



An Australian Government Initiative



PEEL WA

2nd October 2023

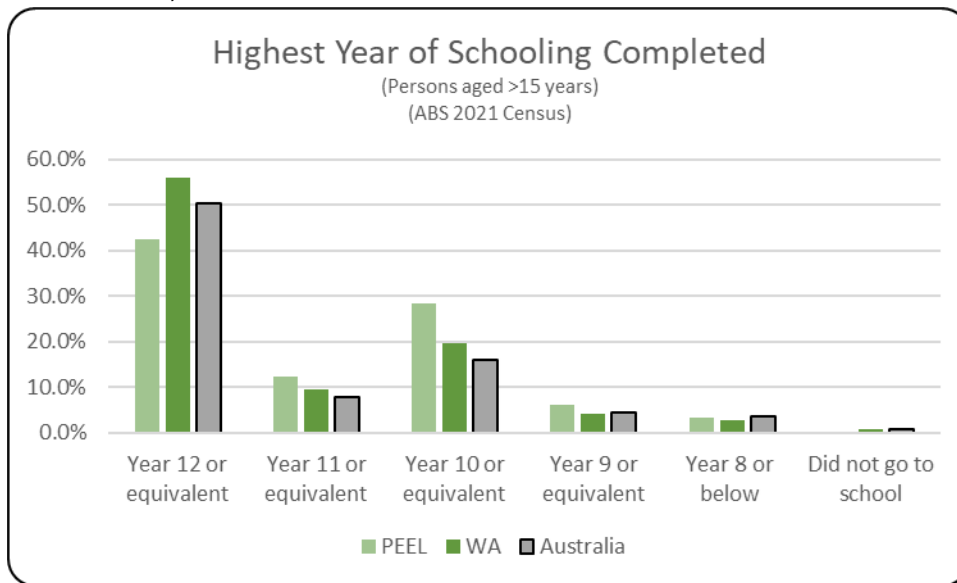
Submission to Suburban University Study Hubs program

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

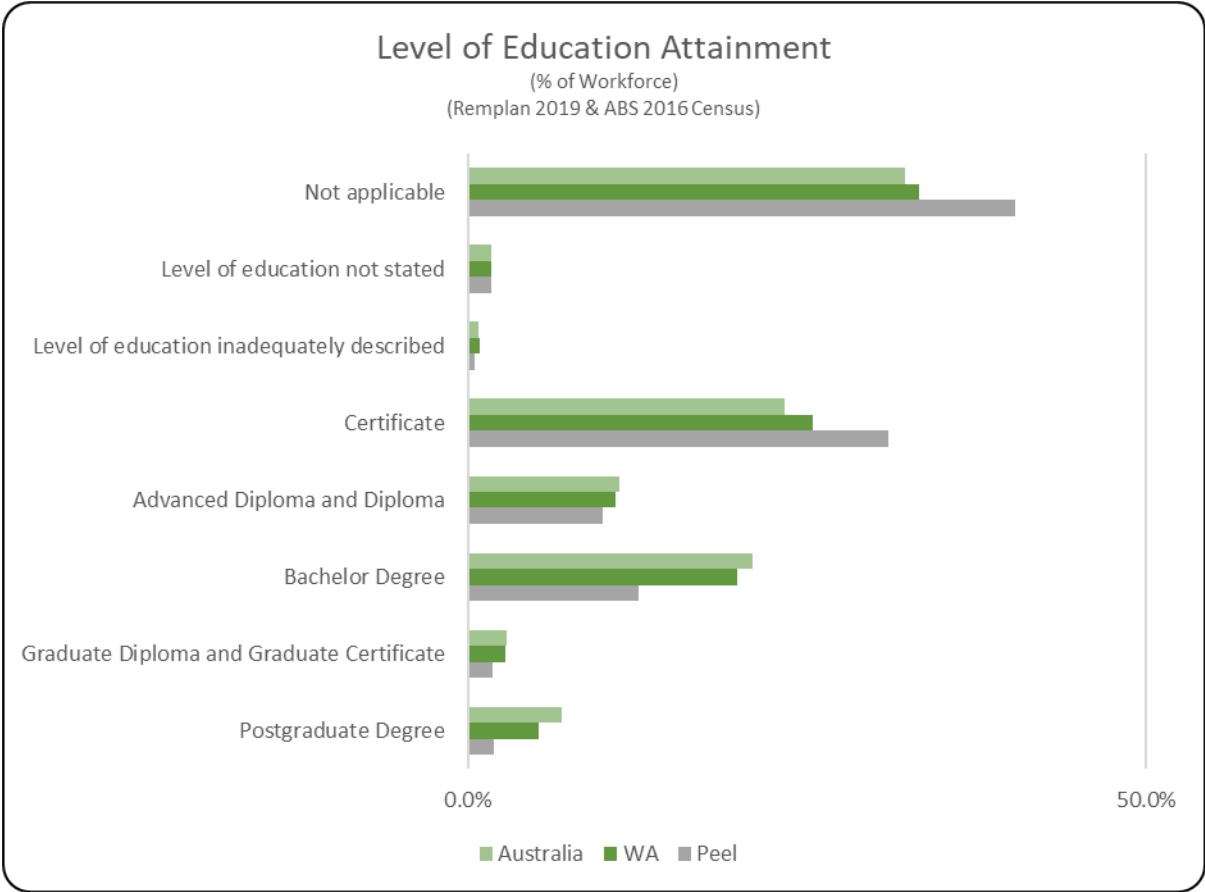
The information, comments and views put forward in this submission are made based on the circumstances existent in the Peel region of WA, centred on the Local Government Area of the City of Mandurah.

This area is characterised by lower than average:

- Completion rate for Year 12 studies;
- Levels of completed post school qualifications at Advanced Diploma Level and above;
- ICSEA, SEIFA and AECD index scores:

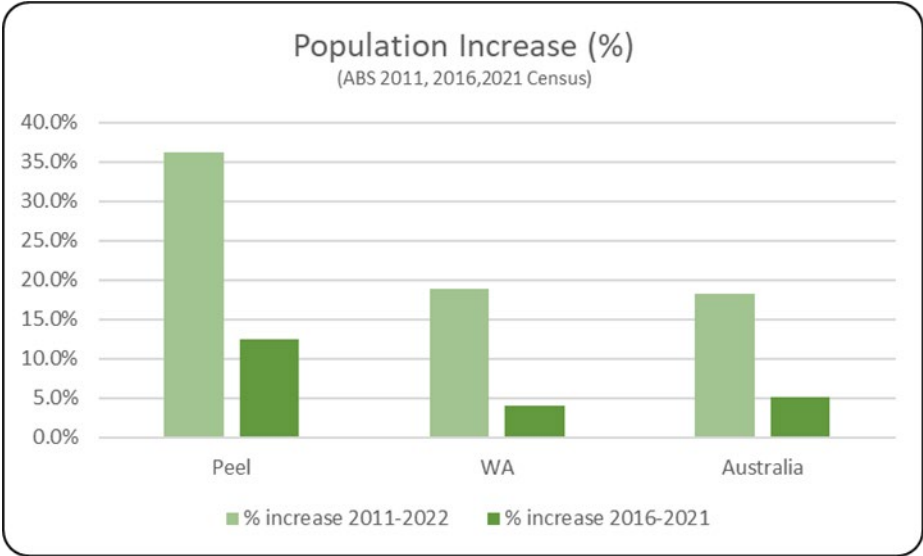


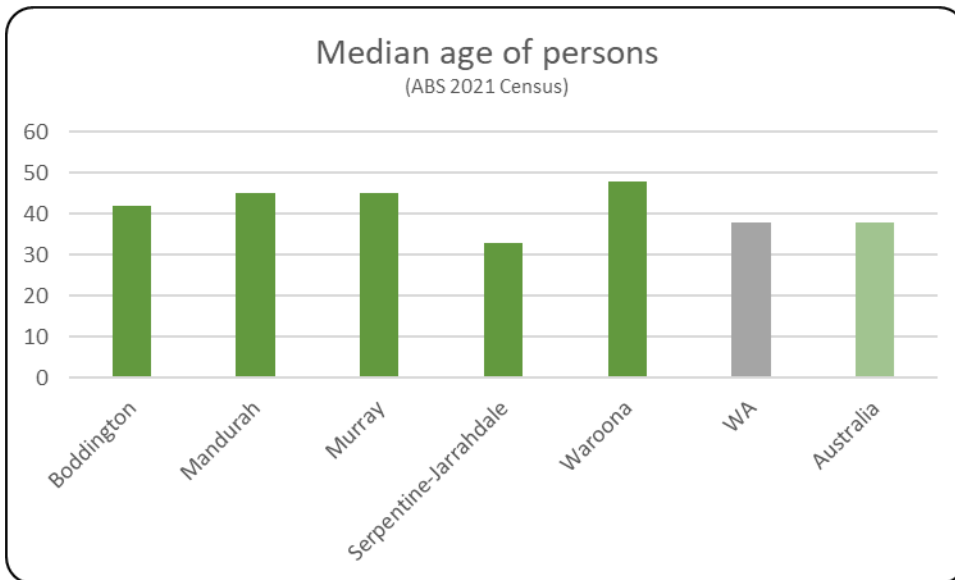
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And higher than average:

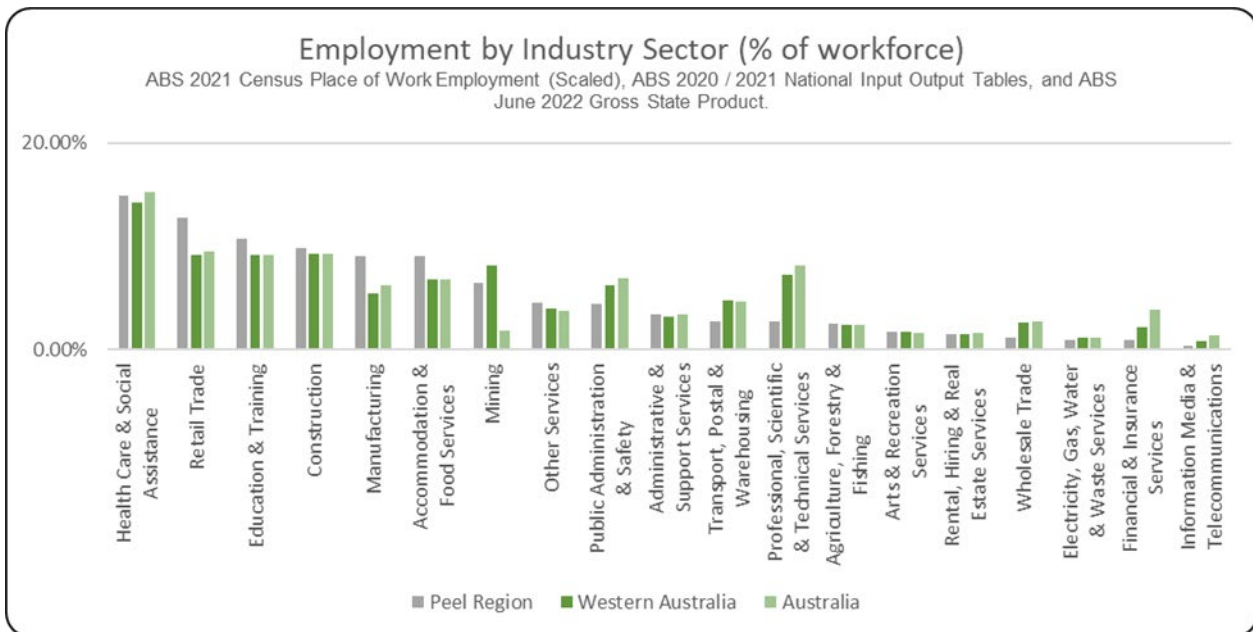
- Population growth;
- Population median age;

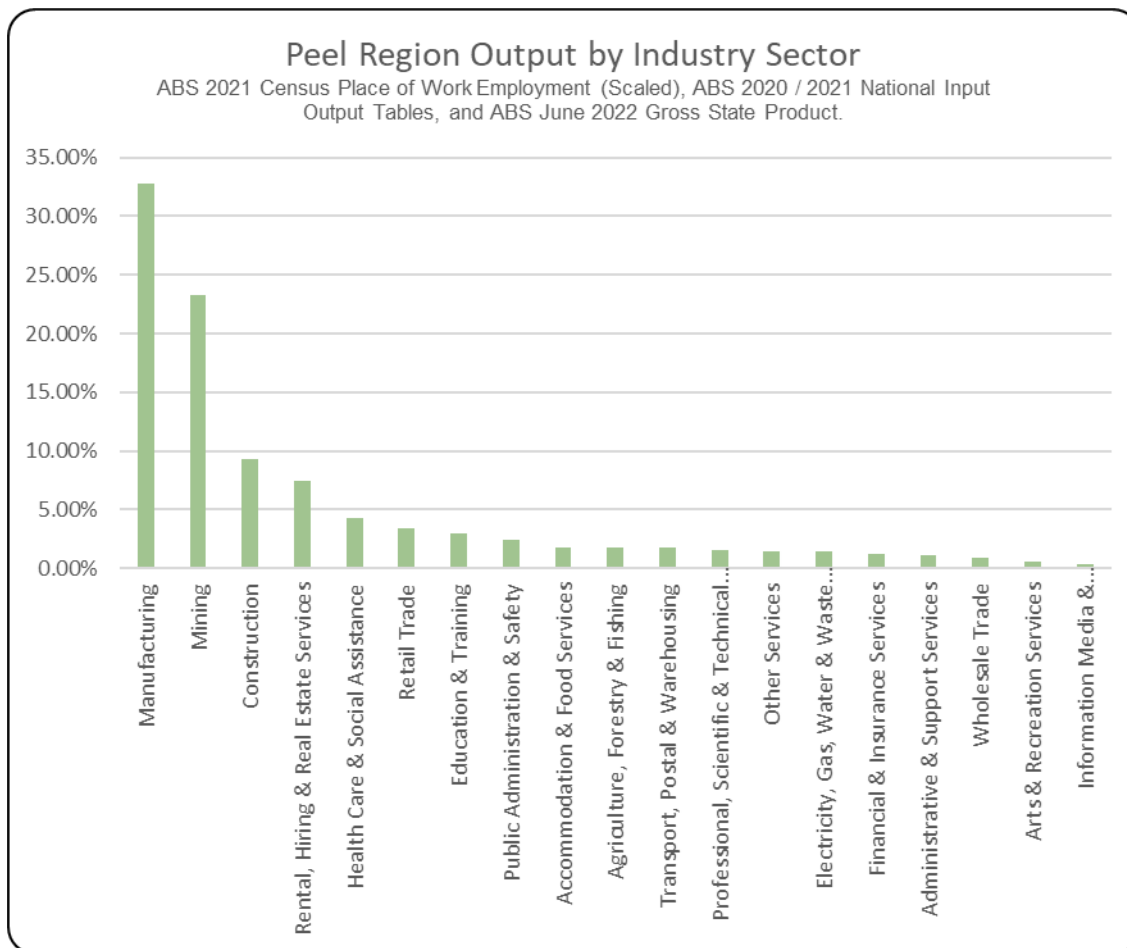




While previously an ineligible area for the Regional University Study Hubs Program, the Suburban University Study Hubs Program provides a much-needed opportunity for the region to develop their people and prepare them for the future of work.

Mandurah currently hosts a campus of Murdoch University which only offers Nursing qualifications; and a TAFE campus with offerings and qualifications not based on local industry need (see <https://www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au/mandurah-courses>).





What is the aim of the Suburban University Study Hubs Program?

1. How can a place-based approach be fostered, as part of the Suburban University Study Hubs program, that ensures the voice of local communities is integrated in their design and operation?

A place-based approach can be fostered by development of a governance model that includes relevant partners consisting of key stakeholders from the region being serviced driving a well-developed community engagement strategy.

These stakeholders could include:

- Local Governments & Regional Development Agencies
- Universities & TAFE
- Education providers
- Major industry representatives

The governance model would be characterised by partnering and a shared agenda, shared design, shared stewardship, and shared accountability for outcomes and impacts.

An effective community and stakeholder engagement strategy would align course offerings to industry specific community needs, and qualifications in demand to address localised skill shortages.

2. How can the Suburban University Study Hubs widen participation and support and extend further study opportunities, adding to existing or planned investments?

Hubs should demonstrate how they will address localised barriers to further education and training, and how the Hub will meet the needs of the community, such as:

- Targeted student support in literacy and numeracy tuition;
- Implement access, enabling and transition pathways to allow for flexible entry requirements;
- Introduce sub-degree courses and micro-credentials with shorter study timeframes and financial commitment, but which provide a pathway to full degrees. This would allow more flexible entry options and might attract students who are first in family and are nervous about committing to a full degree;
- Providing opportunities for professional and business development to accelerate the effectiveness and expansion of local businesses;
- Integrating existing programs designed to increase the participation of young people in tertiary education, particularly those that may not meet current entry requirements. A local example of this is the Peel Bright Minds Trail Blazers Program (see www.peelbrightminds.com.au)

3. How can equity be embedded into the design of Suburban University Study Hubs?

Equity can be embedded into the design of Suburban University Study Hubs through the design and implementation of Diversity and Equity Strategies and Policies to ensure student equity cohorts are given priority placements, including:

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds;
- Students from rural and regional areas;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- Culturally and linguistically diverse;
- Students with disability;
- Students not meeting traditional tertiary entrance requirements.

4. Where multiple communities may co-exist within the same area (for example, ethnic, cultural, industry-based, etc.), how can Suburban University Study Hubs ensure they meet the needs of these different communities?

Hubs should identify the existence and scale of these communities through detailed environmental scans that would inform any business case supporting development of a Hub. The needs of these communities should be met through locally relevant policy developed through the governance model.

5. How can we ensure that Suburban University Study Hubs operate to support students engaging with any provider, while also ensuring strong connections with local providers, campuses and leaders?

Hubs should establish Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with providers that have students participating in the Hub. The SLAs would provide the Hub with the necessary information regarding their students and their individual needs.

Hubs should develop, as part of their governance model, have dedicated community and stakeholder engagement strategies to establish collaborative relationships with local students, local providers, secondary schools, and industry.

What barriers will the Suburban University Study Hubs address and what services will they provide?

6. What dedicated support services should Suburban University Study Hubs provide? Are there gaps in support for under-represented cohorts (for example, First Nations students, students with disability) Suburban University Study Hubs could address?

Dedicated support services should be offered to support students with needs in the areas of language and Literacy and Numeracy and those from CaLD backgrounds those with a disability and/or First Nations people.

This support should be provided in partnership with local agencies already providing those services.

Regulatory flexibility be provided through the Higher Education Standards to allow courses delivered by Hubs be taught with non-traditional teaching methods, that match the needs of the non-traditional student.

7. How can Suburban University Study Hubs provide a culturally safe environment for all students, that is relevant to them and their local context?

Hubs should dedicated social spaces to celebrate diversity and culture with events and social functions for people to meet and collaborate.

8. Are there examples (in Australia or internationally) of similar support services (in tertiary education or other sectors) that could inform the design of Suburban University Study Hubs?

Warwick University in the UK has a dedicated 'Widening Participation Team' which runs a wide range of events and activities for young people aged between 9 and 19, targeted at state school educated students, first in family, low socio-economic backgrounds, and students who come from neighbourhoods where there is low progression to higher education.

The team aims to inspire young minds and maximise their potential, through unique opportunities both in school and on campus, and to supporting young people and their parents/carers to make informed decisions on a local, regional and national level. Access and Participation Plan (warwick.ac.uk)

9. Are there existing support mechanisms that could be leveraged and offered through the Suburban University Study Hubs? How could the Hubs provide a useful additional impact and avoid duplication of services?

Hubs could accommodate a variety of education services so they become comprehensive support centres that address academic, career, personal, and technological needs, creating a holistic environment that enhances the educational experience for students in suburban and peri-urban areas which do not have significant Higher Education presence.

Additionally, the collaborative approach with educational institutions and community partners can help ensure that these services are effectively delivered and meet the unique requirements of the local student population and the greater community.

10. How can Suburban University Study Hubs best communicate the supports they provide to local students and support aspiration in their local community?

Study Hubs should be active and visible members of the community in which they operate.

Implementation of a stakeholder and community engagement strategy along with Service Level Agreements with local education providers should be used to promote the Hub to potential students.

11. What role could Suburban University Study Hubs play in supporting enabling/tertiary preparation courses for students from under-represented backgrounds?

Suburban Hubs have the opportunity to be a more flexible form of Higher Education - an institution that provides specific and tailored student support to underrepresented groups who may not succeed in a traditional university setting.

- Hubs should deliver enabling/tertiary preparation courses, micro-credentials, and other upskilling courses such as, in the case of Mandurah and the existing Murdoch University Campus, the Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse Conversion program in a holistic way which meets the needs of a working student.

Where will the Suburban University Study Hubs be located?

12. What factors should be considered when selecting locations for Suburban University Study Hubs?

- Levels of educational attainment;
- Levels of socio-economic disadvantage;
- Levels of the uptake of ATAR in public schools;
- Distance from significant university campuses (greater than 40km/30mins);
- Levels of potential demand (number of students).

13. What other types of social infrastructure should be located in close proximity to Suburban University Study Hubs to maximise their success?

- Childcare Facilities;
- Supermarket/Café/Hospitality;
- Public transport;
- Support services for students with needs for them;
- Public open spaces.

14. How can Suburban University Study Hubs complement, rather than replace, the innovative solutions being implemented by education providers to support students in outer metropolitan and peri-urban areas?

This question assumes there are currently innovative solutions being implemented by education providers to support students in this outer metropolitan/peri-urban area. We see no evidence of that occurring in Mandurah through either the existing TAFE or University providers.

Hubs can serve as valuable extensions of the existing educational ecosystem by addressing specific challenges faced by under-represented cohorts and serve to enhance the overall educational experience for students.

Hubs should aim to build the capacity of the student with tailored student support, and deliver enabling/tertiary preparation courses, micro-credentials, and other upskilling courses which meet the needs of the community and local industry and businesses.

Who can apply?

15. What skills, services and attributes should an organisation be able to demonstrate as evidence of their ability to establish and operate a Suburban University Study Hub?

The current guidelines of the Regional University Study Hub Program appear to be adequate in this regard.

16. What governance mechanisms should be in place to ensure each Suburban University Study Hub is operating effectively and meeting the needs of the local community?

Development of a governance model should include relevant partners consisting of key stakeholders from the region being serviced driving a well-developed community engagement strategy.

These stakeholders could include:

- Local Governments & Regional Development Agencies
- Universities & TAFE
- Education providers
- Major industry representatives

The governance model would be characterised by partnering and a shared agenda, shared design, shared stewardship, and shared accountability for outcomes and impacts.

An effective community and stakeholder engagement strategy would align course offerings to industry specific community needs, and qualifications in demand to address localised skill shortages.

17. Should a single organisation be eligible to operate multiple hubs? If so, how could local community drive and engagement be built into the Suburban University Study Hub operating model?

For a community and its stakeholders to accept, support and “buy in” to the Hub the operator, particularly in a peri-urban or peri-regional area such as Mandurah, should already have a presence in, and relationships with the key stakeholders in that area.

18. How could the Suburban University Study Hubs encourage collaboration between hubs and education providers (including universities and VET)?

Collaboration could be encouraged through the development of Service Level Agreements with TAFEs, Universities and local schools to provide support and drive student and industry participation and investment.

What will the Suburban University Study Hubs Program fund?

19. How can Suburban University Study Hubs encourage and support partnerships that benefit students? What incentives would be most effective to promote partnership development?

Engagement with industry, peak stakeholder bodies and relevant local organisations would market and showcase success stories to attract student placements.

20. What learnings are there from existing initiatives, and/or are there new ideas that could support the design and development of the Suburban University Study Hubs, noting that they are intended to be different from institution specific study centres/hubs.

Unable to comment.

If you require any further information please contact me on 0428 947 837 or drd@rdapeel.org.au



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