

SHEPPARTON EDUCATION PLAN 2022



STAGE FOUR – TERTIARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government and the Department of Education and Training acknowledge the Yorta and Bangerang Clans, Traditional Owners of the lands of Shepparton, and pays its respects to their Elders past, present and future.

The Department of Education and Training is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades, the young people of Greater Shepparton have experienced some of the lowest educational and health and wellbeing outcomes in Victoria. They have also been some of the most socially disadvantaged young people in the state.

Education is transformative. There is clear evidence that participation in education improves life outcomes and strengthens communities. The Greater Shepparton community is committed and willing to support its young people, and many of its local organisations and employers have been working steadfastly towards that goal.

However, in Greater Shepparton there are fewer school leavers entering further education. Over the past five years, a little over half of all Shepparton school leavers go on to study at university or TAFE or start an apprenticeship. When asked about their future, a number of young people suggest they would have to leave Shepparton to find meaningful work or further study — even with a range of local tertiary education and career pathways available.

The employment landscape of Greater Shepparton is full of contrasts. While the unemployment rate is the highest in the Hume region (6.7 per cent), growth industries in Greater Shepparton report that they are struggling to fill advertised positions due to the high-level technical skills they require. Employers also advise that when they are considering employing a young person, they look for young people who are ‘work ready’, with skills in customer service, problem solving, and written and verbal communication.

Youth unemployment in Greater Shepparton is relatively high. Nearly half of all people looking for work in Shepparton are aged 15-24 years. Local young people were hit particularly hard by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, with a 34.6 per cent increase in young people who have left the labour market altogether — three times the Victorian average. The young people who do have work often work in two or three part time or casual jobs simultaneously.

The disconnect between local young people and successful pathways to careers and tertiary education is exacerbated by the changing nature of industry. Evidence shows that industries that once would have typically employed and developed young people of the Shepparton region — agriculture, manufacturing and retail trade — have experienced a decline in employment, particularly in occupations requiring entry levels skills.

The *Shepparton Education Plan – Stage Four – Tertiary Education and Skills* speaks to how we can prepare our young people with their diverse range of capabilities, skills, knowledge and interests; with the aspiration, networks, and support to embrace the future in our region.

The Shepparton Education Plan – Stage Four – Tertiary Education and Skills is the fourth stage of the Victorian Government’s *Shepparton Education Plan*.

The *Shepparton Education Plan* is a long-term plan to transform education in Greater Shepparton to help young people get the best possible start in life. The Shepparton Education Plan looks at learning from birth to post-secondary school.

The first stage focused on the creation of the new Greater Shepparton Secondary College. The College opened its doors at the beginning of 2020. A single-site campus is being built and expected to be finished by late 2021.

The second stage focused on the educational journey of children from birth to primary school. The third stage focused on primary education and highlighted the importance of inclusive learning and environments that meet the needs of every student and allow them to thrive.

The *Shepparton Education Plan – Stage Four – Tertiary Education and Skills* plan identifies eight desired outcomes that align with the opportunities identified through consultation, each with accompanying priority actions. TAFE provision will be central to the success of the post-secondary outcomes in the Shepparton area as identified in the Plan. A high-quality TAFE network will provide responsive and accessible training opportunities for young people enabling more local students to train at their local TAFE.

Table 1: Opportunities and Desired Outcomes

Opportunity	Outcomes
<p>Build aspiration and prepare young people for success after school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an opportunity for every young person to have the aspiration, networks, and support to explore post-school pathways to further education and/or employment. • Students have opportunities to explore STEM learning and careers. • All students, their families and carers are included in career development throughout all stages.
<p>Support the wellbeing of our young People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate and targeted wrap-around services that support all young people, particularly those from priority cohorts, to engage or re-engage in further education and training or meaningful employment. • Ensure young people from all backgrounds can access sports, volunteering, and other extra-curricular activities to strengthen their community connection and engagement.
<p>Create pathways for young people beyond school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All young people understand the local industry and jobs market, and industry has a pool of local talent to fill all jobs from entry level to professional career roles. • A joined-up tertiary education and training sector that supports all students with a ‘no wrong door’ policy through seamless transition in and out of multiple pathways. • Tertiary providers deliver the courses required by local community and industry, at entry level certificate courses and skill-sets through to degree and post graduate levels.

In line with the approach for other stages of the *Shepparton Education Plan*, a more detailed implementation strategy will follow publication of the *Shepparton Education Plan – Stage Four – Tertiary Education and Skills* plan. The implementation strategy will include an evaluation approach to gauge success and guide ongoing implementation of the plan.

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1 - INTRODUCTION

VICTORIA - THE EDUCATION STATE

The Victorian Government has invested more than \$22.2 billion since 2014 to make Victoria the Education State to improve outcomes for every student, in every classroom, in every school and tertiary education and skills provider, in every community.

The Education State promotes excellence across the curriculum, the health and wellbeing of students, and aims to break the link between disadvantage and student outcomes.

The following targets reflect the Education State ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people:

- **Learning for life**
 - More students achieving excellence in reading, maths, science, critical and creative thinking, and the arts
- **Happy, healthy, and resilient kids**
 - Building the resilience of our children, and encouraging them to be more physically active
- **Breaking the link**
 - Ensuring more students stay in school and breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes for students
- **Pride and confidence in our Schools**
 - Making sure every community has access to excellence, in every government school and classroom.

EDUCATION PLANS

Education plans are typically delivered in areas where there are complex challenges to improving achievement, wellbeing, and engagement in education for children and young people.

Collaboration between community and service providers is required to transform education outcomes. Apart from Shepparton, education plans are operating, or in development, at:

- Bendigo
- Flemington
- Frankston North
- Footscray Learning Precinct
- Lilydale District and Upper Yarra
- Oakleigh
- Bayswater

Education plans help identify and address the unique challenges and priorities of a local community, and can involve:

- early childhood education and care services
- government and non-government schools
- TAFEs
- universities
- community and cultural organisations
- local businesses and industry
- local government and other government agencies.

The Shepparton Education Plan — background

The Greater Shepparton region, which includes the townships of Shepparton and Mooroopna, faces particularly complex and multi-faceted challenges to realising equity and improvement of educational outcomes.

The *Shepparton Education Plan* presents an ambitious, comprehensive framework to facilitate impactful change. It aims to address the region's significant challenges and to support its young children to thrive in school and in life, through the transformative power of education.

The Plan seeks to give Greater Shepparton's young people more options and opportunities, improve the transition through each stage of education, equip teachers with more effective training and resources, and develop contemporary secondary school infrastructure.

How the Shepparton Education Plan was developed

The *Shepparton Education Plan* was informed by a comprehensive community consultation process. More than 6,500 individual comments were gathered and analysed from the broad community. Ongoing feedback during the developmental phase was achieved through contact with 39 community and government organisations.

A strategic advisory group was formed, along with several working parties, to ensure coherence across the Plan's four stages. The group provided strategic advice to the Department of Education and Training through the North East Victoria Regional Director. In late 2017, the group recommended that the *Shepparton Education Plan's* initial focus should be on improving outcomes in the secondary education space, followed by early years settings.

The stages of the *Shepparton Education Plan* were then formulated as:

- Stage 1: Secondary Education
- Stage 2: Early Years
- Stage 3: Primary Education
- Stage 4: Tertiary Education and Skills

The strategic advisory group has since been renamed the Shepparton Education Plan Project Board. It continues to provide strategic advice and oversees the following working parties:

- Early Years
- Priority Cohorts and Partnerships
- Industry Partnerships & Further Education
- Koorie Engagement Group
- Project Control Groups for infrastructure builds

Industry Partnerships and Further Education Working Party

The Shepparton Education Plan Industry Partnerships and Further Education Working Party was formed in 2018 to enhance career and further education opportunities and pathways for young people in Greater Shepparton.

It provides advice to the Shepparton Education Plan Project Board and the Department of Education and Training (the Department) to support effective decision making as part of the *Shepparton Education Plan*.

The Industry Partnerships and Further Education Working Party:

- provides the Shepparton Education Plan Project Board with strategic advice on the development and maintenance of effective industry engagement and partnerships
- provides the Shepparton Education Plan Project Board with strategic advice regarding tertiary education and career pathways for young people
- advises Greater Shepparton Secondary College on effective industry engagement models to support student's experiences of work and career development
- facilitates connections between Greater Shepparton Secondary College and education providers to support post-secondary pathways for young people that maximise their career opportunities aligned to Greater Shepparton workforce skill needs
- provides input into the development of the Shepparton Education Plan Stage Four (Tertiary Education & Skills) document.

2 - THE CASE FOR CHANGE

For decades, the young people of Greater Shepparton have experienced some of the lowest educational, and health and wellbeing outcomes in Victoria. They have also experienced some of the state's highest levels of social and generational disadvantage.

Education can transform the lives of Greater Shepparton's young people. Real opportunities exist for young people to forge a pathway from secondary school to further education and/or employment with a learning component. There is also strong commitment within the Greater Shepparton community to support young people with successful pathways after school.

However, trends suggest that not all local children aspire to take this learning journey. Attendance rates at secondary school in Greater Shepparton are low and have been for some years. Students in Greater Shepparton are increasingly choosing an 'unscored' pathway through VCE or studying a VCAL course without appropriately considering or planning for their future pathways. Only half of Greater Shepparton school leavers are taking places at university or TAFE, or starting an apprenticeship or traineeship. Deferral rates for university have also increased, and more students are choosing not to take up their university offer after a gap year.

Analysis of students leaving secondary school over the past four years shows that there is an increasing number of students who are exiting school without a clear pathway to work or further education, reflecting the growing proportion of young people who are unemployed. When school leavers do find work, they are often working in two or three casual or part-time jobs simultaneously.

Leaving school

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the *Act*) states that it is compulsory for young people aged six to 17 years old to attend school. According to the *Act*, students can only leave early via a Department of Education and Training exemption, or if a student is to be home-schooled. Schools are required to follow up with all students who leave school early (without completing Year 12) within six months of them leaving school. If they are not in education, training or employment, schools are then required to refer them to an appropriate agency to obtain further support.

Analysis of Greater Shepparton secondary school student exits indicate that approximately 11 per cent of students who leave in Years 9-12 embark on a pathway that does not include a further education or employment component. This category of school leavers is not undertaking further study or actively seeking work.

There is a difference between aspiration and finding a transition from school. Community feedback during the creation of this Plan clearly communicated that a pathway is not always immediately visible to a young person, and that it should not be focused on a handful of courses. Pathways can be sought — and seen — through a wide range of avenues and connections, such as involvement in culture, sport, or the arts. It is the ongoing engagement of a young person in

something meaningful, and where and how they are supported to consider their future options that is critical.

Navigating a successful pathway

Greater Shepparton offers young people a wide range of higher education and career pathways. However, when young people think about their future, a number believe they must leave Shepparton to find it. A survey of young people who did go on to further education after leaving school revealed that 60 per cent of students indicated that the location of a tertiary education campus was an important consideration for them. Some young people indicated that they chose to study locally because of the lower costs associated with study, and because they could remain close to family, friends, services and cultural support.

Young people seek career advice from parents, carers, families, and community members as well as from the career guidance services offered at school. Families report that they feel added pressure at this time as they can find the tertiary education system difficult to navigate, with the range of options and application processes.

Some families and education specialists believe there is inadequate support available to students who start a tertiary education course or defer their university place, only to realise the course is not for them. It can be difficult for these young people to decide what to do next as time has passed since they last accessed school support and they have not yet formed new guidance networks.

Engagement in further education and training

In 2020 the National Centre for Vocational Education Research produced a publication *25 Years of LSA - Research from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)*. The surveys followed young people as they transitioned from compulsory schooling to post-school education and employment. The findings show:

- completing Year 12 is not generally sufficient for young people in terms of future employment and wellbeing outcomes — further study is required for success
- intentions to complete Year 12 are associated with academic performance, immigration background, and parental expectations
- young people with more education, ability, and experience have more opportunities to move to high-skilled jobs, while females and part-time workers are more likely to remain in low-skilled jobs
- undertaking VET programs in Year 11 had a positive effect on post-school outcomes, particularly for girls, suggesting that VET programs enable some students to engage with the world of work very successfully, such that they did not return to school for Year 12
- young men who are less academically inclined and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to take up apprenticeships

- students whose parents want them to attend university are 11 times more likely to plan to attend university, and four times more likely to plan to complete Year 12
- a school's socio-economic makeup and proportion of students from non-English speaking backgrounds influences later university attendance more than its tertiary entrance ranks (TERs).

Further analysis of the LSAY data as it relates to indigenous young people reveals:

- indigenous students were less likely to participate in science subjects
- good student-teacher relationships, a positive learning culture, and career guidance increased the likelihood of students from all backgrounds (including indigenous students) enrolling in further education after school
- If indigenous and non-indigenous students reach the same level of academic achievement by the time they are 15 years of age, there is no significant difference in subsequent educational outcomes, such as completing Year 12 and participating in University or vocational training (Mahuteau et al, 2015). This means that the greatest scope for improvement in educational outcomes for indigenous students post-school comes from improved educational performance during the early and middle years of school.
- Indigenous students with high ATARs were more likely to attend Vocational Education and Training than University, compared to non-indigenous students (Mahuteau et al, 2015)
- Current programs in senior secondary school have been reasonably successful at ensuring that indigenous students do not suffer further disadvantage. Australian Government data (2021) indicates that once indigenous students receive a Tertiary Admission Rank, they were as likely as non-indigenous students to go on to University, even with lower tertiary admission scores on average.

The gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians in tertiary education is linked to factors such as the cost of tertiary education, non-completion of schooling, low academic achievement, expectations, motivations, and factors affecting educational choices (including access to information, educational aspirations, and awareness of how to transition.

The research cited above is relevant to the Greater Shepparton context. Young people need opportunities to develop the aspiration, support, and networks to explore pathways after secondary school that lead to further education and/or employment. This is particularly the case for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. As the LSAY findings reveal, these students are more likely to lower their educational and occupational expectations over time.

Entering the Workforce

Discussions with employers in Greater Shepparton indicated that secondary school students are not as 'work ready' when they arrive for work experience or post-school employment as they might have been in the past.

Some employers report they have previously used work experience placements as a recruitment opportunity to identify potential future employees (particularly for apprenticeships), but they have done so less over the past 10 years. Employers advise that some young people present for work experience and/or potential employment without the social and emotional maturity to understand the world of work and expected workplace behaviours. However these skills can be learnt and practised.

Schools suggest that a broad and busy school curriculum does not provide adequate time for them to prepare their students for the world of work. Student expectations and understanding of workplace expectations has also changed. However, much of this is considered teachable, either in a school environment or within industry.

A coordinated effort is required from the whole community (school and employers) to prepare the region's young people for post-school pathways. Employers can support young people with aspiration, their understanding of the world of work, and build their capacity. To support this investment in young people as the future of community schools can be clearer in their communication with employers, engage with support service agencies, and prepare students for life after school.

There is much to celebrate about Shepparton's diverse community. However, a challenge exists to equip and support *all* its young people with the writing and language skills that give them the confidence to take on a job. They need to be offered culturally safe workplaces and tertiary education environments that enable them to thrive.

Where are the jobs in Greater Shepparton?

A report that was commissioned by Greater Shepparton City Council in 2019, *Employment in the Goulburn Valley*, shows that four industry sectors in the Goulburn Valley collectively represent 25,851 or 47 per cent of all jobs in the region.

- health care and social assistance = 7,576 jobs or 13.8 per cent of total jobs
- agriculture = 6,234 jobs or 11.4 per cent of total jobs
- manufacturing = 6,202 jobs or 11.3 per cent of total jobs
- retail trade 5,839 jobs or 10.7 per cent of total jobs

Positions in the health and agriculture fields in particular, are increasingly technical and require higher level qualifications. National Skills Commission data that projects five years ahead to May 2024 has predicted that 90 per cent of new jobs across all industry sectors will require vocational education or university qualifications, a reflection of the way in which the job market is becoming more skilled.

Growth industries in Shepparton are advertising skilled positions across a range of industries however employers have indicated that they are not always able to fill positions locally.

Analysis of industry and employment data commissioned by Greater Shepparton City Council in 2019 shows most industry sectors have grown over the past decade, led by strong performances in health care and social assistance (+31 per cent), construction (+14 per cent), education and

training (+16 per cent), accommodation and food services (+13 per cent) and other services (+21 per cent).

About 30 per cent of the evaluated industry sectors showed a decline in employment over the same period, including agriculture (-17 per cent), manufacturing (-19 per cent) and retail trade (-10 per cent).

These results mirror the Australian economy as a whole, which is driven by a growth in the services sector while experiencing decline in traditional industries such as agriculture and manufacturing.

Youth unemployment

Shepparton's unemployment rate is the highest in the Hume region at 6.7 per cent (ABS Labour Force Data, September 2020), and is consistent with the Victorian and Australian unemployment rate. Regional neighbours to Shepparton comparatively posted results of 4.7 per cent in Bendigo, 4.9 per cent in the Hume and 2.1 per cent in North-West Victoria.

Nearly half of all people looking for work in Shepparton are aged 15-24 years.

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic pushed Shepparton's unemployment rate to the highest level throughout the Hume region.

Impact of coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic

Local youth have been significantly impacted by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a 34.6 per cent increase in the number of young people who have left the labour market altogether. This is three times the Victorian average.

Even before the pandemic, many young people in Greater Shepparton were disengaged. Federal government data shows before the COVID-19 outbreak, 11.9 per cent of people aged 18-24 years in Shepparton were not studying, or looking for work.

Future Work and Career Readiness

The Firth review (2020) identified that the transformative impact of applied learning opportunities and industry exposure in terms of work readiness for young people. The development of critical life skills through work-based learning is linked to improved school completion rates, better employment prospects, and complements other learning.

There are also more practical aspects of work readiness which assist to prepare young people for experiences of work and/or employment, such as:

- student identity documents, including a Tax File Number and a bank account
- job application documents — a resume, referees to speak on the young person's behalf, coaching for online applications
- contact details for students, including mobile phone and email address, and young people being aware of the need for professional communication

- transportation to and from a workplace — use of public transport if required and support for young people to obtain a driver’s licence
- understanding of workplace health and safety requirements, including appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment
- appropriate workplace attire, communication, and expectations of employers
- licences, tickets, and further education required for the career that they are seeking.

The Geared for Careers program in Greater Shepparton has identified that many young people need support with the more practical aspects of being ready for work, noting that for some young people this needs to be taught and reinforced while at school.

Jackson (2018:1) defines work readiness as “... the ability to function effectively upon entering the workforce and across a range of contemporary working environments”. Jackson (2018) suggests that this concept has now moved to “career readiness”, meaning that people require a set of skills and attributes that enable them to successfully navigate a labour market that changes rapidly and requires transferrable skills and knowledge across different work contexts. This involves ongoing learning and development - lifelong learning.

Looking forward, young people in Greater Shepparton will need support to develop a core set of transferrable skills in digital literacy, problem solving and creativity to navigate the 17 jobs over five different careers they are predicted to experience. These figures are sourced from the findings of the Foundation for Young Australians report (2018) that also found:

- analysis of 4.2 million ads by the *Foundation for Young Australians* (FYA) for jobs requiring less than five years’ experience revealed demand for digital skills since 2012 has increased more than 200 per cent, critical thinking more than 150 per cent, creativity more than 60 per cent and presentation skills by 25 per cent
- the FYA has found more than one third of 15-year-olds are not proficient in the skills they need for the future of work, such as science, maths, technology, financial literacy and problem solving.
- the FYA suggests successful education systems focus on immersive, real world experiences to build these skills and capabilities.

Importance of career education and development

Career education is “the development of knowledge and skills through a planned program of learning experiences in education, training and workplace settings, which will assist students to make informed course and career decisions and effectively navigate multiple and complex careers throughout their lives” (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, 2018).

The connection between engagement and wellbeing at school is significant to equipping students with skills for transition out of school and into further education, and/or the workforce, noting that:

- students who understand the connection between school, their sense of self and future career are more likely to be engaged and have better educational outcomes

- career education can promote relevance and importance of school subjects, improving motivation and willingness to learn
- career education helps students develop skills to navigate and understand the world beyond school. It can help students aspire to higher status occupations, have smoother transitions to further education, training or employment and have wider economic and social benefits.

The *Transforming career education in Victorian government schools* (2018) strategy identifies three key focus areas for careers education and development:

- **Start early:** career education will be comprehensive. A decision-making process will start in Year 7 and result in students being able to make confidently informed subject, course, and career choices in later years of school and beyond
- **Connect to work:** career education will enhance students' quality engagement with the world of work. It will give them opportunities to see and experience different jobs. These explorations are vital to assist students in making informed career decisions
- **Make career education a priority:** build the capacity of the career education system to support government schools deliver high-quality career education by training more than 400 careers practitioners across four years.

3 - THE COMMUNITY OF GREATER SHEPPARTON

POPULATION

Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC) is the fifth-largest city in regional Victoria, with a population of just over 66,000 people. Located 180km from Melbourne, Greater Shepparton is a major service centre and transport hub for the Goulburn Valley and Southern Riverina area of New South Wales.

The Greater Shepparton local government area (LGA) covers three main urban centres: Shepparton, Mooroopna and Tatura. Three-quarters of the municipality's population live in Shepparton and Mooroopna.

Population growth

According to Profile ID data for the local government area of Greater Shepparton, the forecast population for 2021 is 69,850 people. This is forecast to grow to 83,234 people by 2036.

Greater Shepparton is considered a regional centre within Victoria.

Looking back over the past seven years of Greater Shepparton's population, Population Australia (2019) cites a strong growth rate, ranging from 0.71 per cent to 1.44 per cent, adding around 449 to 880 people each year to the overall population. This compares reasonably with Victoria overall.

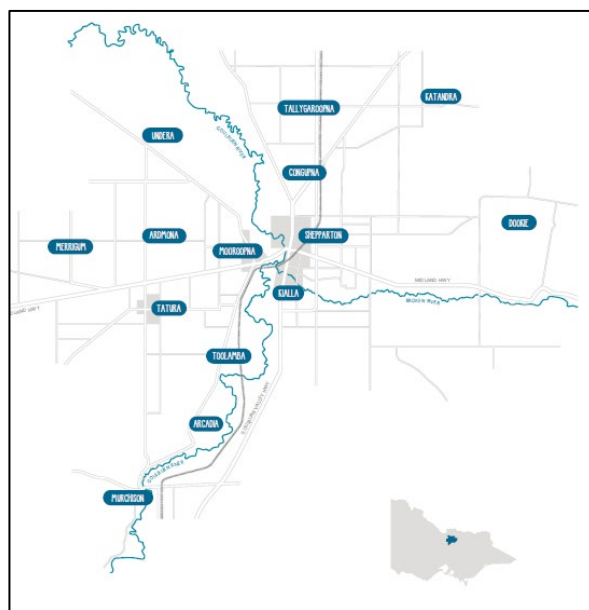
Over the same time, Victoria posted a population growth rate range of 0.35 per cent to 2.55 per cent.

By 2036, Greater Shepparton is expected to experience a 20 per cent increase in the number of school-aged children, reflecting the Victoria state-wide projection of 19.3 per cent. The expected growth rate in children aged 0-4 and 5-9 is around 7 per cent, consistent with Victoria's anticipated growth rate.

These population statistics indicate that Greater Shepparton is a growing regional centre, with an increasing number of young families and school-aged children to call it home in the decades to come.

A culturally and linguistically diverse community

Greater Shepparton is known for being a multicultural community. The 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census indicated that 14.9 per cent (9,459 individuals) of the population identified as being born in a country other than Australia. Most of these people were born in countries where English is not the first language.



Map of Greater Shepparton. Courtesy of the State of Greater Shepparton's Children Report 2019.

Just over one quarter of students enrolled at government schools in Greater Shepparton (primary, secondary and special school) in 2020 had a language background other than English.

The country of birth for students who have a language background other than English include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iran, Malaysia, Iraq, India, the Philippines, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Samoa. The main languages spoken by students and their families in Greater Shepparton include Arabic, Hazaraghi, Dari, Punjabi, Swahili, Samoan, Turkish, Albanian, and Malay. Arabic is the most commonly spoken language for Greater Shepparton students and their families who have a language background other than English.

The Koorie community

Outside of Melbourne, Greater Shepparton has Victoria's largest concentration of people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, referred to here as Koorie. The figure of nearly 2,200 Koorie people is approximately 3.4 per cent of the Greater Shepparton population, more than twice the regional Victorian average.

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that these figures are under-represented. Greater Shepparton's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population could be nearly three times this, with a population of nearly 6,000. Approximately 30 per cent of the total Koorie population in Greater Shepparton are under 11 years of age, and Koorie children represent 11 per cent of enrolments in government schools in Greater Shepparton (primary, secondary and special school). The Greater Shepparton community has two defining features - a high number of Koorie people, and multicultural people and communities.

Disadvantage within community

According to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data obtained in the 2016 Census, Shepparton local government area (LGA) is the 14th most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria (out of 79 Victorian LGAs). The most disadvantaged communities are concentrated in pockets in North and South Shepparton, and Mooroopna. These areas are also most at risk of vulnerability, including high concentrations of new arrivals and refugee families, families living in social housing, people known to be experiencing family violence, and those experiencing the impacts of substance abuse and poverty.

It is acknowledged that social disadvantage can have a negative impact on student aspiration and the pursuit of further study or meaningful work after school. Consultation as part of this plan found that socio-economic and cultural factors contributed to low aspiration among young people in Greater Shepparton. Without role models at home who communicate the importance of education, employment and lifelong learning, students may experience challenges in pursuing study and work.

A youth survey report on economically disadvantaged young people completed by Mission Australia (2019) found a higher proportion of economically disadvantaged young people reported feeling that they had *no/low control* over their lives (12.9 per cent compared with 7.3 per cent of respondents with parents or guardians in paid work).

Wellbeing of children and young people

When children of Greater Shepparton begin primary school, they are twice as vulnerable in critical development domains than the Victorian average and are at double the risk of developing behavioural and emotional problems than their state-wide counterparts, according to the Australian Early Development Census (2018). They are twice as likely to have experienced stress in their family home, such as parental alcohol or drug problems, child abuse or have witnessed violence, compared to the whole of Victoria. Nearly 70 per cent of local children spend their early years living in the greatest social disadvantage — triple the state average.

Student resilience and wellbeing are essential for both academic and social development. Confident and resilient children who have a capacity for emotional intelligence perform better academically. These skills can contribute to a child's ability to create strong social bonds and maintain healthy relationships and lifestyles as they progress through to young adulthood. Low levels of Year 12 completions in Greater Shepparton can stem from historical student disengagement. Absenteeism can start during the primary years or younger. There also appears to be longer term, generational disengagement from education within the Greater Shepparton community.

Some of the challenges facing Greater Shepparton captured during consultation for this plan centred on the connection between the wellbeing of young people and their educational outcomes. There are also challenges with best servicing priority student cohorts, including students with a disability, students in out of home care and disadvantaged backgrounds, and students from the diverse range of cultures in Greater Shepparton. Other issues affecting Shepparton students' capacity for learning include transport accessibility, food security, carer responsibilities, and the need for young people to work.

Students with Disabilities

There are two government schools in Greater Shepparton which offer secondary schooling for students with disabilities – Greater Shepparton Secondary College, and Verney Road Special School.

When a broad definition of disability is used, 10% of Greater Shepparton Secondary College students have some form of disability or challenge that impairs their learning, which equates to more than 200 students. When the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) definition is applied, 4% of the total Greater Shepparton Secondary College student population meet the criteria for specific additional funding, meaning that they have specific cognitive challenges, communication deficits, and require relatively high levels of intervention support.

Verney Road Special School have on average eighteen Year 12 graduates each year, many of which are special education students who would have the capability of progressing to further education and employment if they are provided with additional pathways support.

INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

A recent report commissioned by Greater Shepparton City Council in 2019 and prepared by RMCG Consulting Group shows that four industry sectors in the Goulburn Valley dominate employment in the region. These sectors:

- Health care and social assistance = 7,576 jobs or 13.8 per cent of total jobs
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing = 6,234 jobs or 11.4 per cent of total jobs
- Manufacturing = 6,202 jobs or 11.3 per cent of total jobs
- Retail trade 5,839 jobs or 10.7 per cent of total jobs

The data shows that these four industries, represent 25,851 or 47 per cent of all jobs in the Goulburn Valley region. Other industries with relatively high employment numbers in Greater Shepparton include education and training, and construction.

Employment trends

Employment across the Goulburn Valley, including Shepparton, has increased by 3 per cent over the past 10 years. However, the distribution of employment growth by industry varies significantly.

Growth has been led by health care and social assistance (+31 per cent), construction (+14 per cent), education and training (+16 per cent), accommodation and food services (+13 per cent) and other services (+21 per cent).

About 30 per cent of the evaluated industry sectors showed a decline in employment over the same period, including agriculture (-17 per cent), manufacturing (-19 per cent) and retail trade (-10 per cent).

These results align with the Australian economy as a whole, driven by a growth in the services sector while experiencing decline in traditional industries such as agriculture and manufacturing. This decline in jobs does not necessarily represent a decline in the economic contribution of these sectors. Traditional agricultural pursuits of broadacre (sheep, beef cattle and crop growing) and fruit growing industries reported less jobs caused by changing markets, new technology, and significant changes to irrigation water availability. The remaining jobs in agriculture and horticulture for example are becoming increasingly skilled.

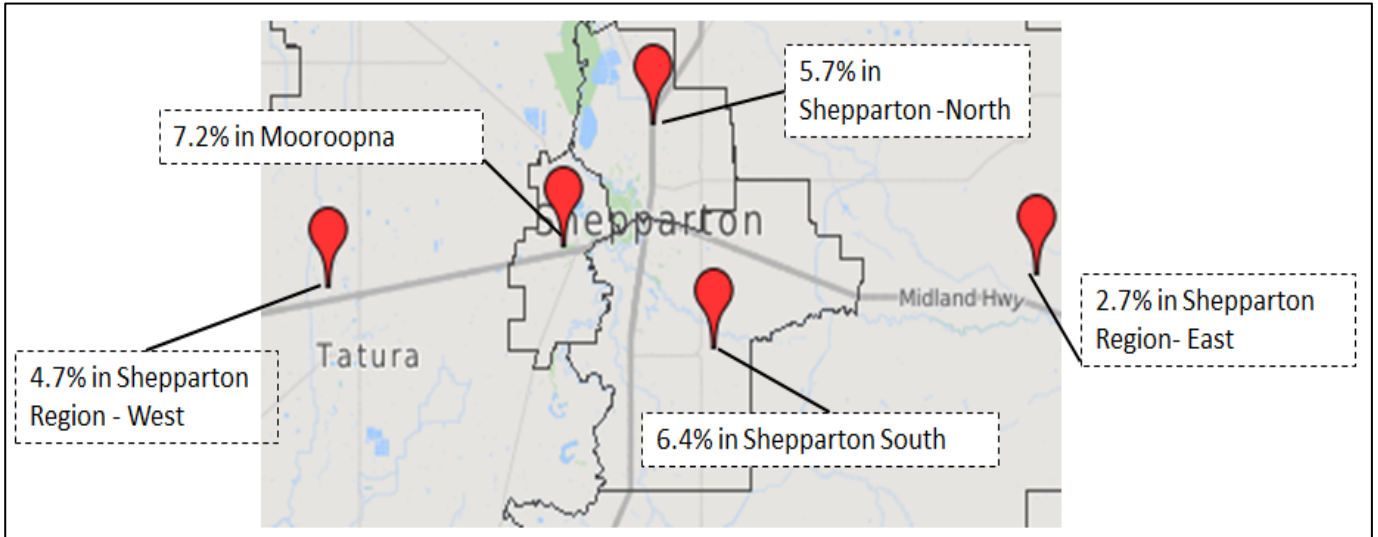
Impact of COVID-19 on employment

Greater Shepparton has experienced large falls in employment compared to regional neighbours during the COVID-19 pandemic. ABS Labour Force data reveals employment fell by 12,100 people, or 14.4 per cent, in Shepparton from March to September 2020. Other regions such North-West Victoria dropped under 5 per cent, and Bendigo saw a 3.8 per cent *increase* in employment. For comparison purposes ABS data in 2019 showed the quarterly unemployment rate for Greater Shepparton before COVID-19 varied between 4.2-4.7 per cent.

In September 2020 Shepparton had the highest rate of unemployment in the Hume region at 6.7 per cent (ABS Labour Force Survey Data, 2020). This rate reached a height of 9.2 per cent during

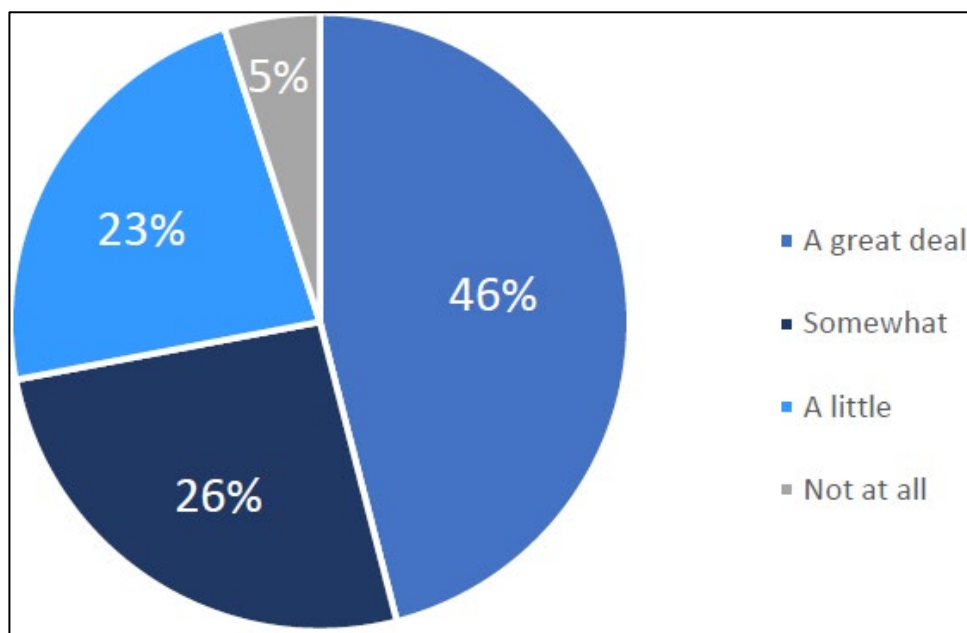
the first wave of the pandemic in 2020. The current unemployment rate in Greater Shepparton is on par with Victoria (6.5 per cent) and Australia (6.8 per cent). Shepparton however, continues to maintain higher unemployment levels than its regional neighbours of Bendigo (4.7 per cent), Hume (4.9 per cent) and North-West Victoria (2.1 per cent).

The unemployment rates throughout areas in Greater Shepparton are illustrated below:

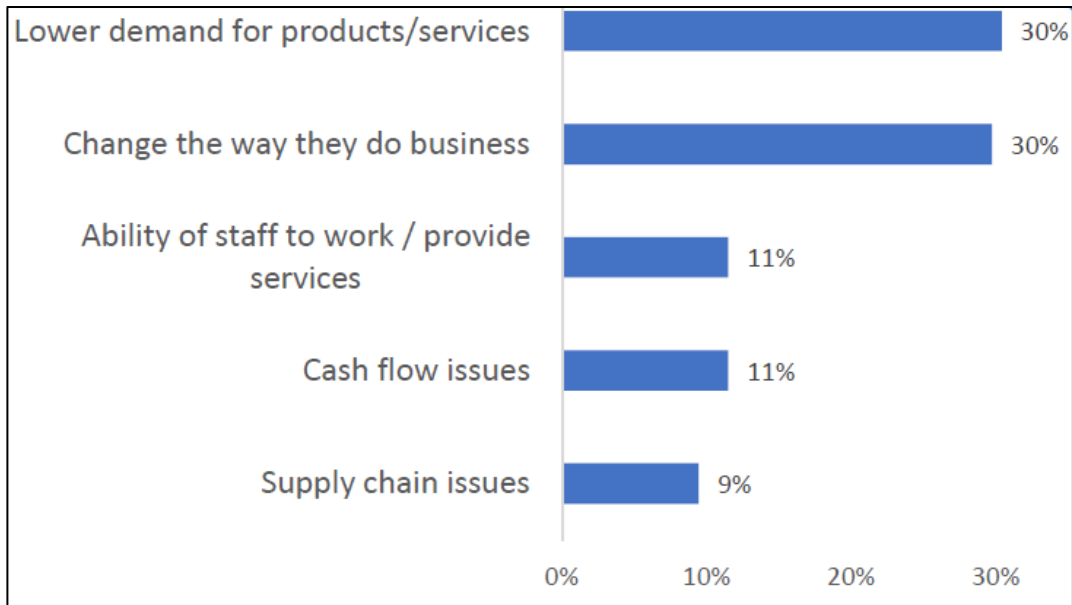


Source: National Skills Commission, Small Area Labour Markets, June quarter 2020

The labour market impact of COVID-19 has been significant for Greater Shepparton, with more than 70 per cent of employers reporting that it has affected their business “a great deal” or “somewhat”, and has required a change in the way that they do business and/or a reduction in demand for their products or services.



Source: National Skills Commission, Survey of Australian businesses: the labour market impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), SheppartonSA4, 1 April 2020 –19 October2020

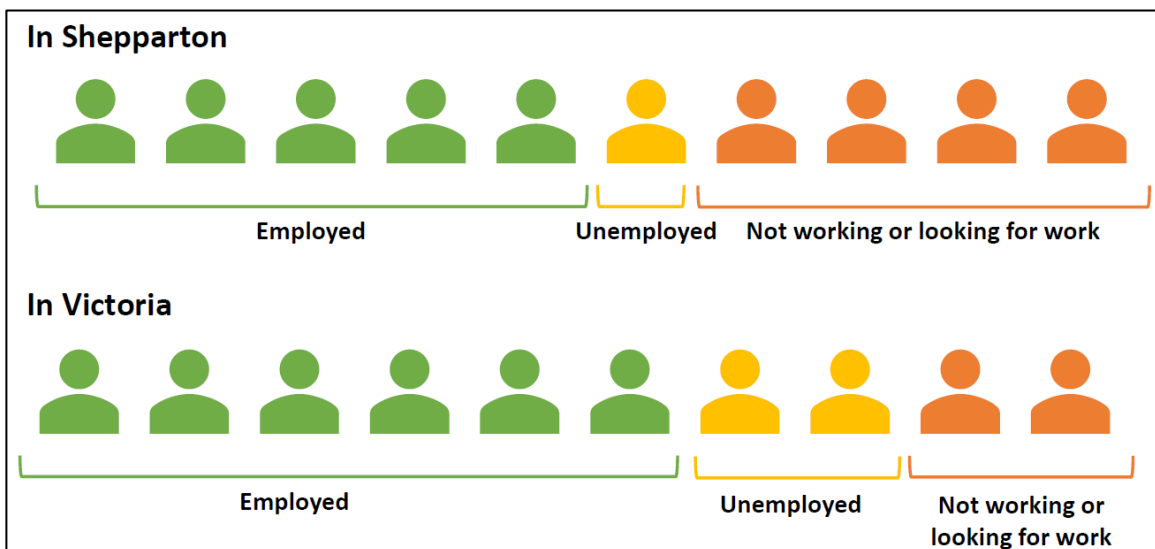


Source: National Skills Commission, Survey of Australian businesses: the labour market impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), SheppartonSA4, 1 April 2020 –19 October2020

Youth Unemployment

Young people in Greater Shepparton have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Nearly half of all people looking for work in Shepparton are aged 15-24 years. There has been a 34.6 per cent increase in young people who have left the labour market altogether (approximately 1,800 young people). This is three times the Victorian average. There has also been a substantial increase in the number of jobseeker and youth allowance recipients in Greater Shepparton.

Comparative data for Greater Shepparton and Victoria shows a relatively high percentage of people in Greater Shepparton who were “not working or looking for work” during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, September 2020

Even before the pandemic, many young people in Greater Shepparton were disengaged. Federal government data shows before the COVID-19 outbreak, 11.9 percent of people aged 18-24 years in Shepparton were not studying, or looking for work. This is the highest rate in regional and metropolitan Victoria.

Emerging industries and skill shortages in Greater Shepparton

The Deloitte (2019:31) report regarding the future of work indicates that “skills, rather than occupations or qualifications, form the job currency of the future”. Deloitte (2019) note that as technology, preferences and demography evolve, the right set of core skills – technical and otherwise – will mean that workers can add value to a range of tasks, occupations and industries. Deloitte’s report indicates that there are key transferrable skills across industries that are in short supply compared to the number of jobs that require them (demand outstrips supply). It is interesting to note that these are often not technical in nature. They include such things as customer service, organisation and time management, digital literacy, leadership, resolving conflicts, problem solving, written communication, and innovative thinking. It can be difficult for young people to articulate and “sell” these skills, which reinforces the need for work experience and further education and training.

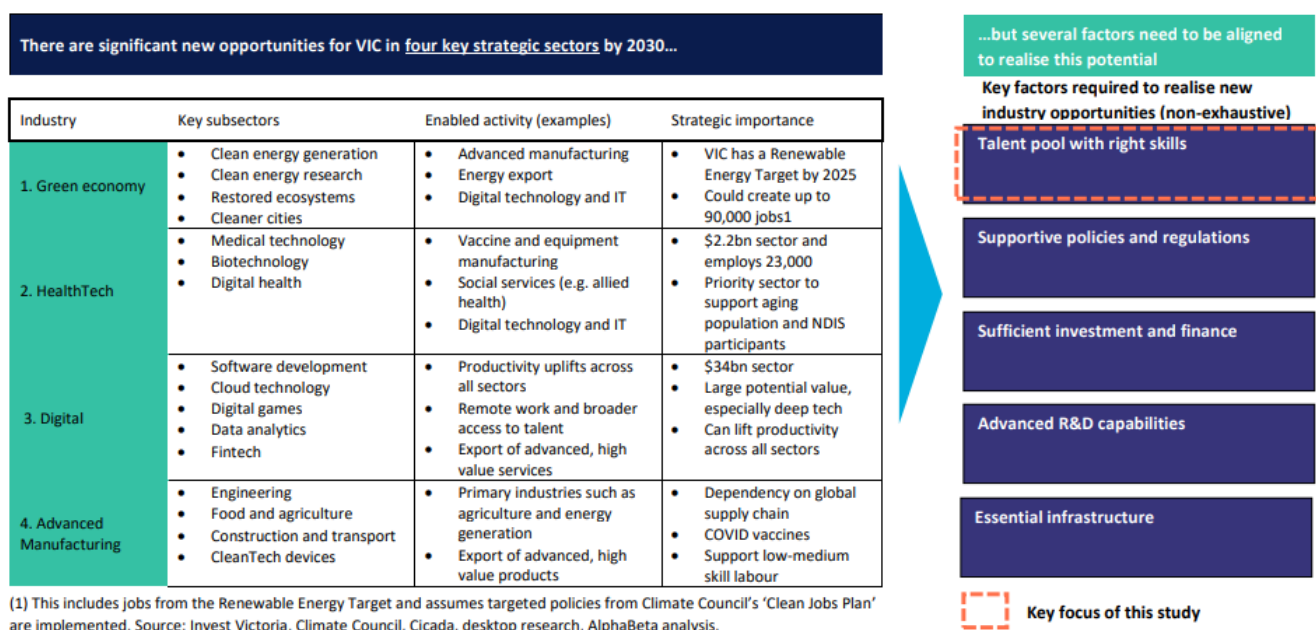
The Australian government gathers information regarding national skill shortage areas by state through its Labour Market Analysis of Skilled Occupations (2019). This identifies shortages and recruitment difficulty in regional Victoria for the following occupations:

- health professionals including sonographers, pharmacists, occupational therapists, midwives, registered nurses, enrolled nurses
- technicians and trade workers, including structural steel and welding trades workers

The Macklin Review (2020:33-34) outlines four major opportunities for Victoria to transform skills policy to meet global, national, and local challenges:

- **Digital economy** – has been accelerated due to COVID-19 and the need for transitions to online work and activity
- **Clean economy** – circular economy to reduce waste and improve use and re-use of materials and resources
- **Care economy** – high quality service provision at an efficient cost to an ageing population, and requiring focus on prevention, early intervention, and co-ordinated care
- **Advanced manufacturing** – including niche manufacturing opportunities in health and food sectors.

Figure 5: Skills required in key strategic sectors¹²



Reference: Macklin, J (2020), page 35

Greater Shepparton is known as an industrial centre with strengths in agricultural and horticultural production, health, manufacturing, and retail (Greater Shepparton City Council Economic Development Tourism and Major Events Strategy, 2017-2021).

Greater Shepparton is well placed to extend and diversify into several of the strategic industry sectors identified for Victoria. Greater Shepparton has already demonstrated capacity to develop and maximise opportunities in emerging industries, in particular:

- circular economy (now referred to as 'clean economy'), and renewable energy
- agriculture and horticulture — protected cropping and new horticultural crops, such as medicinal cannabis

Significant government and private investment is planned for the Greater Shepparton region, including:-

- Big Build Shepparton Line Upgrade – funding over \$400million, which commenced in 2020
- AgBioEn – private investment - \$2billion, which commenced in 2020
- CannaTrek – private investment \$160million and Federal Government support – commencing in 2021

These significant infrastructure developments and emerging industries will require skills at entry level all the way through to highly skilled occupations.

Employers such as Coleman Rail and employment agencies such as Sureway are increasingly reporting workforce shortages and challenges with attracting apprentices into rail construction, civil construction and some building trades. While there has been significant investment in infrastructure, the investment in local workforce development has not matched demand.

4 – CAREERS AND PATHWAYS LANDSCAPE

Greater Shepparton has a range of organisations working in the university and vocational education and training space. There is a large regional TAFE (GOTAFE), and several Learn Local and private training providers delivering a wide range of courses across many industry sectors. Greater Shepparton is also home to a campus of Latrobe University and has a University of Melbourne presence at Dookie and Shepparton.

There are also many organisations who provide a breadth of support services to schools and students in relation to careers and pathways.

Access to further study

It is well documented that young people in rural and regional communities have lower educational attainment rates and qualification levels than their city counterparts. Reasons for this include:

- student attitudes and aspirations
- narrow course offerings available locally
- prohibitive cost of tertiary education
- students needing to work and study at the same time to support themselves and/or their family
- a tendency for people to return to study later in life, potentially part-time, rather than studying straight after school.

In 2019, the Federal Government's Expert Advisory Panel for Rural and Regional Students recommended that local context needs to be placed at the centre of rural and regional education policy and advised that some rural and regional communities have strengths that should be maximised, noting that:

- rural students are less likely to enter undergraduate degrees or higher-level VET, yet they are more likely to take up apprenticeships and traineeships that have strong relevance to work. The data for Greater Shepparton is consistent with this.
- relatively high levels of disadvantage in rural communities have generated a dynamic network of accessible local courses to help disadvantaged learners make the transition to employment.

The 'thin markets' in terms of student numbers in regional areas mean that TAFE provision plays a stronger role in regional communities. Victorian students enrolled in TAFE are more likely to live in a rural or regional area, compared to students enrolled in private RTOs and universities.

TERTIARY EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE)

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE) is the largest vocational education and training provider in regional Victoria, offering over 170 courses across nine campuses. GOTAFE services eleven local government areas within the Hume region with an estimated resident population of over 240,000. GOTAFE's geographic catchment includes the local government area of Greater Shepparton.

In 2020 GOTAFE trained approximately 9,500 students which included 2,000 apprentices and trainees. The four most popular courses enrolled at the GOTAFE Shepparton campus in 2020 were:

- Certificate III in Electrotechnology
- Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance
- Certificate IV in Accounting and Book-keeping
- Diploma of Nursing

Courses and programs offered by GOTAFE which target youth and the development of future study pathways include:

- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
- VET delivered to Secondary Schools (VDSS)
- Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- Pathways to University courses
- Pre-apprenticeship courses
- Accredited and non-accredited short courses

Since Free TAFE was introduced in 2019 a significant number of students have commenced training under the initiative including over 3,500 at GOTAFE. Free TAFE removes the financial barriers that may exist to learners accessing training. The most popular Free TAFE courses at GOTAFE include the Diploma of Nursing, Diploma of Community Services and Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care.

La Trobe University

La Trobe University has operated in Shepparton for more than 25 years. On-campus or online study modes are offered, from short courses through to Doctorate programs. Study areas focus mostly on health and community services, business, and arts.

Entry pathways to La Trobe University are also varied. Students who recently completed secondary schooling can apply to La Trobe University based on the usual ATAR score process. However, an increasing number of students are enrolling via alternative routes, such as like Aspire (early entry) and Bradford Pathways Program.

During 2020, 44 per cent of students enrolled at the university's Shepparton campus were aged over 25 years — not considered to be school leavers. Advice from La Trobe University is that this

pattern of mature age students (25+ years) is not consistent across all La Trobe University campuses.

The university is partnering with education providers, such as GOTAFE, to develop pathways from Certificate and Diploma levels courses through to higher education degrees. This linkage is particularly popular for nursing qualifications.

In 2020, the Shepparton campus of La Trobe enrolled 440 students, with the highest enrolment rankings for courses being:

- Bachelor of Nursing
- Bachelor/Master of Social Work
- Bachelor of Early Childhood and Primary Education
- Bachelor of Business (Accounting).

Course offerings are aligned to meet skill requirements that are analysed in collaboration with local industry and employers. Evidence of this effort has seen an increased focus on study streams in health, education, and social work.

University of Melbourne

Dookie campus

The Dookie campus is an agricultural facility set on 2,440 hectares between Shepparton and Benalla. The campus includes a small community which houses out students and teaching staff, sheep, an orchard, robotic dairy, winery, and a natural bush reserve. The Dookie farm is a living laboratory for programs including the Diploma in General Studies, undergraduate studies, and the Bachelor of Agriculture research degrees. Dookie's broad acre farm is a resource for food security and climate change adaptation and research and teaching.

The Diploma of General Studies, a one-year, full-time program based on campus, and acts as an entry pathway into University of Melbourne degrees in agriculture, biomedicine, commerce, design, and science. This course has been popular with students as a pathway into other University of Melbourne courses.

Melbourne Medical School - Department of Rural Health

The Department of Rural Health is a department within the Melbourne Medical School. The Department is based in Shepparton, Ballarat, Bendigo and Wangaratta.

The accredited programs delivered by the Department are the postgraduate Doctor of Medicine and the Specialist Certificate in Empowering Health in Aboriginal Communities.

The key purpose of the Department of Rural Health is to provide professional health education and research training in a rural context, with an aim to increase the rural health workforce.

The Academy of Sport, Health and Education (ASHE)

In 2004 the Rumbalara Football Netball Club (RFNC) in partnership with the University of Melbourne established the Academy of Sport, Health and Education (ASHE) as a community and educational resource to provide young Indigenous people with an educational setting and support for their transition to employment or further education.

ASHE aims to improve Aboriginal equality and overall life outcomes using a community development and whole-of-life support model, providing accessible, culturally-relevant education, training, health and employment opportunities and outcomes to primarily – but not exclusively – Aboriginal people. GOTAFE collaborates with ASHE to deliver programs which include VCAL, Certificate IV in Community Services, Certificate IV Trainer and Assessor, Diploma of Community Services, Diploma of Nursing, and short courses in Hospitality and First Aid. ASHE also run Cultural programs such as Dream, Learn Achieve for Aboriginal students in Years 8 and Years 9, ASHEdaya Traditional Aboriginal Games and Activities, and ASHEfest.

Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence (MCRE)

The Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence (MCRE) is currently in the planning phase. Munarra will be a purpose-built cultural and community centre in Shepparton which aims to provide employment and further education pathways for Koorie people in the Goulburn Murray region. The Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence will include a campus for excellence in sports, health sciences and education, and seek to build upon the work of ASHE. Munarra will seek to provide an Aboriginal pedagogy for regional communities to engage through knowledge exchange in education, sport and culture.

Non-government Registered Training Organisations

Privately-owned training providers are registered with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to deliver many of the same qualifications as a publicly owned TAFE Institute.

There are 187 RTOs currently registered as delivering courses in Shepparton. Most of these RTOs do not provide an on-campus training facility in Shepparton and instead provide courses on-line or via workplace delivery. Generally speaking, private registered training organisations are relatively small and specialise in terms of their course offerings.

Learn Local Providers

Learn Local providers are not-for-profit community-based organisations and receive funding from the Victorian government to deliver a range of pre-accredited courses. Learn Local providers are skilled in working with people of post-compulsory age who need support returning to education, entering the workforce or maintaining employment through new skills. Pre-accredited training includes options such as:

- short courses in communication
- study skills

- job skills
- getting ready to go back to work
- information technology
- reading and writing
- maths, and
- English.

Learners who undertake Learn Local courses can go on to accredited training at a TAFE or another training provider, or obtain a job.

Many Learn Local providers are also Registered Training Organisations and deliver accredited training. Across Victoria there are over 240 contracted Learn Local providers with 4 in Shepparton:

- North Shepparton Community and Learning Centre
- Shepparton Access
- Shepparton ACE College Inc
- South Shepparton Community Centre

Group Training Organisations

Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employ apprentices and trainees and place them with host employer organisations. They operate across Australia with some specialising in particular industries, and others operating across a number of industries.

Some Group Training Organisations also operate as Registered Training organisations.

Group Training Organisations aim to:

- create more employment opportunities for apprentices and trainees
- provide for continuity of employment and training
- improve the quality and range of training available to apprentices and trainees

Group Training Organisation employer duties include:

- selecting and recruiting apprentices and trainees
- payment of wages and other standard employee benefits
- manage and track arrangements with host employers
- managing the quality and continuity of training, both on and off the job
- supporting apprentice and trainee needs

The Apprenticeship Factory is the large Group Training Organisation based in Shepparton however many others operate in the region including:

- Central Victorian Group Training (CVGT) Australia Ltd
- ATEL Ltd
- Ballarat Group Training

- Melbourne Eastern Group Training (MEGT)
- Apprenticeships Group Australia
- Industry specific GTO's such as the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC)
- MAS National
- Skill Invest

ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

There are many agencies in Greater Shepparton which support young people with careers and pathways, including:-

- organisations which facilitate industry, community, education provider or school based partnerships and programs to improve outcomes for students
- organisations which support individual students based on their learning needs

The challenge in this space is to ensure that all organisations are working together co-operatively in relation to engagement with industry and community, and student support needs.

Goulburn Murray Local Learning & Employment Network

There are 31 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) in Victoria which are funded by the Department of Education and Training to improve the participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes of secondary students.

LLENs operate within local government boundaries. In the context of this plan Shepparton is serviced by the Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network (GMLEN). Employers collaborate with LLENs to provide school-employer activities which are tailored to local priorities. This engagement expands student knowledge and skills, promotes effective course and career decisions, and encourages Year 12 completion or equivalent.

In 2020, the GMLEN supported over 1000 students through 'school to industry' initiatives which include:

- Resources
- Careers events
- Industry Tours and videos
- School-based apprenticeships
- Structured Workplace Learning
- Work experience
- Work readiness activities

Structured Workplace Learning Portal

The GMLEN provides an interface for young people to experience the world of work via the Victorian Government's Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Portal. The Portal gives students and teachers access to work experience, structured work placements and school based

apprenticeships, from a range of businesses locally and state-wide. Structured Workplace Learning can be more difficult to access and organise in regional areas as this form of work experience is in addition to other experiences of work such as Year 10 work experience. Employers advise that they often only have a limited number of students that they can accommodate, and the information regarding the different forms of work experience is not readily available.

In addition to the services provided via the SWL Portal GMLEN supports schools with a number of School – Industry initiatives, targeting local industry needs, skill shortages and future emerging industries.

The NOYS Network

GMLEN's Network of Youth Services (NOYS) provides all schools/organisations in Greater Shepparton with a mechanism to develop local, place based partnerships and solutions to youth wellbeing and engagement issues. By managing the NOYS Network, GMLEN seeks to facilitate resource sharing, services and knowledge for the benefit of all young people in the region.

Geared4Careers

Geared4Careers operates as a separate arm of Worktrainers which invests surplus funds from commercial business activities. Geared for Careers provides support to over 1200 students across 13 secondary schools in North East and Central Victoria. This includes 380 current students at Greater Shepparton Secondary College, mainly student in Years 9 to 12.

The Geared for Careers program is unique in that Program Officers are embedded in the schools, to more effectively assist students remain engaged and support transition to further education or employment.

Geared4Careers works with local youth to:

- Become job ready through activities such as mock interviews
- Apply for Tax File Numbers, Bank Accounts, Birth Certificates etc to prepare for work.
- Secure local part time or casual employment opportunities whilst still at school.

The overall goal for Geared4Careers is to create an environment where students have equitable access to career opportunities, and schools are supported with flexible, and practical career services to meet the needs of their student group.

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse is a place based and grass roots community organisation that improves outcomes for young people in the region from conception to career. Lighthouse uses a deep listening approach and responds with co-designed local solutions. This collective impact model seeks to bring about cultural and systems change through connection, brokering and harnessing extensive networks and latent resources to improve outcomes for Greater Shepparton's youth.

Extensive community consultation conducted within the '1000 Conversations' in 2015 and 2018 resulted in the creation of a local Youth Haven, a Family Haven in Mooroopna, volunteering and mentoring programs in schools focussed on literacy and numeracy support. Lighthouse also

facilitates in-school lunch time initiatives at GSSC campuses to support increased cohesion, connection and engagement of students with a focus on connection to sport and art.

Industry Links was piloted in 2015 at Shepparton High School and was then adopted amongst the other campuses of the now GSSC. Industry Links connects what students are learning within the curriculum to the local operating environment and to local jobs and career pathways. Industry Links has provided students industry immersions and tours connecting with mentors in order to build aspiration for local careers reflective of local growth industries and those experiencing skills shortages. Industry Links is a demonstrated example of a local model which impacted the way community viewed their connection to and role within the educational journey of our youth.

Lighthouse also runs a strengths-based re-engagement offering where students who have, or are at risk of falling out of educational settings connect with industry mentors and positive role models. “Pit Stop” is a program where students gain exposure to hands on work and life skills whilst refurbishing small engines, cars and bicycles which are then donated back into community. “Pit Stop” increases connection for young people within the community whilst better connecting them to opportunities.

The Bridge Youth Service

The Bridge Youth Service opened in 1995 after the Shepparton Central Rotary Club made a commitment in 1991 to raise funds for a service providing advice, programs and information to young people. It provides services to young people 12 – 25 years of age.

The Bridge Youth Service has expanded to Seymour, Wallan and Cobram and delivers support to around 1200 people a year in the following areas:

- housing & homelessness
- reengagement with education
- options counselling, antenatal care, parenting and family services
- family relationships
- mentoring
- early intervention in Mental Health and Alcohol & other Drugs

The Navigator Program funded by Department of Education and training is delivered by The Bridge Youth Service. Program works to solve issues for young people aged 12-17 years who disengage with their education and bring them back to learning. A key element of the program is to develop students' social and emotional capabilities and support schools to be better equipped to engage and retain all young people with education and career pathways.

Programs run through The Bridge Youth Service are funded by the Victorian Government, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department of Education & Training as well as fundraising activities and grants from other sources.

Berry Street

Berry St was established over 140 years ago and supports over 40,000 children, young people and families in Victoria each year. Today it is one of the largest, independent family service organisations in Australia. It offers foster care, therapeutic programs, family violence and support services. It also operates the Berry Street School and has locations in Victoria in Melbourne, Shepparton, Morwell and Eaglemont.

Berry Street provides services in Shepparton to support disadvantaged young people to engage in education and training through the following programs:

- Berry Street School
- Children in Residential Care (CIRC)
- Education First Youth Foyer – in partnership with GOTAFE, and Beyond Housing Network
- Nationally accredited training - as a Registered Training Organisation
- School Focused Youth Service – in partnership with the Department of Education & Training

Specific youth services are also provided including

- Intensive Case Management, and Trauma Informed Practice
- Lead Tenant
- Leaving Care Housing Support
- Leaving Care Mentoring
- Residential Care Case Management

Education First Youth Foyer

The Education First Youth Foyer is an alternative intervention program to combat youth homelessness and disadvantage. It combines learning and accommodation services for young people who are unable to live at home or do not have a stable place to live to achieve their education goals. Young people aged 16-24 years can receive safe, secure accommodation while they study, as well as other support and skills to become independent adults. The foyer opened in 2016 and supports up to 40 young people at a time. It is a partnership between Berry Street, Beyond Housing Network and GOTAFE.

The Smith Family

The Smith Family is Australia's largest children's charity which currently supports 56,000 disadvantaged students nationally in education to provide better future outcomes.

The 'Learning for Life' (LFL) program aims to achieve four main outcomes - attendance, engagement, advancement, and tertiary. All families on the Learning for Life program receive financial support, access to a program coordinator and a suite of educational programs that support early years through to senior secondary.

In Shepparton, The Smith Family have been working in partnership with families, schools, TAFE, Universities and other government and community services since 2000. In 2021 there are 600 Learning for Life students in Greater Shepparton in years Foundation to 12. This equates to \$239,000 in financial scholarships which are provided through sponsorship. 350 of the scholarships are for students enrolled in secondary schools, 226 of which are enrolled at Greater Shepparton Secondary College.

Relevant programs presently running in Greater Shepparton:

- 1x Senior Secondary Learning Club specific tutoring for subjects provided by tutors in partnership with University of Melbourne - 3rd Year Medical Program students
- Student to Student which is a reading buddy program for Grades 3 – Year 8
- Certificate 1 Financial Literacy (finance based to support knowledge of budgeting, banking, superannuation for Years 9 – 12)
- i-Track career mentoring program designed for Years 10 – 12
- Work Inspiration (Employer based program focussed on careers)
- Beyond Year 12 (aimed at Further education, career planning and pathways)
- Ready For Work (Specific Career, employment and education mentoring for life after Year 12 or students who appear to be disengaging from education Years 10 -12)

Learning for Life Students in Year 12 have the option to apply for a Tertiary Scholarship funded by The Smith Family sponsors which is approximately \$2,100 for TAFE studies and \$2,700 for University. The Tertiary Scholarship is separate to offerings provided by education providers and does not discount students from applying for other scholarships.

In 2020 all 15 students on the Learning for Life program that applied for a Tertiary Scholarship were successful. In 2019, 17 students were successful in obtaining The Smith Family tertiary scholarship.

The Beyond Year 12 annual program including 1:1 support throughout the year for Year 11 and 12 students is carried out by the Family Partnership coordinator in conjunction with partnerships with local TAFE and University representatives. This program provides information on the tertiary and application process, VTAC and SEAS application support and other information that supports further study options as well as career pathway, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

In 2021 there are 70 students in Year 11 and 12 (45 at Greater Shepparton Secondary College) that will be invited to attend Beyond 12 sessions which are generally held in August each year to coincide with Open Days, Expos, and tertiary education application timelines.

Ganbina

Ganbina provides an indigenous school to work transition program which pivots on a mentoring approach. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people aged from 6 to 25 years old are supported by Ganbina to make sure they gain learning support, life skills training, cultural appreciation, career guidance and financial assistance.

In the short term, Ganbina empowers young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve their full potential and thus live rewarding, fulfilled and independent lives as adults.

Ganbina graduates later act as 'agents of change' in their own communities. They inspire and lead their communities and collectively achieve true social and economic equality with all Australians. Approximately 400 young people are supported by Ganbina in Shepparton. The programs offered by Ganbina aim to keep ATSI children engaged in education and assist them to successfully transition to meaningful long-term employment post-secondary school. The work follows a case-management and mentoring approach to help young people understand how education provides a platform to influence change for ATSI people.

In relation to secondary school students Ganbina also operates a three-year Youth Leadership Program for students in Years 10-12. This program focuses on building resilience and developing a connection to culture and community.

Annually, a contextualised careers night provides pathway information for participants and their families. Industry tours for Years 7-9 introduce students to local employers and Ganbina project officers assist in prepare resumes and application letters for after school employment.

Shepparton English Language Centre

Shepparton is one of three English Language Centres in regional Victoria. St Georges Road Primary School hosts the Shepparton English Language Centre (SELC) which provides an intensive English language program at primary and secondary school levels, based on the student's need.

Students who are enrolled with SELC typically attend an English Language Centre for between six and twelve months, depending on their educational background and/or refugee/humanitarian status. SELC delivers an intensive English language program tailored to the needs of individual students, which assists students with adapting to the Australian education system and society.

In Shepparton, students are then supported with transition through to one of the 28 government primary schools in Shepparton or to Greater Shepparton Secondary College. Consultation with community and students has revealed that young multicultural people tend to maintain contact with SELC staff even once the students have transitioned to mainstream education, and that SELC staff often informally assist students with considering their post-school pathways.

Headspace

Early intervention mental health services are delivered to 12-25 year olds as part of the National Mental Health Foundation. Headspace in Shepparton is operated by Goulburn Valley Health. A key feature of Headspace is its Individual Placement Support (IPS) program which links young people with mental health conditions to employment opportunities. IPS uniquely provides unlimited time to support a young person and the employer to facilitate a successful job placement.

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GOTAFE)

GOTAFE is listed as a tertiary education provider earlier in this document, however as a publically funded TAFE, its service provision also includes significant student support services listed below.

Skills and Jobs Centre

Skills and Jobs Centres are located with TAFEs across Victoria to provide expert advice on training and employment opportunities. GOTAFE operates a Skills and Jobs Centre in Shepparton which engages with local industries and the community to provide advice to participants.

The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in an increased demand for services provided by the Skills and Job Centre at GOTAFE in Shepparton. There has also been an increase in complex appointments from young people who have experienced mental, financial and employment impacts from the pandemic.

GOTAFE note that more schools are seeking support from the Skills and Jobs Centre. Since 2019 there has been a 64 per cent increase in the number of referrals, from 49 schools to now 77. This higher demand is evidenced by an increase of referrals from schools asking the GOTAFE youth team to be involved with students at risk of disengaging from school. During the first term of 2021, the number of student referrals was 377, up from 329 for the same time in 2019.

Youth Engagement Team

GOTAFE operates a dedicated team to support young people aged 15-18 years who require assistance with their options after they have exited secondary school, whether they exited early or completed Year 12. The support provided includes:

- Secondary and tertiary subject and course advice
- Personal pathway plans to set vocational goals and learning pathways
- Resume support, cover letters and interview preparation
- Assessment tools to identify key strengths and transferable skills
- Advice on apprenticeships and traineeships
- Enrolment support for study at GOTAFE
- Advice on the Department of Education & Training transition requirements for early school leavers
- Referrals to welfare support
- Referrals to financial advice services.

Skills First Reconnect Program

This program helps early school leavers or long-term unemployed people to develop the necessary foundation skills to find work. Eligible participants are aged 17-19 years who have not completed year 12 or equivalent, and are not in education, training or full time employment. People aged 20-64 years can also participate if they have not completed year 12 or equivalent, and are long-term unemployed.

Participants in the Skills First Reconnect Program are assisted to unpack the barriers to enrolling and completing an accredited training program, and associated supervised work placement. The process includes assessment of the participant's learning and non-learning needs and career goals to develop an agreed plan. Participants also receive access to wrap-around services such as health, accommodation and relationship supports.

CAREERS AND PATHWAYS SUPPORT AT SCHOOL

Experiences of Work at Greater Shepparton Secondary College

The formation of Greater Shepparton Secondary College (GSSC) consolidated the career education experience from four previously separate secondary schools — Shepparton High School, McGuire College, Wanganui Park Secondary College and Mooroopna Secondary College.

Greater Shepparton Secondary College utilises a range of careers initiatives including the Morrisby Career Profile Tool for students in Year 9 (230 students to date in 2021). These tools can be used by careers and pathways staff to support students with subject selection and career conversations with students and their parents or carers.

A new range of industry engagement protocols were introduced to bring synergy between the three Greater Shepparton Secondary College campuses operating in 2020 and 2021. Collectively, these campuses have around 560 students in Years 10 to 12 requiring some form of work experience each year.

Demand for work experience ranges from formal, week-long rotations with local businesses, through to Structured Workplace Learning placements for senior students completing VET qualifications as part of VCE or VCAL.

Some local businesses offer Greater Shepparton Secondary College students and teachers with their expertise and knowledge of their industry's workplace practices, education and career pathways. When students feel connected to the wide range of workplaces in their region, it leads to increased student engagement and retention in learning. Importantly, the relationship allows students to explore the breadth of career and employment opportunities on offer locally.

Industries and businesses from around Shepparton are also invited to engage with Greater Shepparton Secondary College curriculum development, and to host incursions and excursions to build connection with their future workforce. Other activities include industry tours, 'mock' interviews, volunteering experiences and immersion activities.

However, the high number of students looking for work experience places high demand on some local industries and businesses. Consultation with industry and employer representatives revealed

employers sometimes found it difficult to understand the diversity and requirements of contemporary work experience at Greater Shepparton Secondary College. Some employers also said the nature of their enterprise limited the number of places and timing of when students could be accepted for work experience. This restriction has resulted in employers accepting students for work experience who were already focussed on the career path offered by the enterprise. There is often little opportunity to expand places and include students who were undecided on a specific pathway and wanted to explore different career options.

Student Wellbeing

In order for young people to be in a position to consider careers and pathways beyond school, and access some of the tertiary education and employment options available to them, it is important that they are prepared for transition to further learning or employment while at school.

There are a range of wellbeing support services available to students during secondary school to assist them to achieve their potential, working alongside the important work of teachers, learning mentors and career staff including:

- psychologists, speech pathologists and social workers
- youth development officers
- multicultural liaison workers
- Koorie education and support staff

Health and wellbeing supports for students in Greater Shepparton government secondary schools include:

- multi-tiered systems of support to provide appropriate support, instruction, and adjustments
- school-wide positive behaviour support — a framework to develop positive, safe, supportive learning cultures
- team around the learner — to support learners at risk of disengaging with a holistic plan

Strong and collaborative advocacy is needed in Greater Shepparton to specifically help young people who rely on their school for their main form of structure and support. These students require support to build skills around social responsibility, emotional intelligence, and resilience to cope in their environment.

Consultation as part of this plan revealed that some students felt conflicted about attending school or trying to succeed because they worried it might be disrespectful to their families if they were following a different path to their family members.

Inter-agency collaboration would be a positive step forward in consolidating the plethora of services operating in Greater Shepparton. There are several screening tools, early intervention, and collaborative service support models that could be considered for students in Greater Shepparton, including that used by The Geelong Project, or the University of Melbourne Health

and Wellbeing screening tool. Such initiatives to strengthen student health and wellbeing and enable them to learn would also assist students to prepare for post-school pathways.

Tech Schools

Tech Schools use innovative, leading-edge technology and discovery to give Victorian secondary school students the skills they need to flourish in the global economy. They are a link between schools and industry to provide innovative learning programs. Tech Schools challenge students to solve real-world problems and prepare them for the future world of work. Students remain at their regular schools and come to Tech Schools for free programs designed to inspire their interest in STEM. They are hosted by universities or TAFE colleges, giving students a taste of higher education and potential career pathways.

- Tech Schools are open to students from their local government, catholic and independent schools.
- Tech Schools do not offer trade training or formal qualifications
- Tech Schools do not take enrolments, and students still attend their secondary school. Students can attend classes at a Tech School campus that is shared with the many other schools in their region.

There are currently 10 Tech schools in Victoria: Ballarat, Banyule Nillumbik (Greensborough), Bendigo, Casey (Berwick), Geelong, Gippsland, Monash (Clayton), Whittlesea, Wyndham (Werribee), Yarra Ranges (Lilydale). While Shepparton does not have a Tech School access for Greater Shepparton students to tech school experiences are currently provided through outreach and virtual engagement through the Yarra Ranges Tech School STEM Camps.

5 – PARTICIPATION IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

Several historic key themes have emerged in relation to Greater Shepparton’s young people and their participation in post-school education:

- a relatively low transition rate from Year 12 completion to university
- more students employed and studying in apprenticeships and traineeships compared to the state average, with many of these students not completing Year 12 prior to taking up an apprenticeship or traineeship
- a relatively high number of students who defer study in the year after they complete school
- a relatively high percentage of mature aged students at University (aged 25+ years) compared to school leavers, enrolled with La Trobe University at the Shepparton campus
- a large percentage of young people seek advice regarding careers and pathways from their parents, family, and members of community.

Student destinations

On Track is a large-scale survey designed to monitor the destination outcomes of Year 12 completors and early leavers, six months after leaving school to find out if they are on track to a bright future. On Track is currently under review, and should show further insights in future.

On Track information provides insights into post-school destinations and pathways and highlights the diversity of pathways young people pursue after leaving secondary school. Participation in the survey is voluntary and response rates can vary from year to year. Anecdotally, it is often the more disadvantaged students who do not respond to the On Track survey.

The intent of On Track is that Year 10-12 students are:

- contacted after leaving school
- assisted with further advice if they are not studying or in full time employment.

The table below has been extracted from the On Track data, and shows that in 2020:

- 33 per cent of Greater Shepparton school leavers were enrolled in a bachelor degree, compared to an average of 54 per cent for Victoria.
- 14 per cent of Greater Shepparton school leavers were employed in an apprenticeship or traineeship compared to 8.2 per cent across Victoria.

		Bachelor degree	Certificates / Diplomas	Apprentice / Trainee	Employed	Looking for work
Geography	Year	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Greater Shepparton (C)	2015	31.9	17.1	16.3	27.6	6.6
Greater Shepparton (C)	2016	37.7	17.4	11.7	27.5	4.9
Greater Shepparton (C)	2017	36.4	16.0	11.8	29.6	5.8

		Bachelor degree	Certificates / Diplomas	Apprentice / Trainee	Employed	Looking for work
Geography	Year	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Greater Shepparton (C)	2018	35.9	13.7	14.3	28.0	5.9
Greater Shepparton (C)	2019	35.0	13.1	16.9	27.1	6.1
Greater Shepparton (C)	2020	32.8	10.2	14.4	33.8	7.9
Victoria	2015	53.2	16.3	7.5	17.0	4.9
Victoria	2016	54.2	14.6	8.1	17.7	4.5
Victoria	2017	53.8	12.9	8.1	19.5	4.6
Victoria	2018	54.9	12.1	8.1	19.8	4.3
Victoria	2019	54.1	12.8	8.2	19.7	4.4
Victoria	2020	54.5	11.9	8.2	17.6	6.4

Source: On Track data (2020) – Destinations of Year 12 completors six months after leaving school, Greater Shepparton (C) and Victoria, 2015 to 2020

Compared to state-wide data, more students in Greater Shepparton are exiting from Year 12 and deferring tertiary education study, increasing their risk of not returning after a gap year.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Greater Shepparton (C)	15.2	16.2	14.1	17.6	16.2	19.3
Victoria	9.1	9.7	10.2	10.0	9.6	10.2

Source: On Track data (2020) - Proportion of Year 12 or equivalent completors who deferred tertiary study in Greater Shepparton (C) and Victoria, 2015 to 2020

The reasons cited by students in the On Track data for their deferral of tertiary education study, compared to the statewide responses for Victoria, were most different in relation to “moving away from home for study” (51 per cent), and “wanting to start working/earning their own money” (93 per cent). It should be noted that students could select more than one reason for their decision to defer.

	Greater Shepparton (C)	Victoria
Reason Provided	Per cent	Per cent
You just needed a break from study	79.7	74.2
You wanted some other experiences, like travel, before continuing your education	69.5	64.6

	Greater Shepparton (C)	Victoria
Reason Provided	Per cent	Per cent
You wanted to start working / earning your own money	93.2	76.5
You would have had to move away from home	50.8	19.5

Source: On Track data (2020) - Reasons provided by Year 12 or equivalent completers for deferring tertiary study who exited school in 2019 from Greater Shepparton (C) and Victoria

The post-school destinations for in Greater Shepparton students who did not complete Year 12 were similar to the Victorian state-wide average.

Geography	Year	Certificates / Diplomas Per cent	Apprentice / Trainee Per cent	Employed Per cent	Looking for work Per cent
Greater Shepparton (C)	2020	Not published – small data set	31.0	31.0	17.2
Victoria	2020	19.4	30.1	22.4	18.8

Source: On Track data (2020) - Post-school destinations of Year 12 non-completers in 2019 in Greater Shepparton (C) and Victoria

Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students (VDSS)

Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivered to secondary students is a key component of the Victorian Government's strategy to support high quality vocational pathways, increase student retention, and improve Year 12 or equivalent completion rates by providing options for all students.

VET studies can contribute towards the completion of senior secondary certificates, either the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). In 2020 403 secondary school students (government, catholic and independent schools) in Greater Shepparton were enrolled in VDSS through GOTAFE. The top VDSS courses in Shepparton delivered by GOTAFE, by student enrolment numbers are:

- Building and Construction (40 students)
- Health and Community Services (39 students)
- Automotive Repairs (38 students)
- Sport & Recreation (35 students)
- Design Fundamentals (33 students)
- Electrotechnology (32 students)

- Plumbing (32 students)
- Beauty and Make Up (31 students)

Greater Shepparton Secondary College offers four VDSS courses under an auspice arrangement with private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) – Certificate II in Building & Construction, CII in Engineering, CII in Community Service and CII in Sport & Recreation. Students who require additional support with their learning, including English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, often choose to study their VDSS course with Greater Shepparton Secondary College during subject selection and course counselling discussions.

VDSS for students with a disability

There are two current VDSS programs offered to students with a disability attending secondary schools in Greater Shepparton:-

1. Certificate II in Active Volunteering

- offered to Greater Shepparton Secondary College students – mainly Year 10 students, with 14 students participating in 2021
- has an emphasis on work readiness, design thinking, project management and careers/pathways development into Year 11 and 12 and beyond
- practical activity based, with relatively high levels of support for participating students

2. Certificate II in Warehousing and Logistics

- offered to Greater Shepparton Secondary College, and Verney Road Special School students – 21 students participating in 2021 – as a combined cohort model
- is a School Based Apprenticeship & Traineeship (SBAT) model, which includes one day per week of paid employment and one day per week of specific study in the Certificate II in Warehousing and Logistics
- involves a partnership with GV Connect and a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

Input from educational specialists who work with young people with a disability indicates that both Greater Shepparton Secondary College and Verney Road Special School have students with a disability who have the ambition and the capability to progress to tertiary education after they leave school. 80% of the Verney Road Special School graduating cohort of 2020 (special education students) progressed to a VET qualification in courses such as Hospitality, Childcare and Automotive. Individualised pathways and support is a key requirement for students with disabilities to achieve their goals.

Student perspectives

A 2020 survey of VDSS students studying with GOTAFE (Year 10, 11 and 12 students) revealed some key themes:

- 80 per cent of students reported they discussed their future with their parents, noting that 20 per cent did not
- 25 per cent of students enrolled in VDSS reported they made their course selections without the guidance of a careers counsellor
- 64 per cent of students were thinking they would pursue a career in the VDSS industry area they were studying in, and 34 per cent were considering their career options
- 68 per cent of students said that work experience assisted them to think about their future career.

A 2021 survey of students who progressed to tertiary education after leaving secondary school revealed some interesting perspectives about how young people make decisions and their thinking about careers and pathways. 95 per cent of the people who responded to the survey attended secondary school in Greater Shepparton, and 65 per cent of respondents left secondary school in the past four years.

Survey findings include:

- 86 per cent of respondents indicated that they were aged 16-17 years or 18+ years when they made a decision about jobs, careers or courses; however some were younger than 15 years
- 53 per cent said their family or members of community helped them decide what to do after school
- 90 per cent said they received career advice from their secondary school, including information about courses, classes about careers and jobs, individual career advice, and access to a career planning tool
- 24 per cent indicated they accessed wellbeing support at school, and that the additional support helped them choose their pathway after school
- 50 per cent said work experience at school helped them choose their study or career
- 64 per cent said work experience was helpful for them to understand “the world of work”
- 60 per cent indicated that when they were considering courses to study after school, the location of the campus was important
- 50 per cent indicated that they considered the location of future jobs and new emerging industries when selecting their course or pathway
- 70 per cent said they experienced doubts or challenges with their course or pathways after leaving school — 48 per cent continued with their selection, 21 per cent changed what they were doing, and 1 per cent dropped out of what they were doing
- 33 per cent said they would be seeking work in Greater Shepparton after they complete their course, and a further 45 per cent said they might seek work in Greater Shepparton.
- the people most commonly involved in supporting students with their career and pathway choices were, in order, parents, careers teacher, school teachers, and family members.

6 – POLICY FRAMEWORK

Following recent government reviews of the educational and skills policy landscape, a significant overhaul of upper-secondary and vocational training delivery in Victoria is on the educational horizon.

The final report of the Review Into the Vocational and Applied Learning Pathways In Senior Secondary Schooling undertaken by John Firth, former Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), has been received. The Victorian Government has accepted all of the review's recommendations in principle.

The second key influence is the Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy, a review by former senior Federal Government Minister, Jenny Macklin. This review focused on how vocational education and training is offered in Victoria.

Common themes were identified in both reviews and during consultation as part of the development of this plan:

- participation in education, whether it be broad or in a focussed study area, can be transformative for people and communities
- information and advice provided to students and parents needs to be improved so they can better navigate tertiary education pathways
- strategies are required to improve uptake in further education and training, and pathways between tertiary education settings
- industry needs to be involved in course design and delivery, and two-way partnerships with education providers
- course offerings should meet local job market needs
- the profile of Vocational Education & Training (VET) should be raised
- collaboration between tertiary education providers will be critical to maximise student choice and outcomes

THE FIRTH REVIEW (2020)

The final report of the Review into the Vocational and Applied Learning Pathways in Senior Secondary Schooling was released in November 2020. The review was undertaken by John Firth, former Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

The Victorian government accepted all recommendations in principle and announced a \$38million investment to support immediate action:

- Victoria will move to an integrated senior secondary certificate, with vocational education embedded in the VCE. This certificate will replace the existing standalone VCAL certificate, (Intermediate and Senior) giving students the opportunity to develop both academic and practical skills

- A new foundation pathways certificate will be created to formally recognise the skills and achievements of students who are not ready to complete Year 12. This will support those students to make successful post-school transitions. This will be particularly important for students with a disability and additional needs, and for students experiencing personal challenges
- all students who fully or partially complete vocational and applied learning subjects will receive an enhanced Statement of Results to provide a full picture of their strengths, capabilities, and achievements when they finish school
- schools should receive more support to deliver vocational and applied learning. This can be achieved through improving the capability of teachers and reducing operational and administrative burdens on schools.

Subsequent work will involve alignment of VDSS courses to Victoria’s growth sectors and local industry needs, and maximising access for senior secondary students.

SKILLS FOR VICTORIA’S GROWING ECONOMY (SVGE)

The Victorian Government undertook a significant review into Victoria’s post-secondary education and training system to ensure Victoria has the skills it needs for its growing economy.

Led by Jenny Macklin (Skills for Victoria’s Growing Economy, October 2020), the review developed an integrated set of recommendations to ensure that government, industries, communities, and education and training providers can work together to build a vocational education and training system focussed on Victoria’s future.

Following the SVGE review, the Victorian Government established the Victorian Skills Authority and the Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery.

VICTORIAN SKILLS AUTHORITY

The Victorian Skills Authority will bring together industry, unions, training providers and communities, and will create a shared purpose and direction for Victoria’s training and skills system to:

- further drive innovation across the VET sector
- deliver better planning for Victoria’s future training needs
- provide an integrated approach to the quality of teaching and training
- lead the development of an annual Victorian Skills Plan to better guide our state’s training delivery.

The Victorian Budget 2020-21 included \$85.9 million to establish the Victorian Skills Authority and enable it to drive outcomes across four key functions:

- an integrated data, intelligence and evidence function to provide cutting-edge analysis and insights on priority training areas for Victoria which will inform an annual Victorian Skills Plan and the Victorian Skills Gateway

- co-designing innovative approaches to skills development for jobs in established and emerging industries, such as the Clean Economy
- working with stakeholders to unblock and unlock the right skills supply across the State and in local communities, including career and training advice for students through our Skills and Jobs Centres
- improving quality VET teaching and training delivered through cooperation with industry groups and bodies.

The creation of a new Victorian Skills Plan is a critical early action of the new authority. The new plan will go beyond the current technical skill needs reports and garner stakeholder support for a set of skills and training objectives to facilitate economic recovery post-COVID. The first Skills Plan will be released in 2022.

OFFICE OF TAFE COORDINATION AND DELIVERY

Along with the establishment of the Victorian Skills Authority, the Office of the TAFE Coordination and Delivery (OTCD) will drive reform, collaboration and coordination across the TAFE Network. It has been created to set the benchmark ensuring TAFEs delivery and right, high-quality courses that mean student are job ready and employers get the skills they need.

The OTCD will be the leader and steward of the TAFE network and will be responsible for new system-wide reforms, including advice to the Government on TAFE policy and guiding TAFEs as they respond to the annual Victorian Skills Plan.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH VICTORIAN UNIVERSITIES

As part of the Victorian Universities Support package announced on 19 May 2020, the Victorian Government has established a new partnership model with Victorian universities. The Department of Education and Training (DET) has worked with the 10 Victorian universities that are established under State legislation, including La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne, to develop individual partnership agreements that reflect the new partnership model between the Victorian Government and each Victorian university.

The partnership agreements frame the relationship between the Victorian and Victorian universities. The partnership agreements:

- reflect an ongoing partnership approach to working together
- set out agreed areas of common interest and mutual benefit, to deliver positive economic and social impacts to the State
- influence decisions that universities and the Victorian Government take jointly and individually
- have a broad scope and timeframe, with review planned every 2-3 years.

The partnership agreements recognise the significant value that Victorian universities contribute to Victoria, including by preparing young people for higher education through school education and providing pathways through VET, as well as by building, sustaining and driving the prosperity of local and regional communities and economies.

CURRENT TERTIARY EDUCATION INITIATIVES

SKILLS FIRST

The Government has actively pursued an ambitious reform agenda to improve the outcomes of vocational training for learners, industry and the Victorian community. Under the Skills First funding program, introduced in January 2017, a more managed training market was created with the centrepiece of a public TAFE network that is responsive to needs. The key elements of Skills First are:

- a managed, demand-driven system of Government subsidised courses
- targeted funding streams for high needs learners, innovation, and delivery in regional and specialist areas
- funding to strengthen TAFEs.

FREE TAFE

From 1 January 2019, Free TAFE has expanded access to training for a broader range of Victorians in both metropolitan and regional communities, including women, young people, jobseekers, Indigenous people, and people with a disability. Eligible students can complete one qualification for free under the initiative. TAFEs assist students to enrol in the best course for them.

Priority courses under Free TAFE have been selected to support entry into industries and occupations with a high need for skilled VET graduates, offer good employment outcomes from training, and where there is a strong community need.

MARRUNG ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PLAN: 2016-2026

The *Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026* sets out a 10-year vision for an education system that views Koorie culture as an asset and supports Koorie learners to be confident in their culture and identity, supporting students to remain at school and build career aspirations.

Marrung encompasses actions that aim to:

- create a positive climate for learning and development where services demonstrate the highest levels of respect and inclusion, and as a result, Koorie children and learners of all ages feel strong in their identity
- build community engagement in learning and development so that, through partnership and collaboration, services work together with Koorie people to find innovative ways to improve outcomes in local communities

- build a culture of professional leadership where success for Koorie Victorians is core business for all educational leaders
- achieve excellence in teaching, learning and development at all stages so that:
 - young Koorie children are on track in their health, development, and wellbeing, and their early learning experience sets them up for life
 - Koorie students engage fully throughout their schooling years and gain the knowledge and skills to excel at Year 12 or equivalent
 - Koorie learners transition successfully into further education and employment and have opportunities to access education at all stages of life.

The **Wurreker strategy** is one of the strategies that forms part of the *Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan*. The Wurreker strategy is a partnership agreement between the Victorian government and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) that aims to ensure all Koorie learners have an approachable and viable pathway into further education to maximise their employment opportunities.

Through the Wurreker Strategy, VAEAI reports on the identified training needs of the Koorie community and promotes training opportunities to Koorie communities and industry groups. VAEAI is also consulted in the development and endorsement of relevant training curriculum and products. VAEAI promotes the provision of culturally appropriate training for Koorie learners by advising on curriculum development and training packages.

A dedicated Wurreker broker for the Goulburn Valley region works closely with education and training providers and schools to communicate and implement the strategy.

CURRENT SCHOOL INITIATIVES

CAREER EDUCATION

Career education in Victorian schools underwent significant reform following government reviews in 2017 and 2018 into career education and advice activities. The reviews found that career education helped students develop skills to navigate and understand the world beyond school. Careers education also supported student aspiration and smoother transitions to further education, training, or employment.

The 2017 careers education review found inconsistent practices and revealed career education was not widespread:

- 10 per cent of schools spent 0.75 hours per student or less, per year on career education
- the median school spends two hours per student, per year on career education
- 10 per cent of schools spent 12 hours or more per student per year on career education
- most hours were spent on senior students with 18 per cent on Years 7-9 and 82 per cent on Years 10-12.

The Victorian Government created the Career Education in Schools Funding Plan (CEF) in 2019 to help ensure students in Years 7 to 12 attending Victorian government schools participated in planned career education activities and had access to appropriate support services.

Schools must now take certain steps to support the career pathways of students leaving school before completing Year 12, including conducting a formal exit interview with a career practitioner or other relevant staff member. Schools must also report on career education as part of the mid-year school supplementary census reporting in August of each year.

CEF aims to transform career education into a professional service for students that:

- supports junior secondary school students to develop a sense of self and aspirations before making plans, with a focus on Years 10 to 12
- supports multiple, meaningful work exposure opportunities, including with industry
- career education that starts early and is embedded in teaching and learning programs across primary and secondary school.

There are a range of careers education initiatives and tools available to secondary schools to support their students and embed careers education into the curriculum starting from Year 7. This includes:-

- My Career Exploration – a series of workshops in career self exploration for students in Years 7 and 8
- My Career Insights – for Year 9 students, which provides free access to a career diagnostic tool, followed by a one-to-one career counselling session by a qualified careers practitioner
- My Career Portfolio – an online careers e-portfolio for all students, which allows students to create an online career action plan and keep all of their career planning documents in one place

There is also support for the upskilling of teachers into career practitioners, with Victorian government funding support for teachers to obtain a Graduate Certificate in Career Education and Development.

IMPLEMENTING SENIOR SECONDARY REFORM

Further to the implementation of the recommendations of the Firth Review, government secondary schools will be supported to delivery improved vocational and applied learning pathways for students in a number of ways, including:

1. Jobs, Skills & Pathways Coordinators – employed by senior schools to provide advice and support for students choosing vocational and applied learning programs. These coordinators will also liaise with training providers and employers.
2. Jobs, Skills & Pathways Managers – to provide tailored support to government schools in the delivery of the specialist vocational pathway, VET, school based apprenticeships and traineeships including Headstart, career education, school industry engagement and school transitions.
3. School-Industry Roundtables – to bring together schools, training providers, industry and employers to discuss ways to improve student outcomes though aligned career education and curriculum with workplace needs

4. VET/VCAL Workforce development – funding through the VET Innovation Fund is available to enable training and professional development for existing secondary school teachers to enable them to deliver VET courses, develop curriculum which is industry specific and enhance local business and industry relationships

HEADSTART

Headstart is an apprenticeship and traineeship pathway that allows school students to spend more time working, while completing the necessary vocational training and a senior secondary qualification (currently VCE or VCAL). It is distinct from, but not does replace, existing school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Headstart pathways are limited to a small number of Certificate III and IV qualifications.

Students can choose to take an extra year to complete their VCE or VCAL. In the first year, students spend one or two days per week in paid employment. This increases to three or four days per week in paid employment in the final year.

Headstart is delivered through 10 clusters of schools across Victoria, however Greater Shepparton is not currently one of the clusters. Schools were invited to participate in the Headstart program based on analysis of:

- economic need in the area
- current school-based apprenticeship and traineeships (SBATs) and VET delivered in secondary schools activity
- strength of existing networks.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT FOR PRIORITY COHORTS INITIATIVE

One of the Victorian government's policy reform initiatives is the Industry Engagement for Priority Cohorts (IEPC) initiative. This initiative seeks to support pathways for students with additional needs.

Its main objective is to:

- facilitate industry engagement activities for priority cohorts from within secondary schools
- prepare and support both priority cohorts and employers for a mutually positive industry engagement experience
- counteract the reality for many priority cohorts that securing work experience and structured workplace learning opportunities is more difficult than for most of their peers.

The Industry Engagement for Priority Cohorts initiative focuses on four key cohorts:

- Koorie students
- students in out-of-home care
- students with a disability
- students in youth detention.

In many instances, an individual student will represent two or more identified priority cohorts.

Locally, Greater Shepparton Secondary College has an Industry Engagement for Priority Cohorts

Coordinator to co-ordinate this work, focussing on students with a disability. There are also dedicated staff across the state with a focus on the three other priority cohorts.

There is a Careers Education Advisor for students in out of home care based in the Lookout team in each region who works with schools.

7 - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

During 2020 and 2021, a range of surveys and consultation activities were undertaken in the development of this plan, noting that the initial rounds of consultation regarding the *Shepparton Education Plan* in 2017 for the secondary stage also identified some key themes.

The ‘1000 conversations’ process compiled by Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project (2018 and 2019) also informed the development of this plan, as 58 per cent of the participants were aged between 14 and 25 years, representing a strong youth voice.

In relation to the specific aspects of this plan, a series of independently facilitated targeted consultation workshops were held for industry, education providers and community support organisations in September and October 2020.

Further consultation included interviews with students and families of Greater Shepparton Secondary College, an online survey of VET delivered at Secondary School (VDSS) students at GOTAFE in 2020, and an online survey of young people who went on to further education and training post-school in 2021.

A summary of all feedback follows.

What we heard — school experience

- **Barriers** to education in Shepparton included transport, food security, carer responsibilities, a need to work and domestic violence. Inclusion and cultural practice/norms around the suitability of the educational offering also affected a young person’s capacity to attend school, and their participation in experiences of work.
- Poor Year 12 completions in Shepparton stemmed from a long history of **disengagement of students while they are in school**. These absences start early. More broadly, there is evidence of longer term, generational disengagement from education by families.
- Some students require **additional, wrap-around support** to support them with their post-secondary school pathways - particularly students from priority cohorts such as students with a disability, students in out of home care, Koorie students, and students in the justice system.
- **Re-engaging students back into study is important** for young people who had exited school early, but did not find work or an education pathway that suited them.
- Teachers may not see their everyday role focussed on wellbeing. However, the **impact of wellbeing on a young person’s ability to learn** needs to be more broadly understood. Teachers, while not wholly responsible, have a role to play in their students’ wellbeing.
- Some young people perceive VCAL as a ‘dumbed down’ version of VCE. More students were choosing ‘unscored’ VCE as a study option.
- Providing students with **information on careers** should not just be the responsibility of a careers teacher.

- More **industry engagement and exposure is needed for teachers** to improve their awareness of local employment. Otherwise, “teachers will only know what they know ...”

What we heard — pathways

- Students relied on their **families** as much as their career teachers for information and guidance on their future. Up to 19 per cent of VDSS students stated that their family guided their course selection, while 13 per cent nominated their school or careers teacher as their source of information.
- In the absence of other information, students can decide on subject or course selections **without guidance**. For example, 25 per cent of students made their VDSS course selections without the guidance of a careers counsellor.
- More work is needed to help families **understand** a student’s transition from school to work and/or further study. This is particularly the case for families of students with a disability, as they can be reluctant to contemplate post school pathways without the supportive environment of school.
- Pathway and career conversations should **start earlier** (prior to Year 11 and 12) to support student transitions within secondary school, and prepare students from all backgrounds for their next steps after school.
- Students still need **support during the gap** between leaving school and their next step — no matter the age or stage of exit. Students often need support from trusted people during the initial stages of their next step, to assist them with navigating challenges or doubts.
- There is a **difference between aspiration and finding a pathway from school**. A pathway is not always immediately available to young people, and it should be focused on a handful of courses. Pathways can be sought through a wide range of avenues and connections, such as involvement in sport or the arts.
- **Children of indigenous families look to their elders for encouragement**. All family members could attend careers events where pathway information is contextualised and tailored specifically for Koorie students. This effort would be more impactful during the earlier years of secondary school.
- The various **entry visas** of some young people in Greater Shepparton affected their **ability to study**. International students are ineligible for exemption and must pay full fees. They are also not eligible for HECS. Obtaining 100 points of identification can also be challenging.
- A new culture around education is required that involves collaborative promotion of all avenues of study. Education providers need to present Shepparton as an ‘education destination’ and offer a **‘no wrong door’** for students who do not necessarily take a linear path through learning.

- The **myth** that a quality education can only be obtained in metropolitan areas and at university needs to be debunked. Misconceptions about the relative value of VET and university study exist and there are opportunities to promote the value of each in their own right.

What we heard — work readiness

- An expectation exists within industry that young people who start work are ‘ready to go’. Young people require an **individualised approach** to assess their readiness for employment. Work roles must be fully unpacked for young people.
- It was considered that **employability skills and work readiness also applied to graduates** from vocational education and training and university. Employability skills and the integrated of work-related learning experiences were an important focus at all levels of study.
- Some respondents felt **young people in Greater Shepparton were not equipped with ‘entry-level’ soft skills** when they began work. Skills in social interaction, problem solving, and conflict resolution were noted as being low among new recruits. This deficit was particularly prominent among young people entering employment for the first time.
- Participants suggested **industry needs to broaden its focus** on hiring only employees who were work-ready. Alternatively, industry could provide on-the job training via a traineeship or school-based apprenticeship.
- Young people need to be supported to **understand the world of work**. Developing local talent will strengthen the job market demand for roles from entry level to professional careers.
- Participants said young people and their employers were often **not fully aware of the training landscape**. They needed help in understanding the difference between traineeships and apprenticeships or how various pathways lead to further qualifications.
- **Socio-economic and cultural factors can contribute to low aspiration** among young people in Greater Shepparton. Without positive role models at home, students have a tougher battle in achieving in study and work and feeling connected to community. Local programs like GROW, Geared for Careers, the Flexible Learning Centre, Beacon Foundation, and the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project are vital in helping young people develop employability skills in teamwork, communication, and customer service.
- Employers in Shepparton understand they need to employ more Koorie young people. Potential Koorie workers may start job-ready with an employer, while others may need to develop skill sets over time.
- Participants felt there was a reasonable level of part-time work available for school-aged people however, there was increased **unemployment and under-employment among Year 12 graduates**. There are also many ‘invisible’ young people in Shepparton who are not engaged in seeking current/future employment but clearly in need of support.

- Increased focus on **English language support** for students from a multicultural background would help students be more ‘work-ready’, particularly around written communication and workplace expectations.

What we heard — the opportunities

- Local industry expressed a willingness to support and champion young people with an understanding of the world of work, and a desire to better understand the school curriculum and pathways approach, and the range of aptitudes and capabilities that students might bring with them to a workplace.
- **Co-locate support** organisations within a ‘hub’ based at the new Greater Shepparton Secondary College. The ‘hub’ could provide a meeting place for students and industry for lunchtime activities, for example. A rotational industry presence (with hot-desks) would make young people feel invested in. This involvement could be linked to the delivery of VCAL projects, working with students to promote critical thinking and innovation. An outreach service could be operated from a ‘hub’ at GSSC.
- There is value in **joining cohorts of students** from different schools and education providers, to offer pathway opportunities that suit their learning needs, particularly for students with additional support needs.
- Increased **volunteering** could help build employability skills in young people. There is less participation in sporting clubs and community organisations which usually provide social connection. Volunteering systems could be difficult for a young person to navigate, however Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project has an established precedent.
- The potential for secondary school careers and teaching staff - as trusted people - to provide **outreach support for young people in the year after they leave school** to assist them with navigating challenges or doubts about their pathway is an opportunity.
- **Mentoring** programs could provide further opportunities for young people to connect with their community. This is particularly for young people who ‘sit in amber’ (not necessarily flagged by government or service providers) who need coaching in their future steps. Mentors could adopt a case-management approach to provide consistency for young people, who are now becoming more nervous about being social.
- **Young entrepreneurship** could stem from possible projects associated with mentored relationships. Young people becoming job creators, rather than job seekers. Shepparton businesses have an appetite to support young people becoming self-employed. Young entrepreneurs could be looped back into their school to champion others to follow their footsteps.
- Development of a **‘skills passport’** could provide a ‘taster’ for young people to explore different fields of work. The passport could include access to industry short-courses to boost employability, such as Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), forklift operation, kitchen safety, CI Card.

- **Work capabilities required by emerging industries** could be developed through new courses which might include entry level certificates and skill-sets, through to degree and post graduate study.

Links with Agriculture & Horticulture (Food & Fibre)

Concurrent with the development of the Plan a series of workshops were facilitated in Shepparton in 2021 regarding opportunities to boost career pathways and aspiration for the diverse careers available in the agriculture and horticulture sector in Greater Shepparton. The workshops were facilitated in preparation for the release of the findings from the Review into the Future of Agriculture Training in Victoria, and as part of the work of the Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce in Victoria.

To further engage key stakeholders a Shepparton School Industry Roundtable (SIRt), focusing on the agriculture and horticulture industry was held in September 2021.

A number of initiatives were identified as potential opportunities to strengthen aspirations and pathways, and engagement with the agriculture and horticulture sector.

The pipeline of skills initiatives identified build on the themes and support the objectives of the Tertiary Education and Skills Plan and create opportunities to deliver an industry specific strategy for agriculture and horticulture as one of the first key pieces of work.

8 - A GREATER SHEPPARTON RESPONSE — THE OPPORTUNITIES

The *Shepparton Education Plan – Stage Four — Tertiary Education and Skills* has eight desired outcomes, each with their own accompanying actions:

- provide an opportunity for every young person to have the aspiration, networks, and support to explore post-school pathways to further education and/or employment
- Students have opportunities to explore STEM learning and careers
- all students, their families, and carers are included in career development throughout all stages
- appropriate and targeted wrap-around services that support all young people, particularly those from priority cohorts, to engage or re-engage in further education and training or meaningful employment
- ensure young people from all backgrounds can access sports, volunteering, and other extra-curricular activities to strengthen their community engagement and connection
- all young people understand the local industry and jobs market, and industry has a pool of local talent to fill all jobs from entry level to professional career roles
- a joined-up tertiary education and training sector that supports all students with a ‘no wrong door’ policy through seamless transition in and out of multiple pathways
- tertiary providers deliver the courses required by local community and industry, at entry level certificate courses and skill sets through to degree and post graduate levels

Victoria’s TAFEs are unique public educational institutions with a long history of delivering skills and training to local communities, including Shepparton and surrounds. A high-quality TAFE network means all TAFE students receive exceptional training, regardless of where they live or the barriers they face, getting them the outcome they want.

STUDENT ASPIRATION AND PREPARATION

Young people need opportunities to develop the aspiration, networks, and support to explore pathways after secondary school that lead to further education and/or employment. Further education beyond school needs to be normalised as an achievable goal for all students regardless of socio-economic status, background, or postcode.

The momentum to build this aspiration needs to be a whole-of-community effort, involving families and carers, schools, education providers, community support organisations, and industry. Greater Shepparton has lots of diverse organisations that are independently going to exhaustive lengths to support young people with secondary education and transitions to further study or meaningful work. However declining educational outcomes and the highest level of youth unemployment in the Hume region illustrate that local young people need more integrated and co-ordinated support to prepare them for the rapidly changing world of work.

Career education needs to start early and this includes normalising the option of further study for all students when they complete secondary school, and lifelong learning.

Families have a significant role in supporting students to make the transition from school to further study or work, and to position them to develop and navigate their career throughout their lifetime. However, consultation revealed that families can feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of giving advice to their children about careers and pathways. Families can find it difficult to navigate the rapid change and perceived complexity of various education and training systems. This is amplified for families from low socio-economic or culturally diverse backgrounds, and for students with a disability. This is a contributing factor to low educational attainment levels for young people in Greater Shepparton.

The social construct of Shepparton leaves some students unable to make their own connections with mentors and positive influences, in environments that encourage aspiration and future thinking. Local students need help to surround themselves with people and experiences that inspire them to complete secondary school and explore pathways to meaningful work or study. Investment in youth employment programs should be targeted and tailored to the most disadvantaged young job seekers and to the programs that demonstrate their effectiveness in supporting young people transition from education to training and employment. Local programs such as Growing Regional Opportunities of Work (GROW), Geared for Careers, and Beacon Foundation programs are vital to help young people develop confidence and employability skills in teamwork, communication, and customer service.

Desired outcome

Provide an opportunity for every young person to have the aspiration, networks, and support to explore post-school pathways to further education and/or employment.

Actions

- Deliver quality careers and pathways programs for government secondary students that include a multi-faceted suite called 'Experiences of Work'.
Experiences of Work for students from Years 7 to 12 would provide students with exposure to workplace settings through a range of activities, maintain their engagement in school, and prompt thinking about post-school pathways. The focus for Experiences of Work activities would be to strengthen student understanding of local employment and career options, workplace expectations and behaviours. Building effective partnerships with industry representatives would also enable aspects of curriculum to be co-designed in particular for Years 9 and 10, and provide a vehicle for industry leaders to act as champions for their sector and share advice. The introduction of targets for employers to increase the numbers of students participating in the Experiences of Work Program is also considered an opt-in opportunity for employers. This includes priority cohort students who require authentic pathways.

- Provide targeted, further education, and employment preparation support for all young people, including both vulnerable and talented students, while they are at school. This support would include strengthening the delivery of applied learning during secondary school (including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships) and facilitating school timetabling and subject selection processes to enable students to succeed with both their SBAT and school study.

Appropriate cultural supports for students, employers, and tertiary education providers to provide a two-way understanding of work, study, and cultural safety is required. Schools and tertiary education providers can work together more effectively to ensure appropriate support (academic, cultural and pastoral care) is provided to students, including advice about career and further study options. Large employers in Greater Shepparton such as Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Co-operative have expressed interest in the development of supported employment and further education pathways for young people, and it is considered that other large employers would also be onboard with this approach.

The facilitation of on-campus access for external agencies that provide complementary career education services for students, to normalise discussions about careers and pathways, and visibility of such agencies while at school, is also an opportunity.

- Develop entrepreneurship and innovation programs as an engagement tool in building student aspirations.

The 'Job seeker to Job creator' model that has been developed and implemented by the Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (based in Beechworth, Victoria) could be adopted by Greater Shepparton Secondary College leading to a potential 'social enterprise school' model for the College in future.

Desired outcome

Students have opportunities to explore STEM learning and careers.

Actions

- Support future opportunities for Greater Shepparton to gain a Tech school/STEM Centre, and facilitate STEM experiences for students.

The promotion of STEM pathways through such experiences would enhance student engagement in learning, inspire and engage students, and better connect them to study and career options. Careers in the health, and agriculture and horticulture sectors – the two largest employment sectors in the region and also the sectors with emerging skill development needs – should be a focus for student STEM experiences.

A Tech School/STEM Centre and/or enhanced applied learning programs at school would help connect industry, schools and tertiary education providers in the common goal of educating students for the jobs of the future and the changing needs of industry.

- Increase teacher classroom confidence, understanding of content, and the range of strategies available to them in the classroom by providing professional development around STEM.

Desired Outcome

All students, their families, and carers are included in career development through all stages.

Actions:

- Ensure all stages of a student’s career development have built-in touch points with parents and carers and that this occurs in an inclusive way.

The involvement of parents and carers in a student’s career education and development journey must acknowledge that people come from different cultures, backgrounds, understandings of education, and may have experienced a diverse range of challenges such as parenting a child with a disability or learning difficulties. However parents and carers across the board seek the best for their child, and providing them with contextualised information and tools at appropriate points throughout the journey can assist.

Career education and development activities with parents and carers should seek to normalise the understanding that further education beyond school is an aspiration open to all students, regardless of socio-economic background. Programs such as Parent Power in the UK could be explored to encourage parents and carers to take an active role in motivating and supporting their children to build tertiary education aspiration.

Similarly the involvement of tertiary education providers in career sessions targeted at parents and caregivers can demystify further education pathways, promote local course offerings, and the value of VET training.

WELLBEING OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF GREATER SHEPPARTON

The social fabric of Shepparton is threaded with a diverse cultural and socio-economic mix. Any of these factors — on their own or in combination — can impact on a young person’s opportunity to connect with education, work, sport, or their wider community.

Students can experience complex health and wellbeing needs because of their environment. These can also limit their exposure to opportunities inside and outside of school.

Young people’s participation in extra-curricular activities should be boosted and encouraged to build skills, positive networks, and understanding of employment pathways.

Mission Australia (2019) survey findings show lower proportions of economically disadvantaged young people took part in sports as a participant (43.3 per cent compared with 65.3 per cent of respondents with parents or guardians in paid work), and sports as spectator (24.8 per cent compared with 42.2 per cent). Fewer also participated in volunteer work (29 per cent compared

with 37.9 per cent), and student leadership activities (20.1 per cent compared with 28.4 per cent). Consultation as part of this plan confirmed that participation in extra-curricular activities was challenging for some students in Greater Shepparton. There is less participation in sporting clubs, as well as other pursuits such as music, dance, the arts, and community organisations. These usually provide social connections for young people.

Financial constraints can prevent young people from accessing sports and other activities such as music, the arts, sport and community volunteering. These activities are positive engagement tools that support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to develop networks and positive role models.

Increased mentoring opportunities could meet the shortfall in community connection that might have once been filled by sport. Consultation participants also noted that young people who 'sat in amber' (not necessarily flagged by government or service providers as being 'at risk') could particularly benefit from coaching on their future steps.

Volunteering was suggested as another way for young people to build employability skills. Young people can find it difficult to navigate volunteering systems, however Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project has an established collaborative model.

Transport availability also significantly influences a young person's ability to participate in activities, sport, and work outside the school gates. Transport availability needs to be addressed so more young people can develop connections and meaningful pathways.

Desired outcome

Appropriate and targeted wrap-around services that support all young people, particularly those from priority cohorts, to engage or re-engage in further education and training or meaningful employment.

Actions

- Develop culturally appropriate career and employment mentoring services for disengaged or 'at risk' young people.

These services for disengaged or 'at risk' young people should also extend to supporting young people who have been involved with the justice system into meaningful and supported pathways to further education, or employment with a learning component.

Mentoring should follow the young person into the workplace and support the employer through the early stages of employment. It may also be necessary to strengthen the mentoring relationship through connection of young people to support agencies when needed, applying an Individual placement support model like the one developed by Headspace.

Mentoring of young people provided by employers within the workplace (who have been provided with training) is also an opportunity that has been trialled in some regional areas, and the opportunity to extend this further in Greater Shepparton could be explored.

- Implement post-school monitoring of students in the eighteen months after they leave school, to facilitate access and referral to support agencies if students experience challenges with their further education or career pathways.

The opportunity to provide such support more than 12 months after a student leaves school would enable students who take a 'gap year' prior to commencing tertiary education – which many students in Greater Shepparton elect to take – to access a trusted person within their school setting for advice.

This outreach service could be particularly helpful for students who require additional support to achieve their goals, including students with a disability, students with anxiety or learning challenges, and students for whom English is not their first language. Someone who can advocate on behalf of the young person, and is trusted by them and their parents/carers, can also help to point them in the right direction and change course if needed.

- Explore opportunities to implement student health and wellbeing screening tools from middle years (years 5 to 8) through to senior secondary level to identify student needs early, and inform student pathways support.

Processes to enhance transition to tertiary education for students who require additional help to provide a supported and informed transition experience have been identified as an opportunity.

- Establish a central point of contact for all support service organisations that work with Greater Shepparton Secondary College and a process for coordination of services. This would take the form of a Student Support and Wellbeing Hub that would house education, youth development, and health and wellbeing support agencies and school staff.

Desired Outcome

Ensure young people from all backgrounds can access sports, volunteering, and other extra-curricular activities to strengthen their community engagement and connection.

Actions

- Investigate existing arrangements that support young people and source financial assistance through existing mechanisms where possible.
- Create opportunities for young people to discover and explore their passions through participation in community activities and events while enrolled at secondary school.
- Advocate for enhanced accessibility for young people to attend community events and activities, including public transport networks.

PATHWAYS

The creation of Greater Shepparton Secondary College has brought an improved relationship between school and tertiary providers. When the college moves to a single-site campus in 2022, there will be opportunities to build on these relationships. The new school could potentially host 'residencies' from education providers. This approach would see providers embedded in the school, rather than waiting to connect with students via opportune events. Graduates who attended Greater Shepparton Secondary College could also visit and inspire/interact with current students as part of the same environment.

Ultimately the focus should be on providing the best pathway and outcome for the individual student, whether it is further study, employment or a (likely) combination of both.

Industry/employer representatives have expressed a commitment to support young people and the community in a joined-up effort that guides students from school to further study or work. Focus should be on streamlining and staging information for students, parents/carers, and families to help them navigate the tertiary education system.

The Goulburn Regional Partnership has identified that a priority action should be to "engage through Regional Roundtables with local industry and education providers to determine skill gaps and education opportunities to align education offering".

There is significant economic value to the Shepparton community in encouraging young people to pursue locally based careers and study. Further study and pathways need to be normalised and introduced during early secondary school. This would help embed capability in students early, rather than cramming a vast array of experiences and activities into senior secondary years.

'Taster' programs aligned to industry needs and employment opportunities for secondary students could go a long way to normalise study pathways into careers, especially for students in Years 7-9.

These programs would also benefit undergraduate students entering university who were not clear on their career pathway and support students with understanding the world of work.

During consultation in the preparation of this plan, the need for further education providers to offer courses aligned to local industry recruitment needs emerged as a common theme. The range of skills and knowledge required by local industry was quite broad, however most could be delivered through available courses, from entry level certificates and skill sets, through to degree and post graduate degrees.

An opportunity exists for tertiary providers to collaborate with industry around courses that would meet the skills needs of emerging industries in Greater Shepparton. This collaboration could inform Skills First-funded providers decision making about courses on their funded scope (including Free TAFE courses), and could embrace a mixed delivery of on-line and face-to-face delivery. Such an approach would reduce pressure on students to re-locate to attend on-campus study. Approaches could be identified to scaffold the development of transferrable skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and verbal communication skills through secondary to tertiary education.

Existing funding sources via the Department's Higher Education and Skills area or industry groups could facilitate course delivery in niche areas and ensure training equipment and resources meet minimum industry requirements, including via the Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF). Offering more courses locally that are aligned to regional skill needs and emerging industries would reduce the need for students to relocate to Melbourne and support the development of a local talent pool.

Desired outcome

All young people understand the local industry and jobs market, and industry has a pool of local talent to fill all jobs from entry level to professional career roles.

Actions

- Develop clear industry engagement and partnership protocols, and a centralised contact point within Greater Shepparton Secondary College.

This would include exploring the potential of a two-way negotiated arrangement regarding employer/industry involvement in secondary school student experiences (within school and outside of school). Such experiences could include industry leaders speaking with students about the local job market, employer representatives speaking with secondary school teachers about their industry and current workforce skill requirements, teachers seeking employer input regarding elective subject design and content, and student visits to employer sites to understand the range of occupations within a workplace.

- The Victorian Skills Authority will play a central role in industry engagement, which will be a key means of identifying local training and job opportunities, as well as communicating about available initiatives including RSTF and Free TAFE. Opportunities in the Agriculture and Horticulture industry will be explored as one of the first pieces of work.

Desired outcome

A joined-up tertiary education and training sector that supports all students with a 'no wrong door' policy through seamless transition in and out of multiple pathways.

Actions

- Greater Shepparton secondary schools partner with tertiary education providers and industry to deliver VDSS and taster courses for secondary school students. These VET programs and taster courses should be aligned to industry needs and employment opportunities for students, but they could also be broader for other students who may benefit from multiple short course opportunities to explore their interests.
- Tertiary education providers to establish and maintain strong links with relevant staff at Greater Shepparton secondary schools to advise on course entry requirements, pathways in and out of courses, and promote further education experiences as both positive and achievable for students.

- Explore opportunities for Greater Shepparton Secondary College students in Years 10 to 12 to undertake some of their classes at a tertiary education facility to familiarise themselves with the university or TAFE experience and gain insights into adult learning.
- Providers across the tertiary education sector work collaboratively to
 - develop many and varied pathways from secondary school to VET study or University, or to apprenticeships and traineeships
 - offer a range of delivery modes, to support student participation and engagement in learning
 - offer integrated services to support students with their learning and pathways
- Development of collateral for Greater Shepparton which promotes the pathways and connections between education providers and pathways.

Desired outcome

Local tertiary providers deliver the courses required by local industry, at entry level certificate courses and skill sets through to degree and post graduate levels.

Actions

- Work closely with the Victorian Skills Authority, industry and tertiary education providers to understand and map the new and emerging sectors for regional Victoria and Greater Shepparton, and leverage local connections to broker solutions that will work for Greater Shepparton.

An understanding of current course offerings across local education providers and overlaying this with the local skill development needs can inform future strategic course development needs.

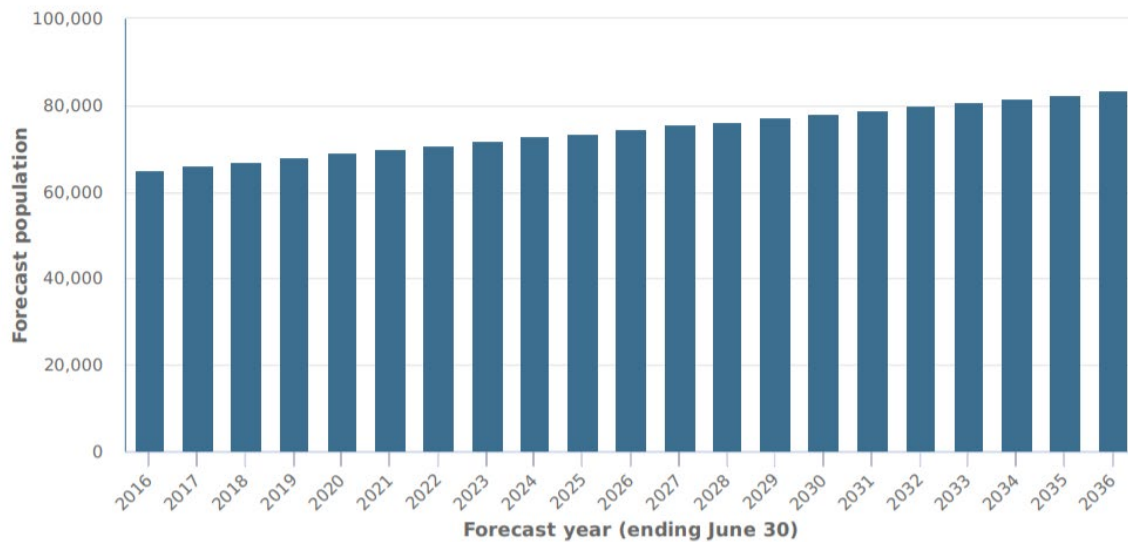
- Facilitate collaboration between industry and tertiary education providers to develop an appropriate strategy and pursue funding sources to support:
 - delivery in niche and skill shortage areas for Greater Shepparton
 - delivery of skill set courses
 - exploration of innovative applied learning (including trades) delivery models to enhance youth engagement
 - course offerings and experiences that will improve graduate capabilities in the areas of communication, work-ready skills, information technology, critical thinking and presentation skills.
 - provision of training equipment and resources that meet minimum industry requirements
 - reducing the need for students to move to Melbourne or other cities if they choose to pursue tertiary education.

APPENDIX A: GREATER SHEPPARTON POPULATION DATA

1. Forecast population for Greater Shepparton

Forecast population

City of Greater Shepparton



Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2036, prepared by .id, October 2017.



Source: <https://forecast.id.com.au/shepparton> Accessed 19/01/2021

2. Shepparton population growth rates since 2011

Year	Population	Growth rate
2011	60,223	n/a
2012	61,020	1.32%
2013	61,900	1.44%
2014	62,700	1.29%
2015	63,200	0.80%
2016	63,649	0.71%
2017	64,446	1.25%
2018	65,078	0.98%
2019	65,803	1.11%
2020	66,493	1.11%

Source: <http://www.population.net.au/shepparton-population/> Accessed 19/01/2021

3. Victorian population growth rates since 2011

Year	Population	Growth rate
2011	5.53 million	n/a
2012	5.60 million	1.27%
2013	5.74 million	2.50%
2014	5.76 million	0.35%
2015	5.88 million	2.08%
2016	6.03 million	2.55%
2017	6.15 million	1.99%
2018	6.27 million	1.95%
2019	6.28 million	1.75%
2020	6.49 million	1.72%

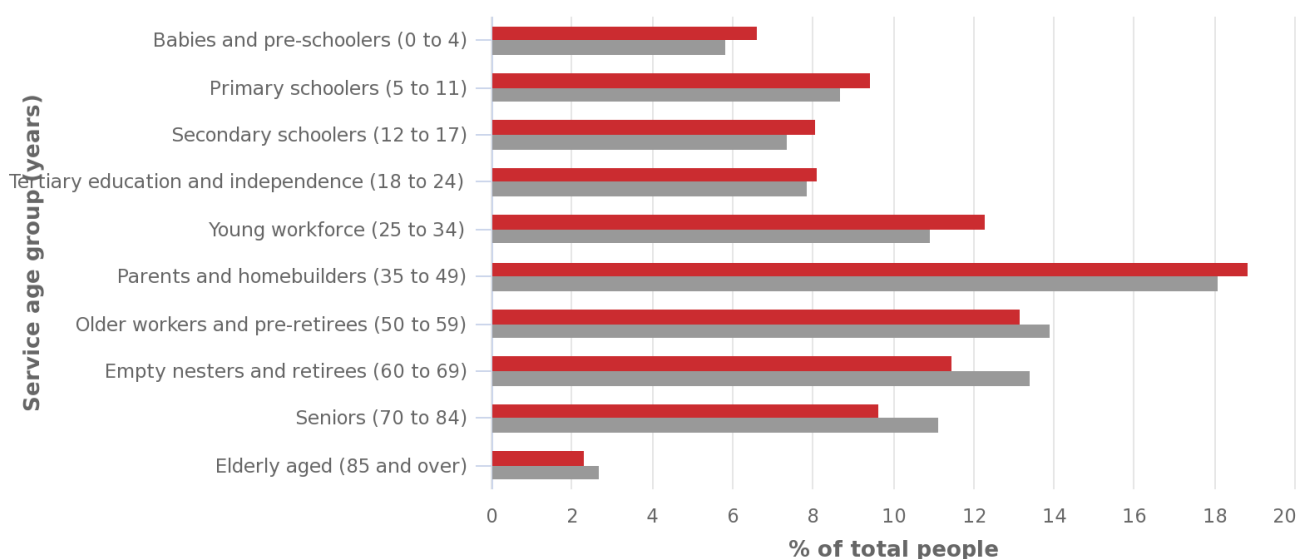
Source: <http://www.population.net.au/population-of-victoria/> Accessed 19/01/2021

4. Age Structure of Greater Shepparton Population

Age structure - service age groups, 2016

Total persons

■ City of Greater Shepparton ■ Regional VIC



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).

.id informed decisions

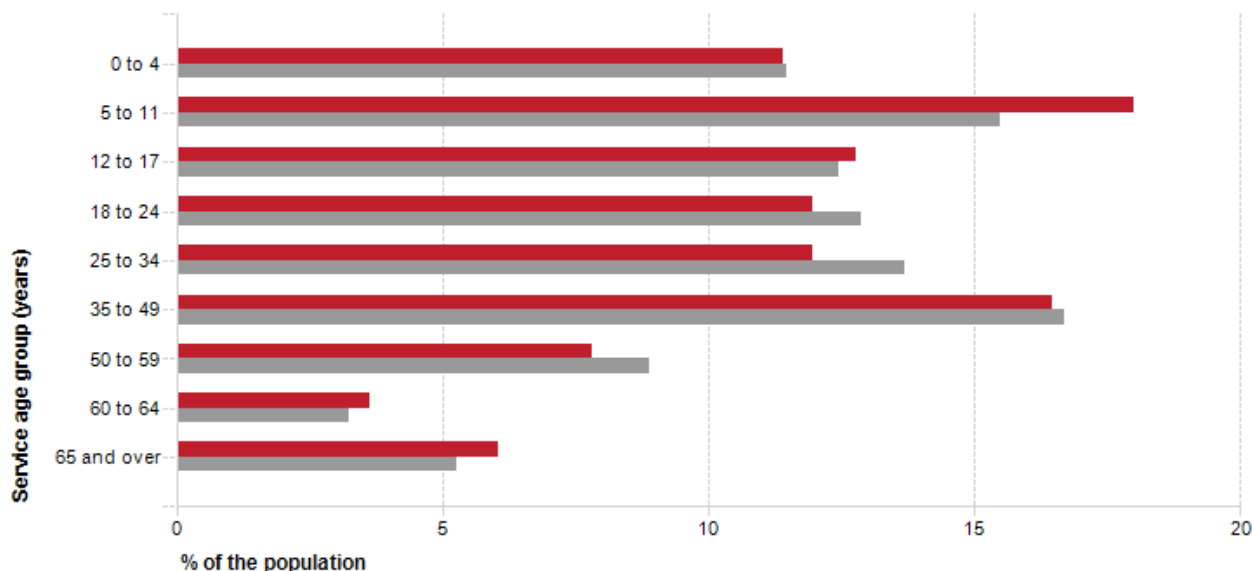
Source: <https://profile.id.com.au/shepparton> Accessed 19/01/2021

5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population

Service age groups, 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

■ City of Greater Shepparton - Indigenous ■ Victoria - Indigenous



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).



Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011 and 2016

Source: <https://profile.id.com.au/shepparton> Accessed 19/01/2021

6. Birthplace – Ranked by size

City of Greater Shepparton - Overseas born (Usual residence)	2016			2011			Change
	Number	per cent	Regional VIC per cent	Number	per cent	Regional VIC per cent	
India	1,202	1.9	0.6	805	1.3	0.4	+397
United Kingdom	1,061	1.7	3.2	1,082	1.8	3.5	-21
Italy	846	1.3	0.5	985	1.6	0.6	-139
Afghanistan	755	1.2	0.1	557	0.9	0.1	+198
New Zealand	715	1.1	1.0	606	1.0	1.0	+109

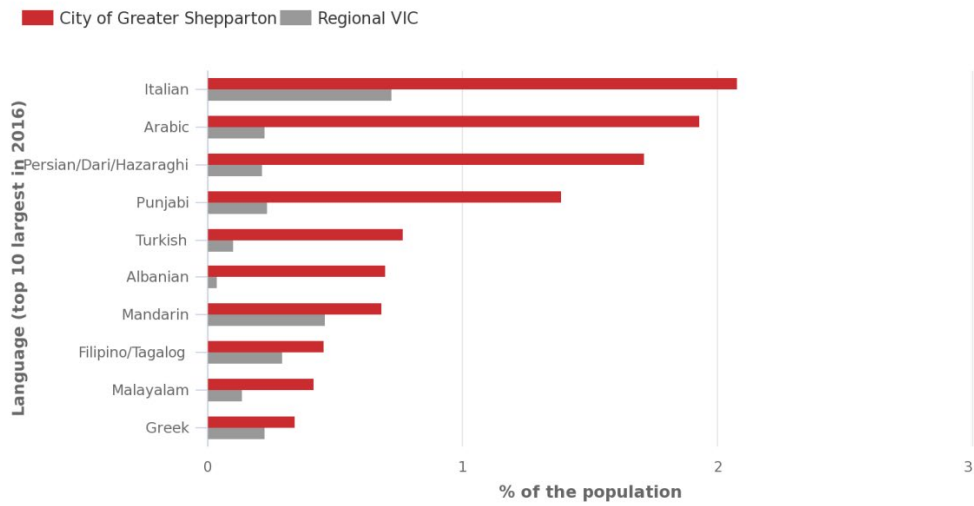
Iraq	464	0.7	0.1	389	0.6	0.1	+75
Philippines	394	0.6	0.4	227	0.4	0.3	+167
Albania	264	0.4	0.0	328	0.5	0.0	-64
Turkey	247	0.4	0.1	329	0.5	0.1	-82
Pakistan	227	0.4	0.1	63	0.1	0.0	+164
Malaysia	212	0.3	0.2	87	0.1	0.1	+125
Netherlands	202	0.3	0.5	213	0.4	0.6	-11
Taiwan	196	0.3	0.1	26	0.0	0.0	+170
Greece	163	0.3	0.1	164	0.3	0.1	-1
China	160	0.3	0.3	136	0.2	0.2	+24
Sri Lanka	139	0.2	0.1	97	0.2	0.1	+42
Samoa	125	0.2	0.0	53	0.1	0.0	+72
Germany	123	0.2	0.4	125	0.2	0.5	-2
South Africa	120	0.2	0.2	76	0.1	0.2	+44
Iran	120	0.2	0.1	53	0.1	0.0	+67
Congo, Democratic Republic of	111	0.2	0.0	62	0.1	0.0	+49
Sudan/South Sudan	110	0.2	0.0	147	0.2	0.1	-37
Kuwait	92	0.1	0.0	80	0.1	0.0	+12
United States of America	82	0.1	0.2	68	0.1	0.2	+14
Ireland	80	0.1	0.2	71	0.1	0.2	+9
Thailand	79	0.1	0.1	65	0.1	0.1	+14
North Macedonia	76	0.1	0.1	78	0.1	0.1	-2
Nigeria	58	0.1	0.0	35	0.1	0.0	+23
Canada	47	0.1	0.1	38	0.1	0.1	+9
Hong Kong	44	0.1	0.1	18	0.0	0.0	+26
Fiji	42	0.1	0.1	23	0.0	0.0	+19
Indonesia	40	0.1	0.1	16	0.0	0.1	+24
Vietnam	40	0.1	0.1	29	0.0	0.1	+11
Serbia / Montenegro (fmr Yugoslavia)	37	0.1	0.1	50	0.1	0.1	-13

Zimbabwe	37	0.1	0.0	23	0.0	0.0	+14
Croatia	35	0.1	0.2	44	0.1	0.2	-9
Bangladesh	34	0.1	0.0	16	0.0	0.0	+18
Spain	28	0.0	0.0	24	0.0	0.0	+4
Saudi Arabia	28	0.0	0.0	29	0.0	0.0	-1
Nepal	25	0.0	0.0	16	0.0	0.0	+9
South Korea	25	0.0	0.0	14	0.0	0.0	+11
Singapore	24	0.0	0.0	20	0.0	0.0	+4
Poland	24	0.0	0.1	25	0.0	0.1	-1
Tonga	22	0.0	0.0	16	0.0	0.0	+6
Egypt	21	0.0	0.0	31	0.1	0.0	-10
France	20	0.0	0.1	22	0.0	0.0	-2
Syria	20	0.0	0.0	15	0.0	0.0	+5
Tanzania	19	0.0	0.0	26	0.0	0.0	-7
Malta	18	0.0	0.1	22	0.0	0.1	-4
Kenya	17	0.0	0.0	29	0.0	0.0	-12
Papua New Guinea	15	0.0	0.0	13	0.0	0.0	+2
Austria	14	0.0	0.1	18	0.0	0.1	-4
Japan	13	0.0	0.0	5	0.0	0.0	+8
Romania	13	0.0	0.0	10	0.0	0.0	+3
Morocco	13	0.0	0.0	6	0.0	0.0	+7
Switzerland	13	0.0	0.0	11	0.0	0.0	+2
Lebanon	12	0.0	0.0	16	0.0	0.0	-4
East Timor	11	0.0	0.0	8	0.0	0.0	+3
Russian Federation	10	0.0	0.0	6	0.0	0.0	+4
United Arab Emirates	10	0.0	0.0	0		0.0	+10

Source: <https://profile.id.com.au/shepparton> Accessed 19/01/2021

7. Language spoken at home

Language spoken at home, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions).



Source: <https://profile.id.com.au/shepparton> Accessed 19/01/2021

8. Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage

City of Greater Shepparton's small areas and benchmark areas		
Area	2016 index	Percentile
Shepparton Surrounds South	1,067.5	86
Kialla Urban	1,055.2	80
Rural North	1,034.0	67
Rural East	1,030.5	64
Shepparton North East	1,030.2	64
Shepparton Surrounds East	1,020.8	57
Victoria	1,010.0	51
Australia	1,001.9	46
Rural South	998.7	44
Rural North West	985.6	37
Regional VIC	977.0	32
Hume Region	975.2	32
Tatura	967.6	28
Moira Shire Council	951.0	22
City of Greater Shepparton	948.0	21
Shepparton North Central	938.1	18
Shepparton Urban Centre	931.3	16
Shepparton North West	907.2	11
Mooroopna	896.3	9
Shepparton South	888.6	8
Shepparton South East	845.6	5
Shepparton Central	842.3	4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2016

Source: <https://profile.id.com.au/shepparton> Accessed 19/01/2021

APPENDIX B: GREATER SHEPPARTON INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT DATA

Total employment in the Goulburn Valley, as defined by the local government areas of Campaspe, Greater Shepparton and Moira, was 54,704 in 2016¹. Current employment by industry in the Goulburn Valley is presented in Figure 1.

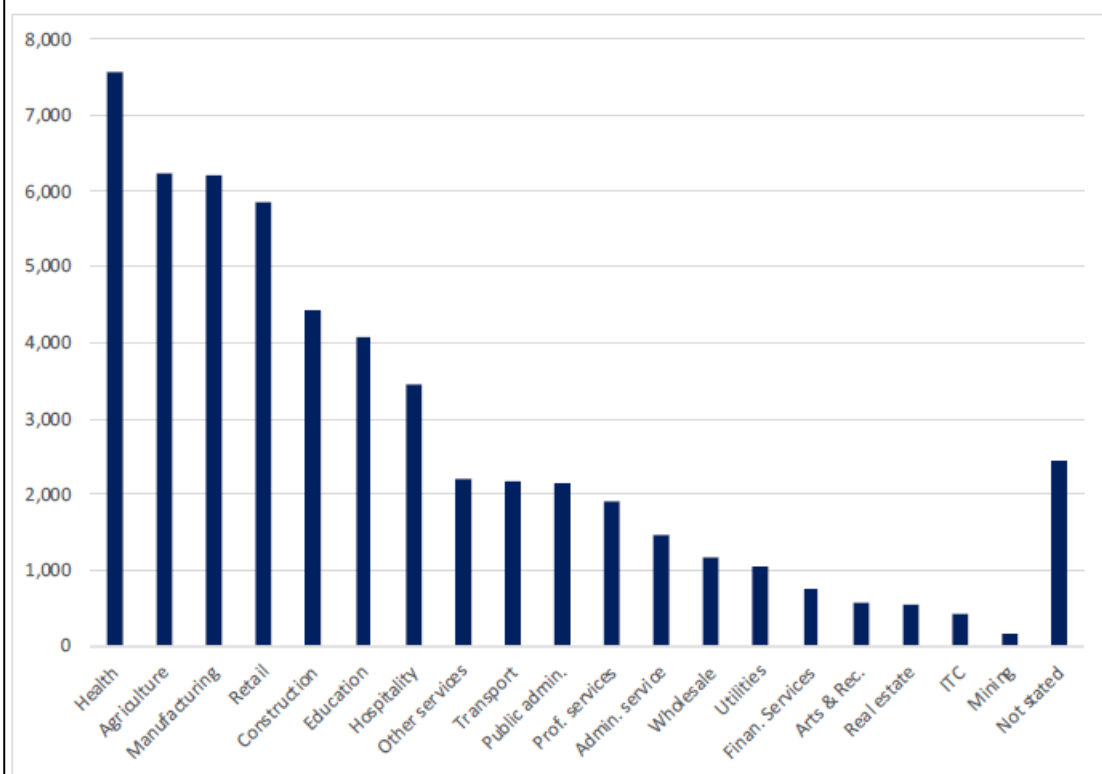


Figure 1: Current employment by industry in the Goulburn Valley

The data shows that four industry sectors dominate employment in the region, representing 25,851 or 47 per cent of all jobs in the region:

- health care and social assistance — 7,576 jobs or 13.8 per cent of total jobs
- agriculture, forestry and fishing — 6,234 jobs or 11.4 per cent of total jobs
- manufacturing — 6,202 jobs or 11.3 per cent of total jobs
- retail trade — 5,839 jobs or 10.7 per cent of total jobs.

Source: Kennelly (2019). *Employment in the Goulburn Valley*

Goulburn Valley employment trends by industry in 2016

	2006	2011	2016	% change 2011-16
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,781	7,044	7,576	31%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	7,526	6,153	6,234	-17%
Manufacturing	7,657	7,343	6,202	-19%
Retail Trade	6,486	6,454	5,839	-10%
Construction	3,878	4,299	4,418	14%
Education and Training	3,497	3,823	4,066	16%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,067	3,314	3,456	13%
Other Services	1,825	2,101	2,207	21%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2,131	2,178	2,162	1%
Public Administration and Safety	1,880	2,061	2,134	14%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1,680	1,826	1,907	14%
Administrative and Support Services	1,188	1,189	1,467	23%
Wholesale Trade	1,905	1,732	1,156	-39%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	801	894	1,040	30%
Financial and Insurance Services	1,009	895	753	-25%
Arts and Recreation Services	438	508	558	27%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	529	451	539	2%
Information Media and Telecommunications	517	453	417	-19%
Mining	83	154	152	83%
Inadequately described/Not stated	1,192	1,363	2,436	104%
Total	53,051	54,227	54,704	3%

Source: Kennelly (2019) *Employment in the Goulburn Valley*

Unemployment rates in City of Greater Shepparton Area

	City of Greater Shepparton			Regional VIC	Victoria	Australia
Quarter	Unemployed people	Labour force	Unemployment rate %	Unemployment rate %	Unemployment rate %	Unemployment rate %
2020						
- December	2,451	32,125	7.6	4.7	6.5	6.5
- September	2,499	33,200	7.5	4.5	5.9	6.1
- June	2,153	34,618	6.2	4.1	5.4	5.6
- March	1,999	35,361	5.7	3.9	4.9	5.2
2019						
- December	1,497	35,671	4.2	3.9	4.7	5.2
- September	1,619	36,134	4.5	4.0	4.7	5.1
- June	1,729	36,146	4.8	4.2	4.6	5.1
- March	1,677	35,756	4.7	4.6	4.8	5.2

Source: <https://economy.id.com.au/shepparton/unemployment>. Accessed 21.4.2021

APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW – VICTORIAN CAREERS CURRICULUM

The Victorian careers curriculum framework aims to support young people to:

- understand and manage influences relating to career planning and lifelong learning
- develop skills, knowledge, and capabilities to make career decisions
- apply their learning to achieve educational and career aspirations
- build resilience in their capacity to manage change throughout their lives.

There are six steps in a young person’s acquisition of skills for career development spanning Year 7 to Year 12.



Goals at each step are organised into three stages:

- self development — young people understand themselves, build their experiences and achievements and develop their capabilities
- career exploration — young people locate, investigate, and consider opportunities in learning and future work options
- career management — young people make and adjust career action plans and manage their life choices, changes and transitions.

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