate increase in their expectation to invest.

- Eight percent of employers expected a strong increase in **sales** in the next 12 months, with an additional 45% indicating a moderate increase. One in four employers expected no change in sales, with a few (7%) expecting a moderate or strong decrease.
- Half the employers expected either a strong or moderate increase in business **profits**, with more than one third (37%) expecting no change.
- Employers were generally cautious in their **recruitment intentions** with the majority (61%) indicating no change in recruitment in the 12 months to November 2014 and only one-third indicating an intention to recruit during this time.

### Employing locally

However, almost one half of employers had no staff living within 5km of the workplace. Decisions about hiring local people were influenced by perspectives that some local people did not have the skills needed (39%) or lacked experience (36%).

### Organisational planning and performance

More than one in four employers did not conduct an annual performance review or have a formal written job description for any of their workers. More than two-thirds of employers had a business plan, while only 29% had a workforce plan.

Nearly 70% of employers indicated that hiring local people was desirable or very desirable.

### Top five factors that affect organisational performance -

- ✓ Attracting qualified staff
- ✓ Skills development for employees and managers
- ✓ Application of new technology
- ✓ Improving leadership skills within the organisation
- ✓ Employee participation in decision making

Organisational collaboration was significant in the region. Around four in ten (41%) establishments always or often collaborated through the exchange of skills. One quarter (24%) always or often exchanged knowledge, one in five (20%) shared equipment, while organisational sharing of staff (7%) was uncommon.

Employers identified tax burden, customer demand, competition in the market place, availability of capital and skills shortage as primary factors that affect performance.

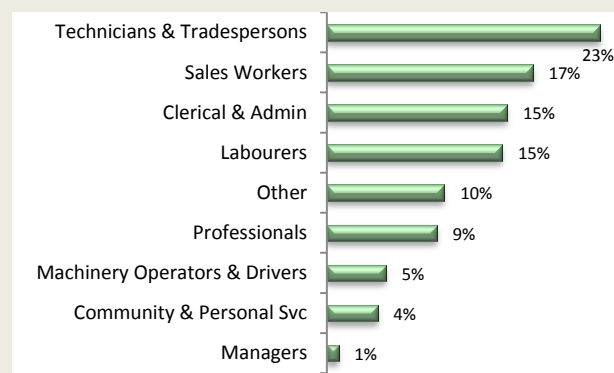
### Vacancies

There were an estimated<sup>2</sup> 1,000 vacancies in the region at November 2013 with around 3,500 vacancies expected from November 2013 to November 2014.<sup>3</sup> Vacancies (46%) were usually advertised via the internet with a significant proportion using informal methods (36%) to promote vacancies such as word of mouth, friends and colleagues. There was a high level of demand – both current and future -

for technicians and tradespersons, with one in five employers with a vacancy reporting an opening in these roles. The highest demand for these occupations came from the construction industry.

Attracting experienced and qualified staff was a major issue for employers in the area (reported by 37% and 38% of employers, respectively). Just over one in ten employers reported a hard-to-fill vacancy usually related to higher skilled occupations (most commonly technicians and tradespersons, professionals, and machinery operators).

Figure 2: Occupations required in the next 12 months (% of employers)



### Workforce development

The majority of employers reported that they followed **good workforce development and training practices**. Most (85%) **supported training and development**, while three-quarters (75%) **recognised prior learning**. Sixty percent of employers **formally assessed skill gaps** which were then addressed through training, mentoring and staff supervision. Training methods most commonly applied include on the job learning, formal training programs and in-house training courses.

Occupations requiring up-skilling in the next 12 months reflected the occupations identified as hard-to-fill including skilled trades, technical/associate professionals and professionals.

Three quarters (73%) of employers reported that they had arranged or funded training for staff in the last 12 months, although up-skilling was clearly recognised as a continual process as six in ten employers also indicated the need for updates before November 2014. Cost was the most commonly reported barrier to training, identified as an issue by one-third of employers.

Technical, job specific skills, IT user skills and problem solving skills need improving.

<sup>1</sup> Note that approximately 68% of Playford and 65% of Salisbury establishments were sole owner-operated or did not employ two persons and are not included in this survey. All reported data and results refer to enterprises with two or more employees.

<sup>2</sup> Note that regional estimates are based on survey responses and extrapolated to the Playford and Salisbury employer and employee populations.

<sup>3</sup> Noting that the survey responses pre-dated the GM Holden closure announcement.