



Department of
**Primary Industries and
Regional Development**

Building a Sustainable Workforce

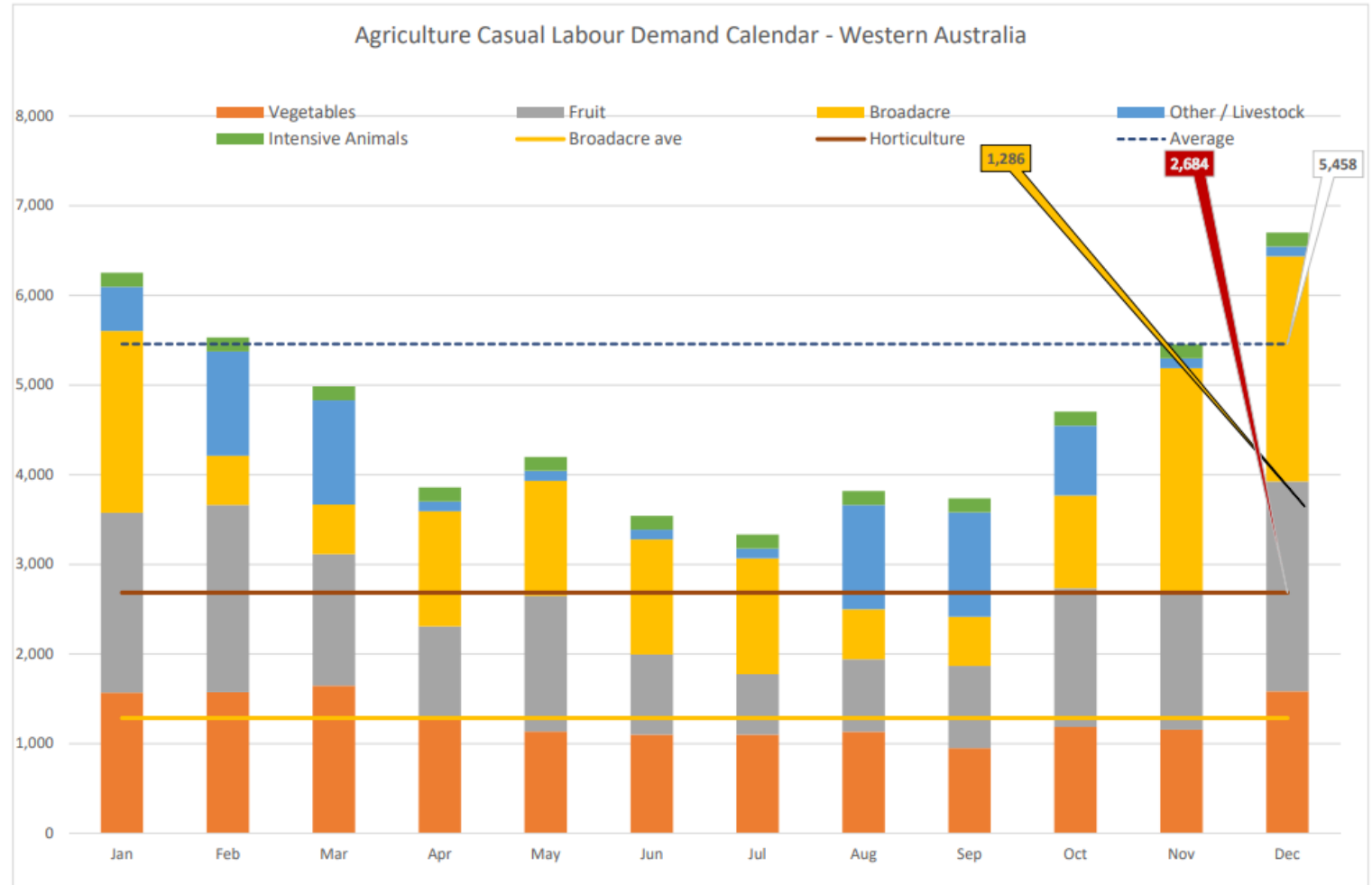
Suzanne Hawkes

Senior Project Officer- Workforce and Business Capability



COVID: The reality check we needed?

- Backpacker numbers have declined significantly and exposed an over-reliance on 'easy labour'.
- Over 75% reduction in backpacker numbers across Australia.
- Opportunity to look for more sustainable, productive and efficient workforce solutions.
- Workforce requirements by sector across WA:



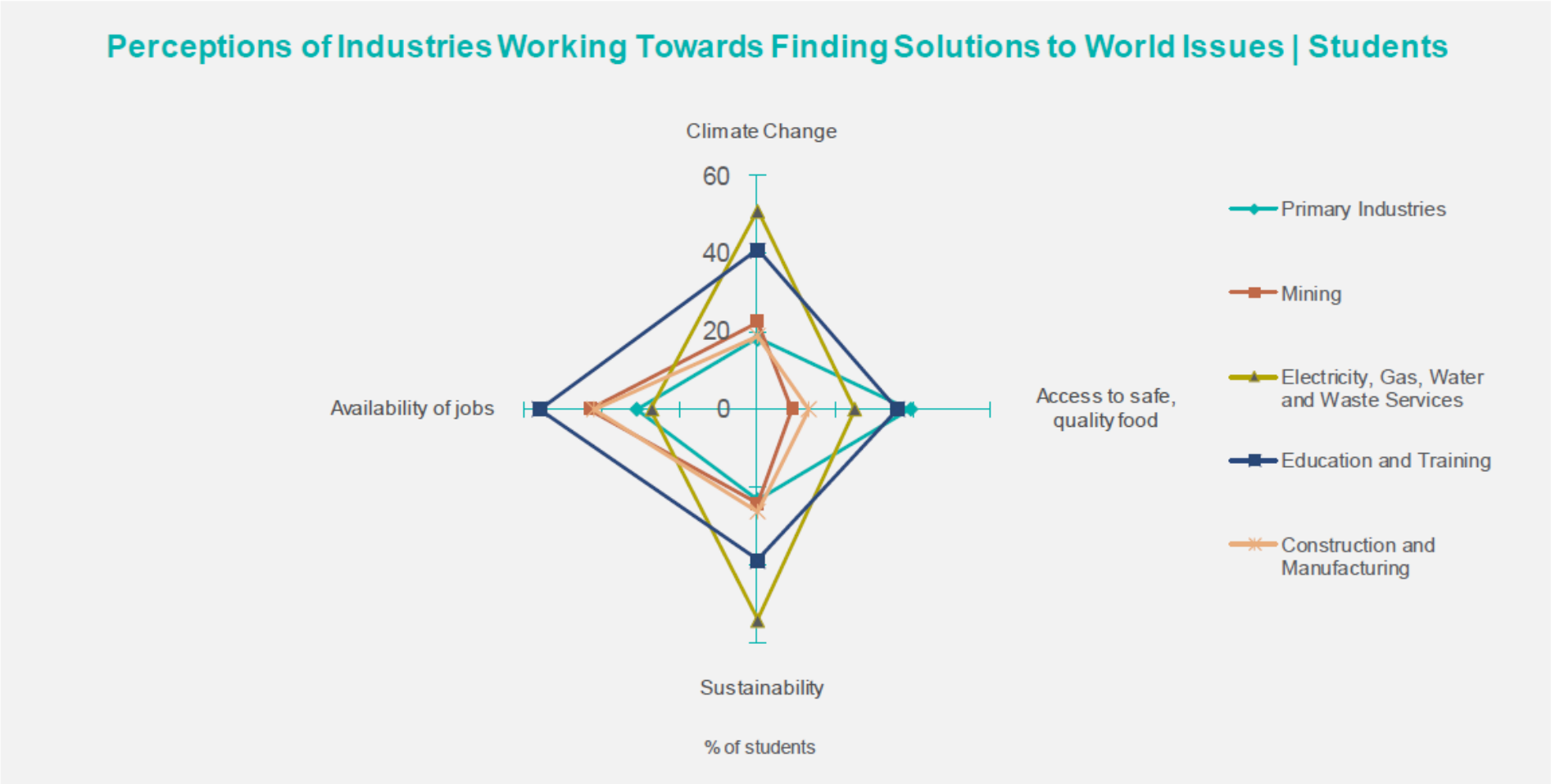
New normal

- Countries around the world are experiencing tight labour markets with many experiencing skills shortages of a similar nature to Australia.
- Flight routes and airline capacity has changed significantly.

Country	Time Period	Unemployment Rate	Participation Rate
United Kingdom	July 2021	4.6%	78.9%
Netherlands	July 2021	3.1%	71.6%
Switzerland	August 2021	2.7%	68.4%
Ireland	August 2021	6.4%	60.4%
Germany	July 2021	3.6%	60.9%
Malaysia	July 2021	4.8%	68.3%
Philippines	September 2021	6.9%	59.8%
United States	August 2021	5.2%	61.7%
New Zealand	June 2021	4.0%	70.5%
Western Australia	August 2021	4.6%	69.0%
Australia	August 2021	4.5%	65.2%

Statistical Data – PRIMED

Graphics sourced from *DoE Student and Parents Survey Report. Metrix. 2021.*



the primary industries

Statistical Data - CSIRO

Graphics sourced from *The Future of Australia's Agricultural Workforce*. CSIRO. 2019

THE THREE KEY VISA
SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL

ONLY 15

out of 43 Australian universities offer degrees in agriculture.⁶ However, there are over 150 organisations across Australia that provide vocational training in agriculture.²⁸

SEASONAL WORKER
VISA 403

Number of visa holders
in Australia (2018)

118,524

16,385

8,457

Eligible countries

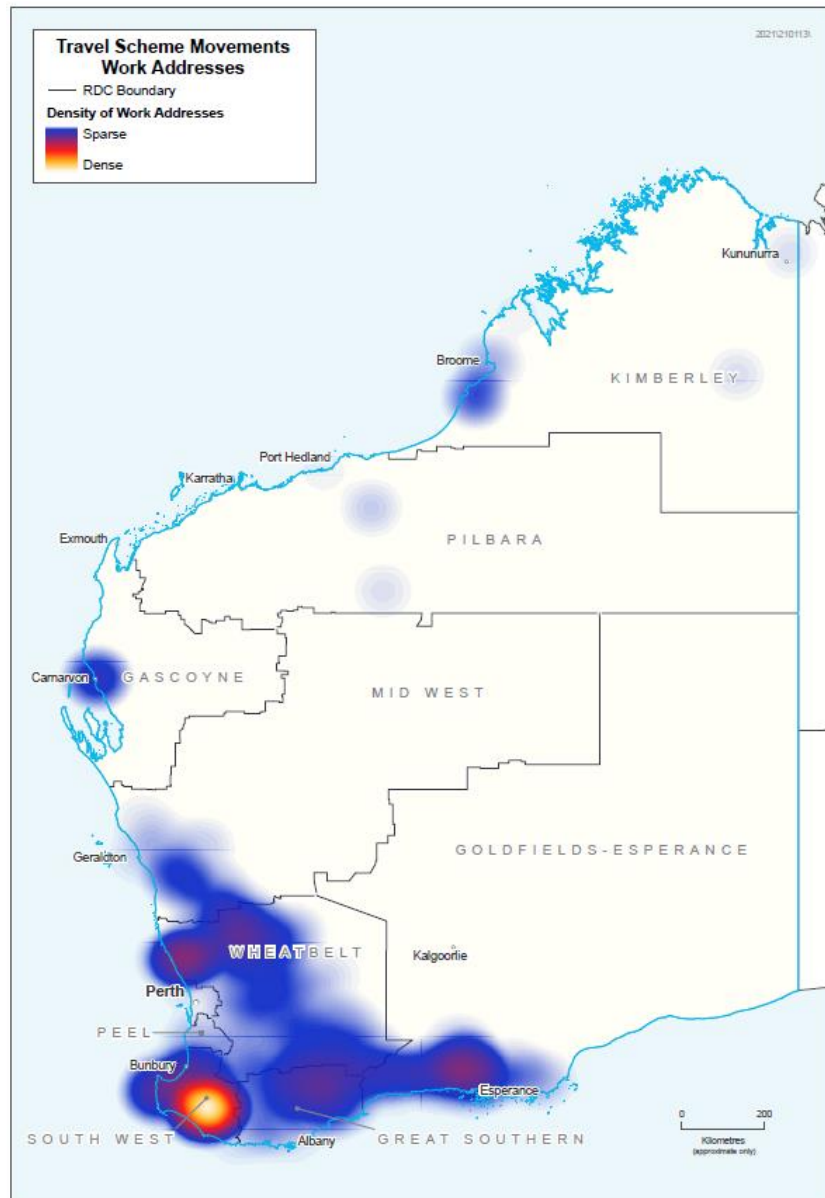


TASMANIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES HAVE INTRODUCED COMPULSORY AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TO PARTS OF THEIR SCHOOL CURRICULUM.^{24,25}

Schools in other states and territories have access to agricultural science units through the Australian curriculum. However, the implementation of agricultural science units to the school curriculum is not mandatory.²⁶

Samoa, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Solutions



- Short term:
 - Regional Travel and Accommodation Scheme.
 - Work and Wander out Yonder.
- Long term:
 - Primary Industries Education – PRIMED.
 - Careers in Food and Fibre.
 - Pacific-Australia Labour Mobility.
 - ASEAN Agricultural Worker Visa.
 - WA Primary Industries Workforce Development Strategy & Action Plan.

Primary Industries Education – PRIMED

- In partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- Creating a primary industries lens for WA school curriculum across years 7-10.



Careers in Food & Fibre

- Promoting careers and pathway information to students from years 7-12, and at university.
- 39 engagements across WA to 36,000 people in 2021.
- Also creates connections between industry and the classroom for incursions and excursions.
- 38 Ambassadors trained to further industry engagements in schools.
- A series of “Discipline Guides” profiling the A-Z of primary industry careers will be delivered in 2022.



Pacific-Australia Labour Mobility

- Continues to play an important role in supplementing unskilled and low labour needs.
- Businesses must be a registered Approved Employer with Federal agencies in order to access the recruitment pool.
- Pastoral care needs are high, with accommodation and cultural integration support required.
- A sustainable solution, as workers return year after year. This reduces recruitment, training and induction costs over time.
- Productivity demonstrated to far exceed that of backpackers. Returning workforce represents a \$29,000 saving based on labour cost per hectare.
- Labour Scheme Facilitation provided by DPIRD employee, Kit Sainsbury.



ASEAN Agriculture Worker Visa

- Led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Designed to supplement to the existing PALM Scheme.
- Visa available to skilled, semi-skilled and low-skilled workers across a broad range of agricultural industries, including meat processing and the fishery and forestry sectors.
- Bilateral agreements being developed with a select number of countries in the first instance.
- Select Approved Employers under the PALM Scheme have been invited to participate in the first trial.



Workforce Development Strategy

- Strategy to address the need for a long-term, sustainable workforce, Australia based, to address both seasonal and permanent workforce capacity.
- Explore barriers to workforce recruitment and possible mitigations.
- Engage with industry stakeholders via a steering committee to achieve best outcomes and industry buy-in.
- Engage with other government departments as necessary to provide solutions.



Workforce Development Strategy



- Areas for further exploration:
 - Public awareness- how can we increase awareness of the primary industries and the range of careers available?
 - How can we develop a sustainable seasonal workforce?
 - What are the limitations / barriers for regional working/
 - How can we create and maintain careers in primary industry?

Workforce Development Strategy

- Ideas for change:
 - Robotics Hackathon
 - Gap Year program and workforce sharing
 - Advertising
 - Licences and basic training
 - Connecting remote areas
 - Apprenticeships



Thank you

Visit dpird.wa.gov.au

Suzanne Hawkes

suzanne.hawkes@dpird.wa.gov.au

08 9368 3117

Important disclaimer

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