



Tasmania's Regional Jobs Hubs network

Brief explainer

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The Regional Jobs Hubs (RJH) network brings local employers and jobseekers together to create employment pathways and training and job outcomes for Tasmanians in their local communities. The hubs began in 2017 as a cross-government community-led trial in four sites focused on addressing high unemployment rates and meeting employer and industry workforce demands. It has since expanded to a network of seven sites covering all of Tasmania's regional areas (see Appendix). Across the network, hubs share lessons from their practice in a Community of Policy and Practice and collectively inform statewide policy and program implementation. Based on its strong employment and training outcomes and engagement with business and industry, the initiative has secured funding through to 2027.

Bridging supply and demand

Hubs provide a range of services to support people into work.

Some of these focus on labour market supply such as one-to-one work with jobseekers on:

- strengths-based careers coaching and goal setting
- developing employability skills
- gaining access to training and work-related credentials.

Other services address employer demand-side issues, including reaching out to businesses, taking the time to understand their workforce needs and matching appropriate jobseekers. All hubs play a critical 'bridging role' to align supply and demand needs. For example, hubs work with employers, jobseekers and training organisations to identify skills gaps, train jobseekers in the skills industry needs, match them with local employers, and support both through the placement process and beyond.

Funding an ambition for systemic change

The [Department of State Growth](#) funds the initiative through grant deeds held by local organisations with demonstrated expertise of their local labour market and expansive local networks. Different types of entities deliver the hubs, from local council, neighbourhood houses and community service organisations through to industry-based economic development groups. Some hubs have a physical street presence while others operate from existing offices and focus more on outreach activities.

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which our organisation operates. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present.

The RJH Network's ambition is to disrupt business as usual in the employment, education and training system and services to improve employment and income opportunities for Tasmanians. The ambition sits at two levels:

1. System-level change: state-wide education, employment and training (EET) policy development and alignment.
2. Hub-level change: effective implementation of the RJH model.

To realise the ambition, the RJH is a model made up of specific structural and practice elements (see Appendix). These are deliberately designed to align policy and resources across state government portfolios and to ensure that local data and knowledge informs state and federal policy making.

Value of the Regional Jobs Hubs network initiative

The RJH network has had a real impact with over 4200 participants placed into work, over 2000 into training and many job seekers into roles where there are workforce shortages.

The [Brotherhood of St. Laurence \(BSL\) evaluation](#) of the initiative found certain conditions were critical to realising outcomes, including:

1. a person-centred and place-based approach that delivers meaningful employment outcomes for local people and employers
2. hubs providing a bridging role between local job seekers and employers to fill the workforce needs of local industries
3. having a governance architecture that connects local hubs, their advisory boards, a statewide network, and Jobs Tasmania staff underpinning the model enables hubs to shape and co-develop government policy and programs to address local need
4. a networked model enables hubs to share lessons learnt, problem-solve common challenges and begin to co-develop best-practice approaches
5. as an authoritative regional EET gateway, hubs are developing workforce solutions that respond and adapt to the region's current and future needs
6. having strong system stewardship by government guides the initiative towards systemic change.

Lessons for place-based and person-centred policy and programs

There is growing interest from Commonwealth and state governments, community organisations and philanthropy to use place-based models of service delivery as a way of addressing complex challenges that current human service systems fail to address. The challenge is how to uphold the locally tailored and flexible principles that define place-based approaches while commissioning a consistent national model with transparency and accountability.

The RJH model is a working example of a place-based network operating at scale led by government and driven by community in a genuine collaborative partnership. It demonstrates the importance of:



- **Designing for local expertise and flexibility**

The flexibility of the hub model allows each hub to vary their emphasis on supply or demand in line with the resources and opportunities specific to their community.

- **Multilevel governance structure that ensures bottom-up and top-down flows of information and resources**

The hubs are embedded in their communities and guided by regional advisory boards. They highlight (from the 'bottom up') to state government the challenges caused by poorly designed and duplicative policies and programs. At the same time, Jobs Tasmania works with hubs (from the 'top-down') to shape the design and implementation of emerging policies, such as the state's Youth Jobs Strategy.

- **A changed role for government as system steward**

The Tasmanian Government acts as system steward and partner, providing funding, network administrative and research support, and working across government agencies and with industry and peak bodies to drive and align government policy.

BSL's role as learning partner

Jobs Tasmania approached the Youth Opportunity team in BSL's Social Policy and Research Centre to conduct a developmental and outcomes evaluation of the Regional Jobs Hubs initiative. This followed our work in Tasmania's Housing and Youth sectors, as well as over a decade of work at the nexus of research, policy and practice honing an [Applied Systemic Change approach](#).

Rather than an outsider 'evaluator' assessing and validating outcomes, BSL positioned itself as 'learning partner', walking alongside the hubs to help develop their model and identify the value of RJH.

BSL's contributions include:

- setting up a Community of Policy and Practice that facilitates shared learning across the hubs and brings together hubs' advocacy ambitions as a collective network
- co-developing frameworks (e.g. employment typology) that articulate RJH's role aligning supply and demand in place
- co-designing with Jobs Tasmania a multi-level governance structure to drive systemic change
- refining and codifying Jobs Tasmania's role as system stewards in driving an ambitious reform ambition.



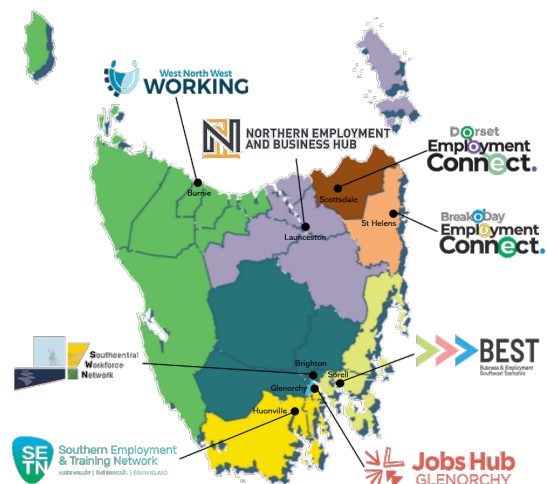
Appendix

Origins and expansion of a community-led trial

2017	<p>Community-led trial, four initial hubs</p> <p>To address persistent high unemployment and unfulfilled workforce demands of employers and industry, the Tasmanian Government begins a community-led trial to improve employment and training in four locations. Hubs are a response to the commonwealth system's failure to ensure that employment services build the capabilities of jobseekers to secure decent work and for employers to access a skilled workforce. This cross-state government effort involved Social Services, Commerce and Industry, Skills Tasmania, and Premier and Cabinet.</p>
2021	<p>Expansion to a Regional Jobs Hubs network of seven regions</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government commits \$10.6 million over three years, under the Local Jobs for Local People agenda, for the Regional Jobs Hub network initiative. The expansion to seven sites, covering all regional areas in the state, marks a transition from localised responses to a networked model. This advances regional issues to inform state-wide policy and program implementation. Funding administration and program support for existing hubs transfers to the newly established Jobs Tasmania unit.</p> <p>The expansion follows the release of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC, 2021) report that highlights job creation, access to jobs, and workforce skills and training gaps as key challenges to economic recovery from COVID-19. It identifies place-based networks that support people looking for jobs, and employers looking for new staff as a building block for improving employment and income opportunities for Tasmanians.</p>
2024	<p>Continued funding to 2027</p> <p>In the 2024-25 state budget, Regional Jobs Hubs secures \$13 million to continue through to 2027.</p>

Coverage of the RJH Network

The Regional Jobs Hubs, their Advisory Boards and Jobs Tasmania work as a state-wide network that advances regional issues to collectively inform state-wide policy and program implementation. This involves sharing and harnessing diverse expertise and learnings through a common model, identifying as a networked community with a shared ambition and policy agenda, and collaboration between the hubs and government. This work takes place both within and between Community of Policy and Practice meetings.



The RJH model

Ten design features:

Structural elements of the model

1. Person-centred and place-based approach
2. Bridging role between supply and demand
3. Top-down/bottom-up governance architecture
4. Networked model
5. Hub as an authoritative regional EET gateway
6. Collective stewardship
7. Active and intentional system stewardship by Jobs Tasmania
8. Commissioning approach
9. Embedded Learning Partner to support implementation and evolution of the model
10. Developmental evaluation

Four (measurable) Change Domains:

Practice elements of the model

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|-----------------------------------|
| Data & Evidence |
| Network Governance |
| Community & Industry Partnerships |
| Strategic Learning |