JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

in the Victorian Local Government Sector

LGPRO
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PROFESSIONALS
THE**LEADING**VOICE

Identifying job vacancies and pathways for:

+ women over 45
+ young adults under 25
+ Indigenous people

to meet employment shortages particularly in regional Victoria in the Local Government sector

A project completed by LGPro for Jobs Victoria. LGPro is the leading professional association for officers in the Victorian Local Government sector

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local government areas in Victoria are experiencing unprecedented increases in the demand for their services as people change the way they live and work as a result of the Covid pandemic. There has been an increase in people moving from metropolitan areas to rural and regional areas. This trend is expected to continue with a predicted long-term increase in the number of people choosing to work from home or adopt other flexible working arrangements.

LGPro (the peak body for local government professionals in Victoria) has examined recent job vacancy rates and the skill needs of the local government sector in Victoria.

For this report, local government areas were grouped according to the Local Government Victoria categories: metropolitan, interface, regional cities, large rural, and small rural councils.

The survey results (average participation rate 35.4%) indicate that local governments are experiencing unprecedented shortages of skilled workers and have longer vacancy rates than they have ever experienced before. Contributing factors include housing shortages in rural locations, availability of people with appropriate qualifications in relevant professional fields, and less competitive salaries overall in local government. Local Government HR practitioners and some recruitment agencies working in local government also contributed their experience through interviews and forums.

The findings from these consultations generated five proposals to address job vacancies and skills shortages in the local government sector including enhanced work experience programs, pre-employment training programs, graduate programs and apprentice and trainee programs. These proposals were put to Jobs Victoria for their consideration. They are not the subject of this summary report on job vacancies and skill shortages.

The proposals developed for Jobs Victoria are the outcome of wide-ranging consultations and are supported by the local government sector. Implementation by local governments will require financial assistance and professional support. They are the subject of a separate process to this summary report but their intent is to address some of the job vacancies and skills shortages identified in this consultation process.

INTRODUCTION

Local Government Professionals (LGPro) is the member association and leading voice for people working in local government in Victoria.

Jobs Victoria, the State Government agency that connects employers with the staff they need, commissioned LGPro to review job vacancies in local governments and to develop options to upskill job seekers to fill these vacancies.

The project plan, scope and constraints are at **Attachment A**.

CONTEXT

Before the COVID 19 pandemic changed the way we live and work, most rural councils in Victoria were growing by around two per cent per annum (approximately 13,000 people)[i] with local government areas on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne experiencing some of the highest growth rates in Australia.

Now, with an increasing number of people working from home on a permanent basis, the number of people relocating to regional Victoria and accessing local government services is increasing. As a result, local Governments are experiencing the highest level of job vacancies for decades, particularly in skilled professions.

RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

Creating meaningful groupings of Councils for this research

There are 79 Councils in Victoria ranging from the smallest (Borough of Queenscliff) through to the largest being Melbourne City Council.

The map below shows the names and locations of the 47 non-metropolitan councils in Victoria.

- Thirty-eight of these councils are classified as rural and cover 79 per cent of Victoria's land area (June 2011), with a combined population of approximately 745,000 people (Census 2016).

- Thirty-seven of these councils are members of Rural Councils Victoria. [1]

- Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) represents the local councils of the 10 largest regional cities in Victoria.[2]

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[1] https://ruralcouncilsvictoria.org.au/about/ accessed 4 November 2021
[2] http://www.regionalcitiesvictoria.com.au/ accessed 4 November 2021
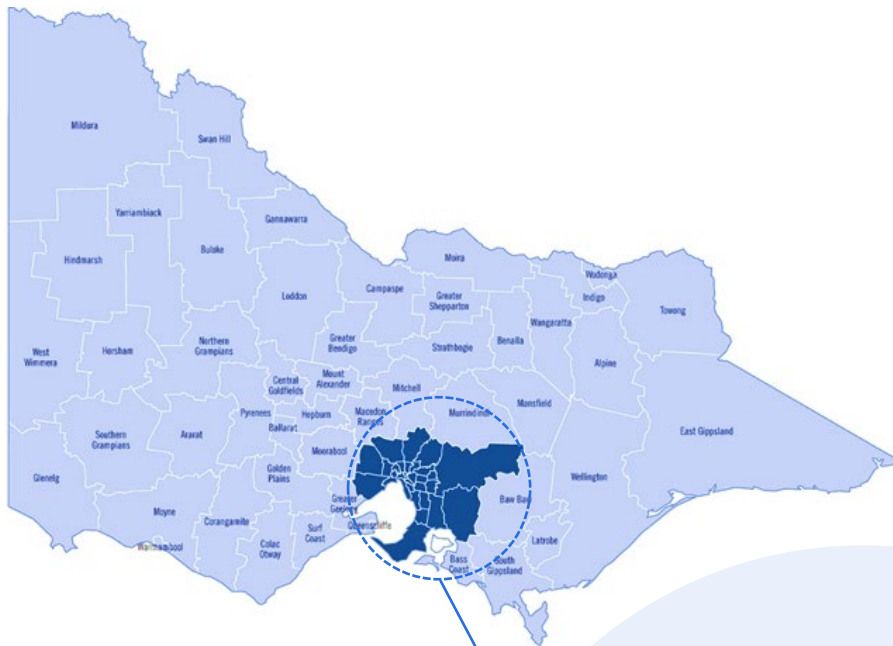
This map shows the names and locations of the 32 metropolitan councils in Victoria

To identify trends in job vacancies, skill shortages and cohorts of potential job seekers, LGPro grouped local governments together using the Local Government Victoria classification system. Local Governments are divided into five categories:

+ Metropolitan

+ Interface

+ Regional City

+ Large Rural

+ Small Rural

These categories group local government areas according to their location, population size and their capacity to pay (in terms of salaries) for difficult to recruit positions. The classifications of local government areas are shown in the table at Attachment B.
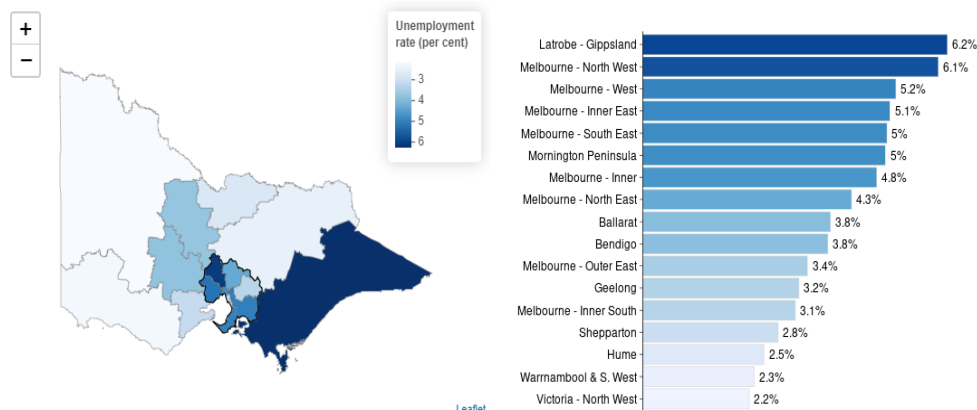
Variations in Unemployment rates – regional, gender, age, and ethnicity

The map below shows the distribution and total percentage of unemployed across Victoria as of July 2021

Unemployment rate across Victoria ranged from 2.2 per cent in Victoria - North West to 6.2 per cent in Latrobe - Gippsland as at July 2021

Unemployment rate by region (SA4), per cent

Region	Rate
Latrobe - Gippsland	6.2%
Melbourne - North West	6.1%
Melbourne - West	5.2%
Melbourne - Inner East	5.1%
Melbourne - South East	5%
Mornington Peninsula	5%
Melbourne - Inner	4.8%
Melbourne - North East	4.3%
Ballarat	3.8%
Bendigo	3.8%
Melbourne - Outer East	3.4%
Geelong	3.2%
Melbourne - Inner South	3.1%
Shepparton	2.8%
Hume	2.5%
Warrnambool & S. West	2.3%
Victoria - North West	2.2%

Source: ABS Labour Force, Detailed (monthly). Note: data is not seasonally adjusted; smoothed using a 3 month rolling average.

Source: ABS Labour Force, Detailed (monthly).

Identifying unemployed cohorts

A table showing unemployment rates for regional Victoria (ABS data for July 2021) is at **Attachment C**. This information is grouped according to Jobs Victoria Regions and provides details of unemployment rates for the groups of interest to this review: Indigenous people, females, mature age people, and young people.

+ The highest rates of unemployment for Indigenous people (over the age of 15) are in metropolitan Melbourne, particularly Western Melbourne and South Eastern Melbourne and Peninsula. More than 91% of unemployed Indigenous Victorians are in metropolitan Melbourne with 8.9% in regional Victoria.

+ The highest percentage of unemployed women are in the Barwon (53.47%), Bendigo (53.15%), South Coast of Victoria (52.85%) and South Eastern Melbourne (52.04%). The lowest are in Inner Metropolitan (47.81%) and the Wimmera Mallee (49.36%). These percentages were then applied to the data on mature age unemployment rates to estimate how many women over 50 may be unemployed. The highest estimated total numbers of unemployed women aged over 50 are in South Eastern Melbourne (6516), Western Melbourne (5463), North Eastern Melbourne (5154) and Inner Metropolitan (4735). The lowest estimated total numbers of unemployed women aged over 50 are in South Coast of Victoria (818) and Bendigo (1167).

+ Unemployment numbers for young people are highest in South Eastern Melbourne (6788), Inner Metropolitan Melbourne (6474), Western Melbourne (6095) and North Eastern Melbourne (5599). The regions with the lowest rates of unemployment for youth were South Coast of Victoria (698) and Bendigo (1137).

Job vacancies in local government

A survey of local governments asked for information on the number of job vacancies within each local government area. The average number of vacancies in the previous 12 months was 111. The number of vacancies ranged from 449 vacancies (response from an Interface Council) and to 5 vacancies (response from a Small Rural Council).

When the Working for Victoria (WFV) vacancies are added into the mix, specifically for the past twelve months, the figures increase to an average of 156 per participant council. This ranged from 678 for an Interface council to 27 for a Small Rural municipality.

Skills Required to fill vacant positions

The survey asked participants to segregate their actual vacancies and estimate of projected vacancies against skill and educational requirement categories. The responses are reported below.

+ Secondary Schooling or Certificate 1/2

The most vacancies in the past 12 months and projected for the next 12 months were for jobs requiring secondary schooling or Certificate 1/2. The average number of vacancies for the past 12 months in this category for each council has been just over 10 vacancies, while the average projection for the next 12 months was for nearly 13 vacancies.

+ Tertiary Qualifications

The second highest rated category was for positions that required a university degree. For the past year this vacancy rate was around 10 positions, and it was projected that this would fall to 9 positions in the coming 12 months.

+ Diploma or advanced Diploma

For paraprofessional roles requiring a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, the respective averages were 7 for current vacancies and 8 for projected vacancies.

+ Certificate 3 or 4

For semi-skilled roles that required a Certificate 3 or 4, the average current vacancy rate was 6 roles but the projected roles in this category were 9 for the coming year.

Skills and Qualifications Required for Job Vacancies
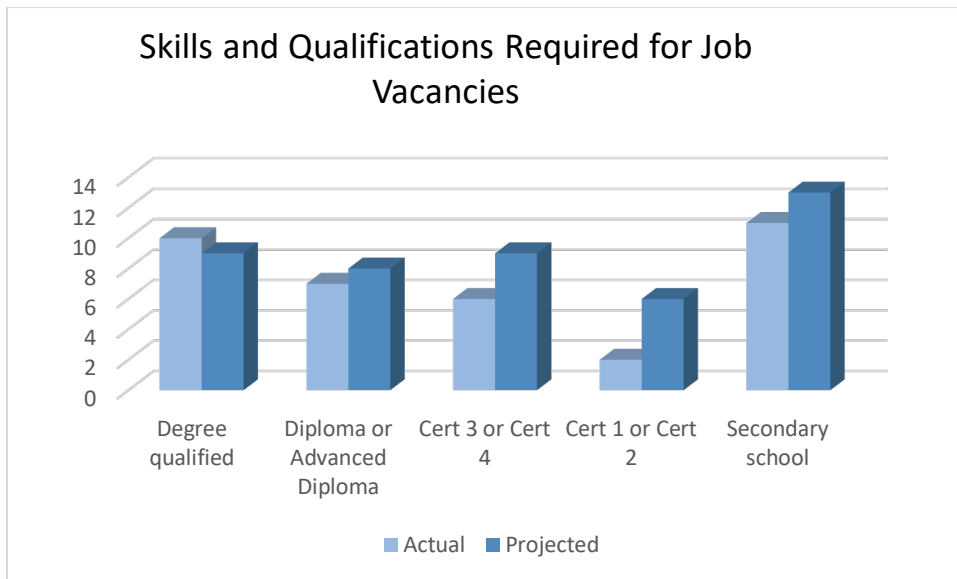
At many councils' recruitment to entry level roles (e.g. waste, depot and leisure roles) and other entry level traineeships and apprenticeships is underlined outsourced through third parties so these roles are not counted in councils' vacancies or projected vacancies. Respondents also anticipated there will be a requirement to re-engage a significant number of workers once leisure facilities are able to re-open following the pandemic.

The range of professional or semi-professional roles that are current vacancies include (in order of mention by survey participants) engineers, planners, accountants, building surveyors, immunisation nurses, pre-school teachers, project officers, governance officers and commu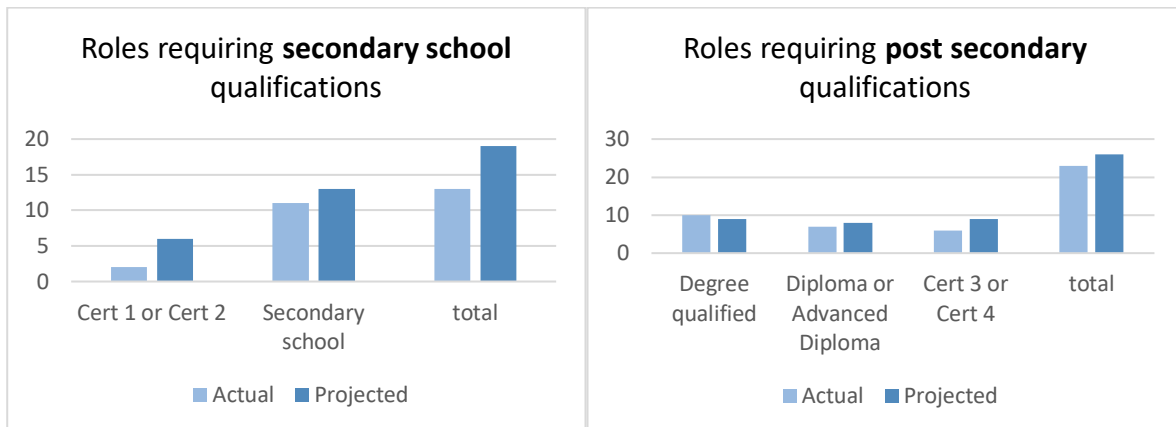nity care workers. One council also mentioned an increasing demand for people with OHS qualifications arising from the pandemic.

Roles requiring secondary school qualifications

Roles requiring post secondary qualifications

When the Working For Victoria roles are added into the evaluation of skills required to fill vacant positions, there was no significant difference reported other than noting that these roles were mostly at the Band 3 or 4 so there was little need for tertiary qualifications. Many of these roles also related to pandemic responses by councils and required little or no qualifications.

Lessons from current recruitment strategies

Councils identified that in the last 12 months, 112 roles had required an alternative recruitment strategy as they could not be filled in the first round of recruitment. This can lead to significant additional costs and stresses in an organisation where a critical position is vacant for a long period. Some of the options applied included secondments or using agency staff or contractors while the position was re-advertised.

Several respondents noted that in the last year many roles required two or three advertisements to fill positions. These councils were predominantly metropolitan or interface councils but there were several small shires that had to re-advertise many roles in the past year. The explanations provided for this included:

+ lack of candidate talent pools for council roles especially in IT, engineering, EHOs, Risk and Occupational Health and Safety

+ some roles were in distant parts of country Victoria requiring applicants to move

+ some roles required high levels of qualification such as Building Surveyors and Maternal Child Health nurses and these skill levels are not easily attracted to country locations with the current salaries on offer

+ Local government pay rates are not competitive compared to the private sector and there is a wide variation of pay rates between rural and metropolitan councils

+ with work-from-home conditions, people living in rural Victoria can work remotely for higher-paying metropolitan jobs

+ some roles are temporary (resulting from parental leave or long service leave) and it is difficult to attract suitable candidates for short periods

+ many of the roles on offer in country Victoria are part-time and therefore cannot attract high quality candidates seeking/needing full time work

+ many candidates are submitting applications to comply with requirements to qualify for unemployment benefits, but they don't meet the basic requirements for the roles

The average number of applicants per advertised role varied from 0 applicants in a small rural shire in a remote location to 250 applicants in a large metropolitan council. Generally, all councils found that the higher the qualifications required for a position, the less applications were received.

One council replied there had been less applications during the COVID pandemic potentially due to the risk of moving to a less secure position (with a probationary period) and the very high demand for technical and specialist roles. Other factors identified for the small number of applicants in rural settings included:

+ Lack of services to attract people to a regional area

+ Lack of connectivity (internet access, speed, and reliability of service)

+ Lack of childcare to attract people to a regional area

+ Lack of suitable housing

+ Lack of public transport

+ Lack of pay parity with surrounding councils

Sourcing suitable applicants for roles in urban planning, project management, digital and IT, and leadership roles in the maternal child health space was particularly difficult for some councils. This was resulting from a range of factors including lower salary, less available talent in a highly competitive market and Councils not articulating an appealing employee value proposition (EVP). Smaller councils also needed to source applicants with a mix of skills and experience for more senior hybrid roles in their organisations and these mixes were often unusual and related to the retiring or departing incumbent.

In general, most councils took about 1 to 2 months to fill vacancies, but it could be much longer in some rural areas.

+ Some councils took up to 7 – 8 months to fill vacancies due to poor candidate pools

+ Few or no applications sometimes required councils to reconfigure the role to make it more attractive or for a different cohort of applicants e.g., senior engineering role reconfigured to enable graduates to apply

+ Funding models sometimes held up the process e.g. Working for Victoria funding

+ The Police background check and Working with Children check process took up to 8 - 10 weeks earlier this year due to IT issues

+ Some successful candidates need to give long notice periods at their relinquishing organisation that held up the overall process

+ Some successful candidates turned down the roles when the remuneration on offer was not the same or better than their current employment

+ Some difficult to fill roles were even hampered by the tight labour market when they were given to recruitment consultants, as there were no available candidates at the remuneration level on offer.

+ Mandatory vaccination requirements have also impacted recruitment fields

The survey also asked what delays resulted from recruitment processes in their council. Responses included:

+ limited resources to do recruitment

+ managers are flat out and it takes them a long time to do recruitment

+ some councils wait for the availability of candidates for interviews

+ some councils cannot afford to engage a recruitment consultant to assist with the process

+ some councils do not offer sufficient remuneration to attract candidates

+ reviewing positions before advertising can take time

+ the pandemic and working from home arrangements delayed the process

+ some councils wait until a position has closed before assessing applications which can lead to suitable candidates seeking opportunities elsewhere

These delays in the recruitment process resulted in other implications for councils as well. These included:

+ no handover with departing staff

+ critical gaps or shortages of staff requiring other team members to pick up the work

+ missing out on the best candidates

+ backfilling in other parts of the organisation to cover these gaps

+ candidates having to follow up when time frames are stretched impacting on council's desirability as a prospective place to work and reputation

+ recent delays with Police background checks and Working with Children checks meant candidates accepted roles with other employers who did not require these checks

+ Successful counter offers from current employers

The Working for Victoria recruitment model of a centralised and speedy recruitment process and short in-house interviews for suitable candidates meant that many high calibre candidates were introduced to councils that would not otherwise have considered them as desirable places of employment. After this program concluded, former participants have been successful in gaining on-going roles in either their auspicing council or adjoining councils.

Several recruitment agencies working in the local government sector provided their insights into job vacancies and skill shortages in the sector.

Recruitment agencies are being used by councils to recruit suitable applicants for roles in:

+ economic development

+ organisational transformation especially digital

+ advocacy and government relations

+ building surveyors

+ corporate professionals such as governance and HR

They were finding that CEOs were expressing a lot of interest in improving the agility of employees in their IT, HR, governance, and financial areas. One provider commented that there are lots of change and movement in the sector and they are the busiest they have ever been in this sector. They also noted that the state government was now 'sucking in' talent from the local government sector in recognition of the good people coming up through the ranks at councils. Councils that were insisting on a return to traditional ways of working (full time in the office) were also losing good candidates who were seeking more contemporary hybrid ways of working.

They also recommended that councils should be looking at more contemporary roles such as business analysts to strengthen their workforces for the future.

It was also reported that there has been increasing demand across the sector particularly for senior roles. Some rural councils have not been able to afford external recruitment and search activities. Recruiting agencies are finding that 'search' is a very important component of their business, as print advertising only delivers about 5% of their candidates.

Recruiters are finding candidates are more interested in flexible arrangements with several rural appointments coming from locations outside the local government area, including interstate. Candidates are also now coming from other sectors and local government was tapping into this broader talent pool. Of particular concern for young professionals was the perception that local government was not a good career move.

Recruiting agencies noted that Metropolitan and Interface councils were not experiencing many issues in terms of recruitment and attraction of quality candidates. Regional cities were also doing well although some candidates expectations of being able to continue to work from home full time into the future was unrealistic. Rural councils had been the hardest hit with many candidates not willing to go beyond reasonable commuting distance from the metropolitan area or a regional city for work.

IMPROVEMENTS TO ATTRACTION, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROCESSES

The research consultations provided suggestions to improve attraction, recruitment, and retention of skilled and experienced people for local government positions. These suggestions are listed verbatim at **Attachment D**. An overview is provided below.

Professional Local Government Sector

The Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) administers several programs on behalf of and for public sector bodies, (excluding local government). These programs include:

+ Workforce programs – employment pathways, the Victorian Government graduate program and Getting to Work, the Victorian Public Sector Disability Employment Action Plan

+ Workforce Frameworks – strategy, resources, and frameworks across the employee lifecycle

+ Indigenous employment – strategy, resources, and development

+ eRecruitment – careers website and service management

+ Workforce Strategy

+ Communications and Engagement

+ Learning activities and development programs tailored to each band of the Senior Executive Service of the VPS trough the Victorian Leadership Academy

These activities are for the equivalent of 50,000 public sector employees and in a limited way to a further 215,000 employees associated with public entities such as schools and hospitals[3]. These numbers for the public sector are roughly equivalent to the numbers of employees in local government across the state of Victoria (Figures at **Attachment E**).

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[3] Figures as of 30 June 2020

There is no similar organisation that can provide these services for the local government sector. A funded, coordinated approach to supporting the local government sector in these ways would enhance the professionalism of the sector and the value of a career in local government.

Attracting Suitable Candidates

+ Improve the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for local government employees so that the sector is seen as progressive and high performing overall.

+ The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) continues its promotion of council jobs on the Victorian Councils' website, the Council Careers Victoria platform on LinkedIn and the national local government careers website to provide information about career opportunities, pathways into a range of occupations, and job vacancies in all councils in Victoria.

+ Market the benefits of working in the sector and conduct social media campaigns.

+ Councils develop and share strategies to increase the workforce participation level of under 30-year-olds.

+ The number of apprentices employed by councils in Victoria be increased with assistance from the Victorian government for the cost of apprenticeship training and employment through wage subsidies – particularly for rural and regional councils.

+ Cadetship programs be designed to lead into graduate programs.

+ Increase the number of Engineers and Town Planners across Victoria in partnership with Engineers Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA).

+ Develop a sector-wide graduate program to attract high potential young candidates with a professional on-boarding process and the option of career rotations. There is already a successful engineering graduate program working in the west of Victoria.

+ Build relationships with universities to ensure adequate cohorts of graduates in high demand professions such as Environmental Health Officers.

+ High potential new recruits would benefit from mentoring and coaching opportunities where these were highlighted as part of the recruitment package. The appointment would then be seen as an opportunity rather than a risk to long-term career advancement.

+ In country Victoria, available and affordable housing and rental shortages are a deterrent for applicants. One council has purchased local accommodation to provide share housing for young professionals or to accommodate senior people and their families.

Recruitment Process

+ Introduce 'candidate blind' shortlisting, diverse selection panels, and training to avoid racial or gender bias and other forms of unconscious bias in the recruitment process

+ Contemporary recruitment practices such as 'walk around' interviews might also give a better impression of the sector.

+ Councils be made aware of the benefits of employing school-based trainees.

+ Partnering with regional bodies in the same location seeking similar skill sets such as the power industry, decentralised state government bodies and water authorities.

Onboarding and professional development for successful candidates

+ Improve and highlight professional development opportunities and on-boarding programs.

+ Introduce rotations as part of a graduate program that could also extend into the state public sector where this was able to be facilitated by organisations such as LGPro or the Institute of Public Administration (Australia) IPAA.

+ Train existing, experienced (aging) workforce as mentors for new recruits

+ Encourage local government to identify the core competencies needed by supervisors/team leaders for inclusion in Position Descriptions. Work with training providers to develop training that is accessible (cost and mode of training) to all councils.

Working Conditions

+ Improve apprentice and trainee arrangements that attract people into these professions with wage subsidies appropriate to the Banding levels at councils.

+ There is now an expectation that working from home is part of a normal working life and councils that insist on full time attendance in the office are losing quality candidates. However, some candidates, especially from outside the sector, do not understand the nature of local government and the requirements for personal interactions with councillors (at the senior levels) and the community in general. This may lead to unrealistic expectations of being able to work from home full time.

+ Pay gaps particularly for rural councils were also a huge hurdle for councils. Competition next year with the potential 'Great Resignation' will be high and salaries will be the biggest issue non-metropolitan councils will have to confront.

University programs to meet the needs of Local Government

+ Some of the professions essential for local government are having their pipelines narrowed, particularly in Environmental Health. There is a role for LGPro or Jobs Victoria to advocate to universities about keeping these recruitment pipelines open and widening them to ensure an adequate supply of candidates into the future.

+ At present there are five students studying Environmental Health in Victoria at Swinburne University. These students can only gain a recognised qualification under the Public Health Act for a post graduate qualification at this university (see **Attachment G** for the mandatory qualifications required for this statutory role). Currently no other universities provide this course in Victoria. On the university website a private company advertises that they take graduates from this program and offer a Boost induction and training program to successful graduates. This cohort of students is not sufficient to meet the demand for this profession in the Victorian local government sector, so councils are having to meet vacancies with interstate recruits. This process has been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic**.**

+ It was suggested that the Local Government sector approach the university sector to encourage further places for this type of study in the future. However, the demand from students to study this program then work in the sector may not become evident until there is a concerted effort to market the benefits of working in local government.

Planning and Implementation

Many suggestions were made during the consultations, some which do not directly relate to job creation opportunities but will support planning and implementation. These are included here for further consideration.

+ The Victorian Grants Commission collect annual data sets that include:

    o the number of full-time, part-time, and casual employees

    o the number of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) employed in local government

    o this data broken down by gender

+ Councils should collect participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and persons with disabilities as part of their Strategic Workforce Planning process.

+ Further analysis of the ABS Census of Population and Housing be undertaken to determine the occupations, age groups and regions experiencing greatest movement to and from local government between 2011-2016 (and the 2021 Census data when available) to inform future attraction and retention strategies for regions, occupations, and the local government sector.

+ Councils undertake an Age Audit of their workforce and to monitor the age profile of their workforce (noting the obligations under anti-discrimination legislation)

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

It is proposed that a model to assist Local Governments to recruit to job vacancies and address skill shortages be developed that:

+ Builds and markets the local government sector as an employer of choice

+ Develops and administers a state-wide graduate program for difficult to fill professions in the sector

+ Develops and administers a state-wide pre-employment program for school leavers provided on a regional basis that prepares them for entry level positions in councils

+ Potentially takes over the administration of and placement for apprenticeships and traineeships in the sector to ensure they can conclude their training with one or more council providers

+ Advocates on behalf of the sector for the maintenance and expansion of difficult to fill professional roles in Councils with universities such as engineering, Environmental Health, project management, MCH nursing, planning, and building surveying

+ Develops and administers an employment plan to attract Indigenous people to the sector

+ Develops and administers a diversity employment plan for the sector

+ Advocates and potentially provides funding for difficult to fill positions in rural and remote councils

+ Provides strategic human resources solutions particularly for small and medium sized councils

+ Partners with LGPro to provide career and professional development pathways for high potential candidates in the sector

+ Advocates on behalf of the sector for better services and housing options in the non-metropolitan regions of Victoria to attract high calibre candidates to council roles and to facilitate secondments and short-term transfers within the sector for professional development.

+ Explores the opportunities for shared services models of provision of software particularly for e-recruitment and payroll for Victorian councils.

+ Potentially provides a short-term appointment agency of contractors for councils

+ Gathers and provides data and information about the local government sector and its workforce.

It is unlikely that local Governments will be able to achieve this on their own. Funding, collaboration and coordination will be required. A state-based approach would be one practical approach to achieve this model.

Development of Local Government as a career choice

It is proposed that an organisation is created or assigned functions to undertake and oversee sector-wide initiatives to promote local government as a career/employment choice.

If funding was available, LGPro has the expertise and professional networks to achieve this.

Alternatively, a body like the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) could be set up for local government in Victoria, or local governments could be included into existing VPSC arrangements to undertake the following:

+ Market the sector through a broad information campaign about the benefits and opportunities of working in local government

+ Undertake models of employment for difficult to fill roles such as graduate programs, apprenticeship programs or school leaver programs to fill vacancies in the sector

+ Develop and engage in partnerships with tertiary institutions to ensure skill shortages are addressed in their programs

+ Develop and provide programs that enhance the opportunities for diverse community members to apply for and win roles in local government

+ Provide top-up funding for difficult to fill roles in regional and rural settings

+ Provide HR support and advice for small and remote councils

+ Partner with LGPro for career and professional development pathways that articulate into university qualifications with partner institutions for all local government employees

+ Advocate to the state government for improvements in connectivity, public transport, housing, and medical/educational facilities for rural and regional Victoria to enhance the attractiveness for potential candidates for roles in these councils.

LGPro currently runs a program: Introduction to Local Government. This program is currently a 2.5-hour online program, or a one day in-person program aimed at introducing participants to the important role local government plays in people's lives and the governance regimes overlaying this important work. It is delivered by a range of former CEOs and Executives in Local Government who know the sector and how it works.

In addition to this one-day program it is proposed to run an additional one-day program 'Understanding Local Government Services' that outlines some of the 120 different services offered by local governments that impact significantly on the daily lives of the community. This program is designed to introduce participants to the wide range of job offerings and opportunities to work in the sector.

Potential models of employment

Once an auspicing organisation is established/identified for the local government sector a number of models of employment were proposed but they are not the subject of this report.

In addition to these employment models other initiatives should include:

+ Development and implementation of a marketing campaign for local government employment

+ Development and marketing of career and professional development pathways that progress through LGPro and articulate into university programs where possible

+ High level strategic Human Resources advice for local government on employment issues particularly for small rural and regional councils that cannot afford such advice.

CONCLUSION

Local governments continue to have difficulties attracting, recruiting, and retaining staff at all levels in their organisations. These issues continue while local governments are growing and experiencing increasing demand for their services.

This report has investigated the causal factors leading to these issues and in a separate report has suggested employment and training models to improve recruitment, retention, and skills development.

The report recommends that responsibility and funding for the implementation of these programs be given to an existing organisation (such as LGPro) or that a new organisation (or part of an existing organisation) be created to support local governments in building its capability.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Project Plan, Scope and Constraints

Outcomes	Key Activities	Timeframes
Scope of work agreed between Jobs Victoria and LGPro	• Final agreement of project scope between LGPro and Jobs Victoria • Appointment of Project Manager	July 2021
Methodology developed to identify cohorts of councils with similar skill/job requirements	• Identification of key stakeholders • Consideration of a number of ways to group councils who have similar job requirements e.g., by Rural Councils Victoria regions, Jobs Vic regions, LGV council size categories • Test process/methodology with expert advisors	August 2021
Victorian Local Government sector skill gaps/requirements identified	• Identification and engagement of senior local government advisory services • Convening of council stakeholders for insights/input on skill requirements for job vacancies – in person, virtually or via survey • Identification of hurdles to training and /or employment for Jobs Victoria priority cohorts, including women over 45, Aboriginal Victorians and young people (between 18 to 25 years).	September 2021
Job creation and training opportunities/pathways identified	• Using skill gaps and job vacancies information and connecting with council cohorts – identify job creation opportunities, supported by training/up skilling pathways • Identify a job creation model for these cohorts • Draft report • Draft report reviewed by expert advisors and amendments undertaken	October 2021
Job creation project proposal finalised that addresses job shortages, skills gaps, and upskilling options	• Presentation of finalised job creation and training pathways project proposal to Jobs Victoria for formal assessment	November 2021
Addressing the skills gaps identified	• To be determined from the initial steps in the project but not forming part of this project	November 2021 – May 2022
Audit Opinion	• Final audit report provided to Jobs Victoria	30 June 2022

The following elements are outside the scope of this project.

Out of Scope Statement	Reason not included
Matching of job seekers with councils	Advice and design will be provided for the matching of job seekers to potential role creation and access to skill development. Matching of job seekers to training pathways and job vacancies will be directed by Jobs Victoria.
Design and funding of training modules	Recommendations will be made to Jobs Victoria on training and upskilling.

Constraints

Constraints/Assumptions	Impact/Risk/Opportunity
Transition to new Local Government Act	Councils are stretched to meet all new requirements under the new principles based Local Government Act. This could be an opportunity for job creation as Councils will be seeking to engage employees to assist with the transition.
Several programs being run by Victorian State Government requiring Local Government sector engagement e.g. Gender Equity Act	Numerous programs are being run and require Local Government input, but utilising LGPro networks, targeted approaches can be made to expedite model development for Jobs Victoria.
State and Federal Government training/apprenticeship programs	Opportunities may arise through the scoping process to link with other job creation programs such as the SKiP project with RMIT or the Women in Building Surveying Program.

Attachment B: Groups of Local Governments

(according to local Government Victoria Classification System)

Metropolitan	Population	Interface	Population
1. Banyule (C)	125,503	1. Cardinia (S)	87,008
2. Bayside (C)	99,947	2. Casey (C)	283,415
3. Boroondara (C)	172,612	3. Hume (C)	188,832
4. Brimbank (C)	197,701	4. Melton (C)	127,677
5. Darebin (C)	148,728	5. Mornington Peninsula (S)	153,800
6. Frankston (C)	135,243	6. Nillumbik (S)	62,872
7. Glen Eira (C)	144,059	7. Whittlesea (C)	187,006
8. Greater Dandenong (C)	149,518	8. Wyndham (C)	199,715
9. Hobsons Bay (C)	91,148	9. Yarra Ranges (S)	150,098
10. Kingston (C)	153,079	*Mitchell (S)	38,515
11. Knox (C)	155,508	**Regional City**	**Population**
12. Manningham (C)	118,521	1. Ballarat (C)	100,283
13. Maribyrnong (C)	81,859	2. Greater Bendigo (C)	106,971
14. Maroondah (C)	111,223	3. Greater Geelong (C)	224,926
15. Melbourne (C)	122,207	4. Greater Shepparton (C)	63,269
16. Monash (C)	185,037	5. Latrobe (C)	73,653
17. Moonee Valley (C)	117,337	6. Mildura (RC)	53,036
18. Moreland (C)	163,488	7. Warrnambool (C)	33,501
19. Port Phillip (C)	104,846	8. Wodonga (RC)	38,131
20. Stonnington (C)	105,981	9. Horsham (RC)	19,691
21. Whitehorse (C)	163,697	10. Wangaratta (RC)	27,117
22. Yarra (C)	86,506		

Metropolitan	Population	Interface	Population
Large Shire	Population	Small Shire	Population
1. Bass Coast (S)	31,623	1. Alpine (S)	12,028
2. Baw (S)	45,945	2. Ararat (RC)	11,184
3. Campaspe (S)	36,881	3. Benalla (RC)	13,597
4. Colac -Otway (S)	20,501	4. Buloke (S)	6,086
5. Corangamite (S)	15,996	5. Central Goldfields (S)	12,606
6. East Gippsland (S)	43,772	6. Gannawarra (S)	10,145
7. Glenelg (S)	19,357	7. Hepburn (S)	14,888
8. Golden Plains (S)	20,544	8. Hindmarsh (S)	5, 644
9. Macedon Ranges (S)	44,715	9. Indigo (S)	15,409
10. Mitchell (S)*	38,515	10. Loddon (S)	7,365
11. Moira (S)	28,833	11. Mansfield (S)	8,217
12. Moorabool (S)	30,926	12. Murrindindi (S)	13,595
13. Mount Alexander (S)	18,102	13. Northern Grampians (S)	11,719
14. Moyne (S)	16,344	14. Pyrenees (S)	6,979
15. South Gippsland (S)	27,937	15. Queenscliffe (B)	3,027
16. Southern Grampians (S)	15,919	16. Strathbogie (S)	9,810
17. Surf Coast (S)	28,481	17. Towong (S)	5,797
18. Swan Hill (RC)	20,580	18. West Wimmera (S)	3,982
19. Wellington (S)	42,220	19. Yarriambiack (S)	6,892

*Note that, despite being a member of the Interface Group of Councils, Mitchell Shire Council has been included in the large rural grouping as three quarters of their population reside in the rural part of the Shire

Attachment C: Victoria Regional Unemployment Figures

Employment Region	Unemployment Rate (15+) (%)	Unemployed (15+)	Total jobactive Caseload (15+)	Female jobactive Caseload (15+)	Youth jobactive Caseload (15-24)	Mature Age jobactive Caseload (50+)	Indigenous jobactive Caseload (15+)	PWD jobactive Caseload (15+)	Refugee jobactive Caseload (15+)
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8	Column 9	Column 10
Ballarat	5.8	5,000	7,978	4,111	1,329	2,412	332	2,153	31
Barwon	3.7	6,300	11,872	6,348	2,023	3,433	405	2,786	359
Bendigo	4.4	3,600	7,221	3,838	1,137	2,196	378	2,307	208
Gippsland	6.2	8,300	14,058	7,105	1,940	4,747	928	4,031	75
Goulburn/Murray	4.0	6,400	16,666	8,530	2,674	5,122	1,577	5,010	471
Inner Metropolitan Melbourne	5.6	52,700	40,243	19,243	6,474	9,903	785	7,869	1,629
North Eastern Melbourne	6.0	34,600	35,570	18,492	5,599	9,914	907	7,739	1,848
North Western Melbourne	8.9	18,700	19,015	9,445	3,224	4,789	301	3,691	2,774
South Coast of Victoria	3.6	2,500	4,758	2,515	698	1,548	331	1,375	26
South Eastern Melbourne and Peninsula	6.0	37,700	43,494	22,635	6,788	12,521	797	10,395	3,524
Western Melbourne	7.9	36,200	40,075	20,340	6,095	10,763	783	8,219	4,584
Wimmera Mallee	3.1	2,100	7,873	3,886	1,235	2,504	1,114	2,221	204

Attachment D: Survey Suggestions to fill skill gaps in Local Governments

Key solutions for job vacancies

Category	Value
Other	3.0
Development opportunities	5.3
Local Government marketing campaign statewide	4.6
Marketing campaign regionally	5.2
Wider range of benefits on offer	6.2
Better educational and health facilities to attract…	3.5
Obvious career path options	6.1
Better housing options in our region for families	6.4
Increased capacity to pay higher salaries	7.8

Councils and skill gaps

When asked a slightly different question about skill gaps there were several other solutions presented by councils. These are set out in the graph below. For the 'Other' category the solutions included:

+ A proactive pipeline of talent

+ Nurturing possible location shifters

+ Increasing awareness of the opportunities in local government at the regional level

+ Working more closely with universities to secure professions such as engineers

+ More cadetships to students outside the local area

+ Providing career pathways for skilled recruits from local educational establishments

+ Greater capacity to support relocating families with day care, school places and linking partners with employment

+ Increasing the capacity of councils to pay higher salaries for groups such as building surveyors, engineers, and planners.

Skill Shortages Solutions

Category	Value
Other	1.2
Development opportunities	4.4
Local Government marketing campaign statewide	4.1
Marketing campaign regionally	4.2
Wider range of benefits on offer	5.7
Increasing our capacity to take on cadets, trainees and…	6.4
Obvious career path options	5.8
More graduates from Universities in these specialist…	7.1
Increased capacity to pay higher salaries	7.8

Short-term potential solutions

The final few questions of the survey asked questions about potential short-term solutions to these issues, potential longer-term solutions and who should be driving these solutions. They can be grouped under the following headings:

Marketing

+ More holistic campaigning

+ Regionally and state-wide

+ Low cost

+ Campaign based

Graduates and trainees

+ Graduates/trainees - using the VARP program which we are currently taking advantage of

+ Increased numbers of traineeship/apprenticeship/cadetship/graduate opportunities

+ Increase organisational capacity to take on cadets, trainees, and apprentices

+ Industry Placement Programs and Traineeships/Apprenticeships are cost effective, however there is a significant investment in time to train this level. However, those who show potential can be of great benefit to the organisation

Tertiary Institution partnerships

+ partnerships with TAFE's and universities

+ proactive sectorial engagement with training providers - universities and TAFE, plus Group Training Organisations

+ Building partnerships with local skills and universities

Career paths

+ Build career pathways

+ Career pathing aligned with workforce planning

+ Development opportunities and obvious career paths

Other

+ all would require additional HR/Org resourcing - we don't have capacity

+ Also, some better explanation of the various benefits that we offer, and some honest recognition by many people that the money we have available isn't bad

Longer-term potential solutions

For the longer-term solutions there were some additional suggested solutions including:

+ Further developing and acting on our recruitment and retention strategy as outlined in our Workforce Plan (4-year plan)

+ Review of the pay and benefits on offer in the sector and increasing pay in some professions

+ Fully funded graduate programs, e.g., for women in municipal development programs

+ Higher salaries and housing availability in the region

+ Scholarship and employment programs for industries with skill shortages

+ Better education, health, and housing options in regional and rural settings

Drivers of these solutions

The penultimate question of the survey required the solutions to be allocated a driver for their implementation. They fell into two categories:

Local government

+ Collaborative approach across Metro, Regional and governing bodies

+ MAV as it is a sector wide issue

+ Marketing campaigns - joint effort between regional alliances and LGPro/MAV

+ Councils but we don't have capacity. LGPRO could re-screen and have a pool of candidates ready for us to select from (like the Procurement Australia panel for agency staff)

+ LGPro and local Government Vic in collaboration and local councils

+ Councils

+ LGPRO career campaign to encourage people to choose career paths in Local Government or partner with peak bodies to do this

+ Executive Team to determine salaries

+ The sector as a whole for future sustainability and relevance

+ Local Government peak bodies - because it will be a benefit for all Councils to change the image of local government

State Government

+ State Government should focus on increasing the liveability of rural and regional locations

+ The relevant state government body for funding opportunities and service expansion

+ Graduates and students are a great way to support the development of junior staff and build capacity to support hard to fill roles in the future. Should be undertaken by the specific department as a program.

And the final question of the survey offered some more insight into the issues and potential solutions. Specifically:

+ Councils have an aging workforce so there is potential to bring more young people into the sector potentially through engagement with secondary schools especially Maternal and Child Health, Environmental Health and Planning jobs - most teens don't know about these jobs

+ LG needs investment from the State - we need to deliver more and more to the community but do not get enough support from the State Government

+ we really need to promote regional Victoria and what we can offer especially the great lifestyle but perhaps without the high salaries

+ We need to find a way to increase career pathways within the sector - make it a visible and viable option to explore options from all LGA's as each LGA has a limited number of promotional opportunities and we need to recognise and support staff gaining experience across the public sector

+ Regional councils can't compete with metro councils in respect to salaries (lower revenue). Rate capping has caused complications.

+ Limited public transport options for those living regionally to easily access metro cities.

+ Housing shortages locally both rentals and sales, government bodies could make it easier for rural land to be re-zoned residential.

+ Volume roles are time consuming to fill, but there is a ready supply of candidates who can fill these roles (with appropriate training). We do find for volume roles that the workforce is transitory (particularly for our leisure centre roles). So, we have built this into our recruitment practices/plans. More specialised positions are harder to fill due to candidate shortages and the impacts of COVID. As a result, investment with development programs e.g., graduate and clear career pathways would help attract and retain talent who might otherwise be lost to the public sector. This includes clearly articulated benefits. Flexible Work Options are high on the list moving forward as are collaborative workspace when people move back into office

+ Our inability to increase wages due to rate capping is a significant hindrance. Our current EBA increase is not competitive with private organisations.

+ We are a small Council, neighbouring with larger Councils that have better resources. Would also consider the impacts of Covid19 in applicant hesitancy.

+ Large scale infrastructure projects and demand for engineers are making it hard to remain competitive with salary. Education requirements for MCH nurses in Victoria versus other States and Territories make it hard to find registered MCH nurses in Victoria.

+ Something needs to happen soon otherwise services will not be available in the medium term.

Attachment E: **Victorian Public Sector Employees Cf. Local Government Employees**

Victorian Public Sector	Employers	Headcount	Full-time equivalent
Departments	8	36,660	34,668
Public service employers	27	10,172	9,644
Administrative offices	16	3,200	3,083
Total	51	50,032	47,395

Source: VPSC website

Vic LG employees	Full time	Part time	Part time EFT	Total EFT for FT + PT	Casuals EFT	Total FT, PT + Casual EFT
Male	14,447	3,283	1,368	15,815	3,020	20,750
Female	11,536	15,543	8,427	19,964	7,024	34,103
Nonbinary	8	3	2	10	2	13
Totals	25,991	18,829	9,797	35,789	10,046	54,866

Source: Grants Commission data 2019-2020

Attachment F: 2021 Requirements on Victorian Councils

(Provided by Local Government Victoria)

2021 Requirements on Victorian Councils

- Performance Reviews from IBAC
- Personal Interests Returns
- Community Engagement Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Climate Act
- Vic. Aboriginal Local Govt Action Plan
- Gender Equality Act
- Financial policies
- Food Safety Reforms
- Elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Community Vision

Councillors
- Role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Defined roles and responsibilities

- Council Plan
- Budget

CEO
Defined role and responsibilities

- Conflict of Interest
- Financial Plan
- Municipal Strategic Statements
- Bushfire Recovery
- Asset Plan
- Workforce Plan
- Economic Stimulus $
- Code of Conduct
- Social Housing Build
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Social and Affordable Housing
- Building Act Reforms
- Councillor Induction
- Rating Review
- Revenue and Rating Plan
- Leadership Changes
- Emergency Management Reforms
- Electoral Reviews
- Kerbside Recycling Reforms
- Gift Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Operationalise principles approach
- Prof Engineers Registration
- COVID response

Attachment G: Environmental Health Mandatory Qualifications in Victoria, 2020

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY FOR APPOINTMENT AS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS

I, Brett Sutton, Chief Health Officer, Department of Health and Human Services, under section 29(3) of the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**, declare that –

1.   The Declaration made by me to the Department of Health on 8 February 2019, which was published in Government Gazette G8 on 21 February 2019 and took effect on 18 March 2019, is revoked; and

2.   At least one of the qualifications, or one of the combination of qualifications (where applicable), contained in the following Schedule is necessary for a person to be appointed as an Environmental Health Officer under the Act.

This declaration will take effect on 17 December 2020.

Dated 14 December 2020

ADJUNCT CLINICAL PROFESSOR BRETT SUTTON
Chief Health Officer
Delegate of the Secretary to the
Department of Health and Human Services

SCHEDULE

Victorian Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health)	Swinburne Institute of Technology
Bachelor of Health Science (Public and Environmental Health)	Swinburne University of Technology
Bachelor of Health Science (Environmental Health Management)	Swinburne University of Technology
Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice	Swinburne University of Technology
Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health)	La Trobe University
Certificate of Competency issued under section 38 of the **Health Act 1958** prior to July 1992	
Diploma Environmental Health completed prior to 2000	Swinburne College of Technology
Diploma Environmental Health completed prior to 2000	Swinburne Institute of Technology
Diploma of Applied Science (Environmental Health) completed prior to 2000	Swinburne College of Technology
Diploma of Applied Science (Environmental Health) completed prior to 2000	Swinburne Institute of Technology
Diploma for Public Health Inspectors completed prior to 2000	The Royal Society for the Promotion of Health
Bachelor of Public Health majoring in Environmental Health completed prior to 2002 -AND- Graduate Certificate of Environmental Health completed no later than 2004	La Trobe University, Bendigo

Victorian Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Diploma in Public Health completed prior to 2000 -AND- Diploma in Meat and Other Food Inspection completed prior to 2000	Royal Society of Health or any TAFE Institution

New South Wales Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Bachelor of Applied Science -AND- Graduate Diploma of Applied Science (Environmental Health)	Any Australian University University of Western Sydney for Graduate Diploma
Bachelor of Science -AND- Graduate Diploma of Applied Science (Environmental Health)	Any Australian University University of Western Sydney for Graduate Diploma
Diploma in Public Health completed prior to 2000 -AND- Diploma in Meat and Other Food Inspection completed prior to 2000	Royal Society of Health or any TAFE Institution
Bachelor of Natural Science (Environment and Health)	Western Sydney University

Western Australian Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health)	Western Australian Institute of Technology
Diploma in Public Health completed prior to 2000 -AND- Diploma in Meat and Other Food Inspection completed prior to 2000	Royal Society of Health or any TAFE Institution
Bachelor of Health Science (Environmental Health)	Edith Cowan University
Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health	Curtin University

South Australian Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health Practice	Flinders University
Master of Environmental Health	Flinders University

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Queensland Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Associate Diploma in Health Surveying	Queensland University of Technology
Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health)	Central Queensland University
Bachelor of Health Sciences	Griffith University
Bachelor of Health Science (Applied Environmental Health)	University of the Sunshine Coast
Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health	Queensland University of Technology

Tasmanian Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Advanced Diploma of Environmental Health	Institute of TAFE Tasmania

Australian and New Zealand Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Applied Science Degree -AND- Graduate Diploma or Masters Degree in Environmental Health	Any Australian or New Zealand University

International Qualifications	
Name of Qualification	**Institution (where applicable)**
Bachelor Degree Course in Science accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	Conducted in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
Bachelor Degree Course in Science accredited by the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland	Conducted in Scotland
Bachelor Degree Course in Science majoring in Environmental Health	Conducted in the USA
Bachelor of Science	Any institution provided the person has obtained a Certificate of Registration of the Environmental Health Officers Registration Board (UK)
Bachelor Degree of Science majoring in Environmental Health	Conducted in South Africa
Bachelor Degree of Applied Science (Environmental Health)	Massey University (formerly Wellington Polytechnic)
Public Health Inspectors Diploma completed prior to 1974	Public Health Inspectors Education Board (England)

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[i] RCV, Demographic Density Report, May 2021