



# Victorian Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023

A shared vision for skills-led solutions



Education  
and Training

## A message from the Victorian Skills Authority

### New skills priorities are emerging in Victoria

The Victorian economy is rebounding strongly from the pandemic. Our skills system must act now to provide the skills to fuel Victoria's economic recovery. Investments in infrastructure and health and community services workforces signal the challenge we face—the need for more skilled workers with higher levels of expertise who rely upon a healthy and dynamic post-secondary education system in Victoria.

The pandemic has created an imperative to increase labour market participation to meet a shortage of workers and accelerated the trend for digital skills across industries and within occupations. This points to the need to bring more people from under-represented groups into vocational education and for new forms of learning for a digital world, so students acquire the skills critical to success in work.

Building on the Government's position of TAFEs as anchor vocational institutions, a refreshed view of skills and vocational education will widen the pool of skilled workers, deliver key projects as planned, and help business flourish. In conjunction with the network of quality private and community-based training organisations operating under Victoria's Skills First arrangements and increased collaboration across community and higher education providers we aim to ensure communities have access to education and training and local businesses can grow their workforces and thrive.

A vibrant labour market characterised by deep but transferable skills among workers and new entrants is the best support for adapting industries, growing businesses and offering career trajectories and opportunities for wages growth for Victorians. Higher order skills are the foundations of Victoria's future economy.

This first Victorian Skills Plan is based on rich data and analysis and extensive stakeholder insights. The importance of these data and insights cannot be overstated: it can guide the skills investments of government, industry, training providers, schools, universities, communities and individuals.

Aligning the delivery of skills with the needs of the economy will ensure there is a pipeline of skilled workers available to meet future needs, including in those areas of Government priority around infrastructure and social recovery. The Skills Plan identifies actions and recommends what is required to build a robust skills base for Victoria.

### Bringing it all together

Supporting Victoria's priorities for its economy and people does not come from a single action. Achieving quality and relevance of training in such a dynamic environment will be delivered when all parties with a stake in the outcome are engaged in developing solutions. This means we need education and training providers, government and industry all invested to solve challenges and build a better Victoria.



Bringing new skills and capabilities to more learners powers businesses and ensures skills critical to success are retained in Victoria. Strengthening skills delivery to leverage the latest education and training approaches and empowering teachers to bring these new approaches to the classroom and workplace is a key feature of the Education State.

The Victorian Skills Authority Advisory Board will play a role in guiding the implementation of actions from this plan.

Working together, connecting locally and acting with integrity to set up new approaches is the key to success.

**Craig Robertson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Victorian Skills Authority

**Lisa Line**  
Chair  
Victorian Skills Authority  
Advisory Board



## A new era for skills

Over the past six months, the Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) has worked to develop its first Victorian Skills Plan. This Skills Plan provides a 'skills roadmap'. It represents a new approach to connecting industry, learner and community insights and provides evidence for the provision of training and skills across Victoria aligned to current and future job needs.

It identifies actions and the further work needed to build a robust skills base and shape the next generation of skills delivery strategies.

The Skills Plan focuses on the occupations and skills that industry and workers need and are delivered by the TAFE and training system, Adult Community Education and Higher Education.

With evidence drawn from more than 60 local, national and global sources, enhanced through more than 100 consultation forums with industry, employers, unions, education and training providers and learners, the Skills Plan:

- ✓ delivers industry-validated insights on the scale and form of the issues facing Victoria
- ✓ provides clear direction on the response required, and
- ✓ identifies priority actions to improve the training and skills sector.

### KEY INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- Industries and regions are facing significant labour shortages, mostly due to COVID-19 impacts but some pre-dating the pandemic.
- Employment growth has been, and will continue to be, concentrated in workforce-intensive industries linked to population growth.
- Industry is overwhelmingly positive about future growth but constrained by the lack of labour and skills shortages.
- Some industries are having to take on workers to fill critical vacancies even though they may not have the right skills. This is adding pressure to other staff, including supervisors.
- The care economy is facing specific challenges meeting labour and skills needs, resulting in competition for the same workers across aged care, mental health, disability support and allied health.
- Many businesses are already gearing up for the shift to the 'clean economy' while others are uncertain of their training needs.
- Small but critical occupations can have a significant supply chain impact if in shortage.
- Both full qualifications and skill sets are valued by employers.
- It is not just an education response that is required to meet labour shortages. Other factors are also at play, including the cost of housing, transport and poor wages or working conditions.
- Advances in digital technologies and platforms are transforming the expectations of many occupations. While this is not translating into an overall loss of jobs across the workforce it is changing the nature of many jobs.
- Vocational education needs to provide a richer base of the knowledge that underpins practice. Many industry representatives acknowledge they carry responsibility for building 'experience'.
- The system is difficult to understand and the key parts – Adult Community Education, TAFE and training and universities – are siloed, making it hard to move from one to the other.
- Learners want better information to support their decision-making.

## The Vocational Education and Training system has been rebuilt, with stronger foundations

Victoria – the Education State – recognises that its economic success and the prosperity of all Victorians is built on the skills, knowledge and expertise of its people. This is developed across the skills sector.

The Government is committed to providing world-class skills and training that meets the needs of Victoria’s employers, industries and communities.

Through targeted investment to meet immediate industry and community needs, the Government set about stabilising the skills sector, restoring confidence in the TAFE system, improving quality, and establishing a framework to address current and future skills shortages and workforce training needs.

In 2015, the Victorian Government invested in TAFEs heavily through a range of initiatives including the \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund, the TAFE Quality Blitz, the \$50 million TAFE Back to Work Fund, a \$50 million TAFE Boost fund and a \$16 million investment in Skills and Jobs Centres.

The 2017 *Skills First* reforms brought a new approach to training, setting benchmarks for quality and supporting courses that most likely lead to employment.

Since then, a raft of initiatives – including Free TAFE, Head Start and the Reconnect Program have helped strengthen pathways into vocational education and equip Victorians with the skills they need for a great career and life.

Across 2020 and 2021, a new skills architecture was established with the creation of Apprenticeships Victoria; the Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery (OTCD); the Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) and a new division in the Department of Education and Training focused on Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE).

## Victorian Skills System: The Vision

*To deliver a quality skills system, aligning training to employer and social needs, collaborating with industry and underpinned by a strong TAFE network, supplemented by quality private and community-based organisations that deliver on government priorities, providing pathways to training, jobs and rewarding careers for all Victorians.*



## Focus and structure underpin the system

More than 100,000 Victorians have signed up to **Free TAFE** since it was introduced in 2019 –making rewarding career pathways accessible to more people and saving them more than \$240 million in course fees.

More than half of Free TAFE students are women, nearly 30 per cent are from culturally diverse backgrounds, around a quarter were unemployed and close to 10 per cent live with disability.

Free TAFE offers more than 60 courses, including skills required in priority sectors such as cybersecurity, building and construction, education support, agriculture and community services. [www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe](http://www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe)

**Apprenticeships Victoria** is setting new benchmarks for earn-and-learn opportunities. Victoria has had one of the highest increases in new apprenticeships and traineeships of any state, doubling to almost 50,000 in the 12 months to September 2021. [www.apprenticeships.vic.gov.au](http://www.apprenticeships.vic.gov.au)

**Skills and Jobs Centres** continue to play a key role triaging people into the appropriate vocational learning pathways, delivering qualified career counselling and providing information on local job opportunities. [www.vic.gov.au/skills-and-jobs-centres](http://www.vic.gov.au/skills-and-jobs-centres)

Each year more than 30 Skills and Jobs Centres screen around 1,500 apprentices for *Big Build* demonstration projects and provide services to over 23,000 clients.

The **Victorian Skills Gateway** provides advice to learners about priority occupations and skills in demand, as well as the educational and training opportunities offered by TAFE and other providers. [www.skills.vic.gov.au](http://www.skills.vic.gov.au)

**Learn Local** providers and broader community support organisations are critical. They provide courses that empower students to gain the skills they need to pursue further education or skills that are aligned to jobs in local communities.

Learn Local courses are particularly suited to adult learners looking to develop their digital, literacy, numeracy and employability skills for study, work and life. [www.learnlocal.org.au](http://www.learnlocal.org.au)

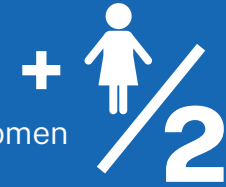
In a unique response to the impact of COVID-19 on the state's universities, the **Higher Education State Investment Fund** facilitated projects to boost productivity in the recovery phase.

The Victorian Government is delivering other programs to support people into jobs in demand:

- **Jobs Victoria** supports people looking for work and connects employers with the staff they need. [www.jobs.vic.gov.au](http://www.jobs.vic.gov.au)
- The **Digital Jobs program** builds the state's digital workforce by upskilling mid-career Victorians so they can transition into digital careers. [www.djpr.vic.gov.au/digital-jobs](http://www.djpr.vic.gov.au/digital-jobs)

## LEADING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SKILLS AND TRAINING

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nearly

**30%** are from culturally diverse backgrounds

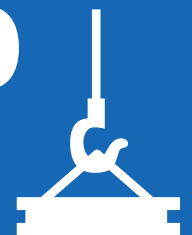
**1/4** were unemployed

and close to **10%** live with disability.



Each year more than **30** Skills and Jobs Centres screen

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## The COVID-19 pandemic presents us with opportunities

The pandemic has made people reassess what really matters to them – family, where to live, what to do for work. Many are considering a different career path, either through choice or circumstance.

Across the world – Victoria was no exception – the pandemic affected the availability of workers and demonstrated just how rapidly technology can change work practices.

It also put pressure on health care employment and disproportionately affected women, who typically occupy more casual and at-risk roles than men and carry caring responsibilities within families. To assist, the Victorian Government introduced the Sick Pay Guarantee focused on the industries with high rates of casual and contract workers without access to sick pay, whose work hours are often unpredictable and low paid, and where vulnerable groups are overrepresented, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and young people.

To be able to take advantage of the broader opportunities in the Victorian economy, new entrants and existing workers need information on where the future jobs are likely to be and the range of education and training pathways to them, including vocational, higher education and other formal and informal options.

Occupations are in demand across all Victorian industries, stimulated by strong consumer demand, major government investment and transition to clean energy.

Structural and ongoing changes to the nature of work have resulted in an increased need for highly skilled workers. Victoria's labour market is currently experiencing a high-level mismatch, with employers citing a lack of skills as a reason for recruitment difficulties. Increased opportunities for upskilling and reskilling of the workforce will therefore be required.

The education and training sector is not immune to workforce pressures with shortages of teachers and trainers being experienced to varying degrees across Victoria. This issue spans teachers in traditional trades and cutting-edge technologies.

There are both labour and skills shortages across sections of the economy. Regional areas are feeling these workforce challenges most acutely.

And these labour and skills shortages are expected to continue to be compounded by COVID-19. Health experts predict the virus will be part of everyday life for some time, including higher than normal absenteeism.

But challenges bring opportunity.

Victoria can pivot into new areas of competitive advantage. Medical research, international education and agrifood are just a few opportunities providing potential for global leadership.

The pandemic prompted innovations in the delivery of education and training, particularly around the delivery of quality online training. New forms of immersive learning can become part of the future skills solution.

Concurrently, industry is changing. The sectors that provided the jobs of the past, will not be the sectors that drive the jobs of the future. And the move towards zero emissions is impacting all aspects of the global economy.

Victoria's skills system stands at the forefront of growing the available talent pool of workers. This ranges from supporting the development of the basic building blocks of employment (foundation skills covering literacy, numeracy, digital and general employability skills) and training, upskilling and reskilling workers so they are ready to adapt and take up new and changing employment opportunities.

# The Victorian economy is resilient

Victoria has led the nation in job creation from the time of the state's second COVID-19 peak, with over 300,000 jobs created since September 2020.

Unemployment is at an historically low level and employment growth is strong, with around 373,000 additional workers needed by 2025 to meet growing demand from new jobs and to replace retiring workers.














Demand for some of these new workers will be met through young people entering the labour market, helping unemployed and underemployed people into work and through skilled migration.

While workforce participation rates for women have improved, they still lag the participation rates of males: women's participation is 62 per cent and male participation is 72 per cent. Increasing women's participation can contribute significantly to addressing labour and skills shortages while improving equality.

But a shortfall is likely, particularly if the investment in the supply of skills is not better aligned to industry demand.

Further details about the state of jobs in Victoria is available at [www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-authority](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-authority)

There are currently **3.5 million Victorians** employed across **13 industries**<sup>1</sup>

	Administrative and support services	<b>105,200</b>
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	<b>68,000</b>
	Construction	<b>305,700</b>
	Education and Training	<b>308,900</b>
	Health and community services	<b>515,050</b>
	Manufacturing	<b>260,300</b>
	Mining	<b>15,850</b>
	Professional, financial and information services	<b>628,700</b>
	Public administration and safety	<b>206,600</b>
	Rental, hiring and real estate services	<b>52,250</b>
	Service industry	<b>811,150</b>
	Transport and logistics	<b>183,350</b>
	Utilities industry	<b>48,750</b>

**373,000** additional workers are needed in Victoria by 2025 to meet growing demand<sup>2</sup>

There are **160,000 fewer working age Victorians** in 2021 than forecast pre-COVID-19<sup>3</sup>



In February 2022 **222,600** people were under-employed<sup>4</sup>



In February 2022 there were an estimated **331,200** people not in the labour force who wanted work<sup>5</sup>



Underemployed workers wanted to work an additional **3,031,700** hours



**195,600** of these people could start work within four weeks



which is the equivalent to almost **7,000** people



Unemployment at May 2022 **3.7%**<sup>6</sup>

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force Survey, February 2022.  
 2. VSA, Deloitte Access Economics and Nous (2022) and National Skills Commission employment forecasts. VSA and Nous (2022 analysis).  
 3. Victoria in Future (VIF) 2019 and ABS (2021), Quarterly Population Estimates (ERP).  
 4. ABS, Labour Force Survey, February 2022, 6202.0 and 6291.0.55.  
 5. ABS, 2022, 6226.0 Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Table 21.1  
 6. ABS, Labour Force Survey, May 2022

Industries are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC). Some industries have been amalgamated as follows:  
 Service sector includes: Accommodation and Food Services, Arts and Recreation, Retail, Other Services and Wholesale Trade.  
 Professional, financial and information services includes: Financial and Insurance Services, Information, Media and Telecommunications and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services



## The way forward

The recent *Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy* (Macklin Review) was unequivocal: building and sustaining effective collaboration and stronger connections between the education and training sector, industry and the wider community of support services is critical to Victoria's future success.

One of the key recommendations of this review, and the mechanism to drive collaboration, was the establishment of the VSA.

The VSA brings together the key stakeholders of the skills sector – industry, employers, providers, unions, communities and learners – to provide skills-led solutions, drive reform and work together to improve the skills and employment outcomes.

The VSA uses a combination of direct engagement with stakeholders on specific issues and will, from 2023, rollout a range of innovative approaches to solve critical skilling issues through a new collaborative approach that brings the key players together to develop and trial solutions. Options to embed successful trials in ongoing funding will be explored.

The Department of Education and Training's Higher Education and Skills group, the VSA and OTCD forms a three-part governance structure for the post-secondary skills system. The capabilities of each will be brought together to roll out solutions.

Located within the Higher Education and Skills group is the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Division.

Guided by the *Future of Adult Community Education in Victoria 2020-25* Ministerial Statement, ACFE is delivering excellence and reducing the impact of disadvantage for vulnerable Victorians.

Victoria's vocational and higher education sectors also operate within national arrangements. Many of the actions in this plan will require close liaison with the federal government to represent the skills needs of Victoria.

The Government's investment and reform agenda is ensuring the skills system aligns with the needs of learners, employers and industry; that providers can deliver high-quality training in the right courses to the right learners; and that national settings represent a good deal for Victorians.

The VSA is also working to better support the immediate workforce challenges of local employers through Skills and Jobs Centres, local advice and support to connect employers with local training delivery and Regional Taskforces that are leading the identification and implementation of local solutions to skills and labour challenges.

**But there is more to be done.**

All Victorians – including those who are vulnerable, disengaged or disadvantaged – should have access to the training they need to find a good, secure job and a decent way of life.



## Using the Victorian Skills Plan

Occupation and skills demand for Victoria is segmented into 13 stand-alone industry reports.<sup>1</sup>

These reports provide insights on the key challenges, and will guide the future work of the VSA, Government and key sector stakeholders.

The Skills Plan also includes data on individual occupations, by industry and by region to understand current demand in 2022 and forecast demand by 2025.

The publicly available VSA insights dashboard provides forecasts for the more than 300 occupations that make up the Victorian economy.

The Skills Plan also includes regional snapshots.<sup>2</sup> These present views on key occupations and industries and point to actions that can be taken, and the education and training sector's response required, to bring skills needed to the regions. The snapshots align with the existing Regional Skills Demand Profiles available via the VSA website, and those under development during 2022.

The Skills Plan identifies actions the VSA will undertake – partnering with government, industry, employers, training providers and learners – to address priorities in skills provision.

Other insight reports on specific issues, such as digital skills and clean economy will be published outside of the release of this skills plan.

All documents are available through [www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-authority](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-authority).

1. Industry reports include Administrative and Support Services; Agriculture; Construction; Education and Training; Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services; Health and Community Services; Manufacturing; Mining; Professional, Financial and Information Services; Public Administration and Safety; Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; Services; and Transport and Logistics.

2. Regional snapshots will be aligned with the nine Regional Partnership regions. There are regional snapshots for Barwon, Central Highlands, Goulburn, Great South Coast, Loddon Campaspe and Mallee. Ovens Murray, Wimmera Southern Mallee and Gippsland Regional Skills Demand Profiles are currently under development – snapshots will be released later in 2022. Regional snapshots, and Regional Skills Demand Profiles currently under development, align with and complement Regional Development Victoria's Regional Economic Development Strategies.



## Better alignment of education and training with labour market demands through the provision of ‘best in class’ data insights

Across Victoria, almost 832,100 people are enrolled in the vocational education and training, adult community education and higher education sectors. Of these, there are over 565,000 people enrolled in vocational education and training or adult community education, of which almost 60 per cent are government funded. The VSA wants to ensure this investment in training and education achieves the best possible outcomes.

Data in the Skills Plan will guide decisions around funding of courses and provision of *Skills First* training for 2023. (Through *Skills First* settings, the Government subsidises those courses—the Funded Course List and the Funded Skill Set List—determined to be of the highest economic and social value to Victorians.)

Feedback in developing this Skills Plan highlighted that a more granular level of skills needs beyond occupations is needed. A common issue was that emerging occupations with unique skills were not captured in the data and the skill expectations of existing occupations were transforming, driven principally by technology. New approaches to identify these skills is an important part of future skills plans.

The Skills Plan will also guide future planning for the TAFE Network and the OTCD. The importance of securing delivery of critical niche skills for industry is also highlighted.

The data is available to all education and training providers and higher education institutes to guide their planning and investments, and to industry to support their workforce planning.

**[www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-authority](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-authority)**

## Improving outcomes through a better-connected system

The education and training opportunities in Victoria are extensive and diverse, comprising public entities such as secondary schools, TAFEs and universities and many non-government and community based providers such as Learn Locals.

Independent, industry and community training providers deliver for industries like early childhood education and care, community services and construction, as well as critical and niche skills.

Their work is supported by a host of other organisations, such as Apprenticeship Employment Network members committed to helping people navigate apprenticeships and traineeships.

**The VSA has been tasked with driving better connections between all these bodies, to guide future skills planning and improve the flow of Victorians through to great jobs.**

Those who struggle to access education and training, and those who want to move within and across sectors, must be the focus.

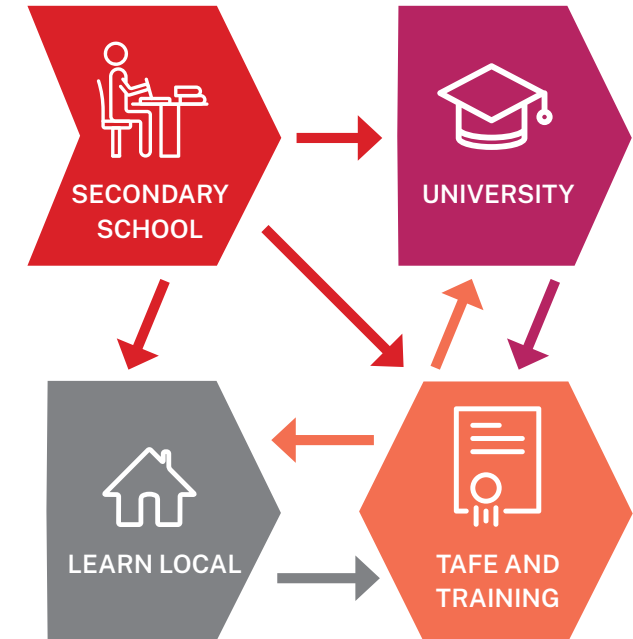
In response to this need, partnerships between Learn Locals and TAFEs are being expanded. Quality private and community-based training organisations are helping people build core skills and prepare for local work opportunities. Industry and other specialist training organisations are filling important job needs. Many TAFEs and universities collaborate in key priority areas.

Reforms in senior secondary schooling to broaden and strengthen vocational learning within the Victorian Certificate of Education are creating a springboard for more school students to venture into industry areas key to Victoria's growth and secure good jobs. With the nature of many industries transforming, and jobs changing, these reforms mean students can learn about careers they may not have considered before.

The VSA can help industries engage with the school system to highlight available careers.

By sharing insights from its Industry Advisory Groups and Regional Skills Taskforces, the VSA drives effective collaboration between the education and training community, learners and industry, leading to a richer experience for all players.

### THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDENT JOURNEY



## TAFE: better than ever

The Government has TAFE as the core of the vocational education sector and a key agent for delivery of vocational education in schools, for targeted higher education and as the key channel to build export opportunities through skills.

The OTCD is increasing collaboration across the TAFE Network and harnessing the potential for excellence in vocational learning aimed at future skills.

There are opportunities to strengthen the impact of the TAFE Network. The power of an education institution serving local industry and community that can offer a full range of pathways and support should not be discounted. The range of offerings and services within one setting can help those uncertain about their learning journey to explore options in one place.

TAFEs are central to the vocational education system and play a key role in delivering vocational education to school students, as well as international and higher education.

Along with outstanding facilities and capabilities, TAFEs have industry experts who understand education design and teaching practice. Their connections with industry, both locally and globally, make them experts in analysing leading industry practices and emerging skills.

The new model of collaboration facilitated through the VSA also provides new channels for industry to partner with the OTCD and TAFEs to bring emerging skills to life.

The international networks built by TAFEs over many years also provide a rich source of information about trends in skills development and the basis of people-to-people connections through to diplomacy links. It means TAFEs are ideally placed to extend education and training exports and skill up workforces in countries in the Asia Pacific region, especially as they adapt to net-zero emissions.



“My teachers made clear efforts to recognise the individual needs of students and encouraged us to communicate with them from the very beginning of the course.”

Samantha Daly, graduate of dual Certificate IV in Mental Health and Mental Health Peer Work at Swinburne University of Technology.



## TAFE: the road ahead

As a first step, the OTCD and TAFEs are enhancing the delivery of vocational qualifications. This includes engaging local industry in course and assessment design and developing leading-edge materials and assessment. Sharing these contemporary learning resources is key in the pursuit of excellence.

Vocational education, however, must be able to keep up with the rate of change in skills, to support emerging skills such as those arising from digitisation and climate adaptation and respond to the changing expectations of learners.

TAFEs, as Government entities and operating through OTCD, are set up to respond to these emerging skills and to support industry to adapt and grow. This also means TAFEs are a source of intelligence for ongoing learning for people already in work. The new model means TAFEs can take a lead role in developing accredited responses to new skill requirements.

**This will be a critical next step in developing the capability within Victoria to rapidly deploy new skills.**

Many stakeholders highlighted the lag in the development of national VET qualifications to meet current local needs. Victoria can lead the way in setting up new models to supplement national qualifications to design and deliver future skills and meet contemporary learning practices.

The OTCD and the TAFE Network, in collaboration with the VSA, will work within local accreditation arrangements operated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to support this.

This new approach also recognises shifts in the economy, as jobs move up the skills trajectory and need a combination of vocational and higher education approaches.

Building collaboration that uses the strengths of universities and TAFEs needs to be pursued. This will allow learners to move through vocational training and into higher education qualifications that are relevant to the workplace, based upon an understanding of the technical requirements of occupations.

**The TAFE Network is ready for these new possibilities.**

Closer alignment of training with job forecasts and building on the specialisations of each institute, supplemented by high-quality private and community provider delivery, will support learners to achieve positive employment and further education outcomes.

The VSA will partner with the TAFE Network to develop education and training that delivers transferable skills, deeper knowledge and emerging skills.

With these changes, the TAFE Network will be at the cutting edge. It will teach skills aligned to industry development, with an ability to develop innovative approaches to accredited training. The network is also ideally positioned to provide the skilling support that will be needed across regional Victoria to deliver the infrastructure and operation of the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Victoria 2026.

This could include targeted investment to bring on stream more virtual and immersive delivery to support vocational education for regional communities, workplaces and learners who prefer this mode of engagement in learning.

## Growing jobs in regional Victoria

Communities across Victoria are rebuilding their industries and communities after the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Workforce challenges are most acute in regional areas. Changing demographics are putting pressure on local services, while skills shortages can hamper local industry growth.

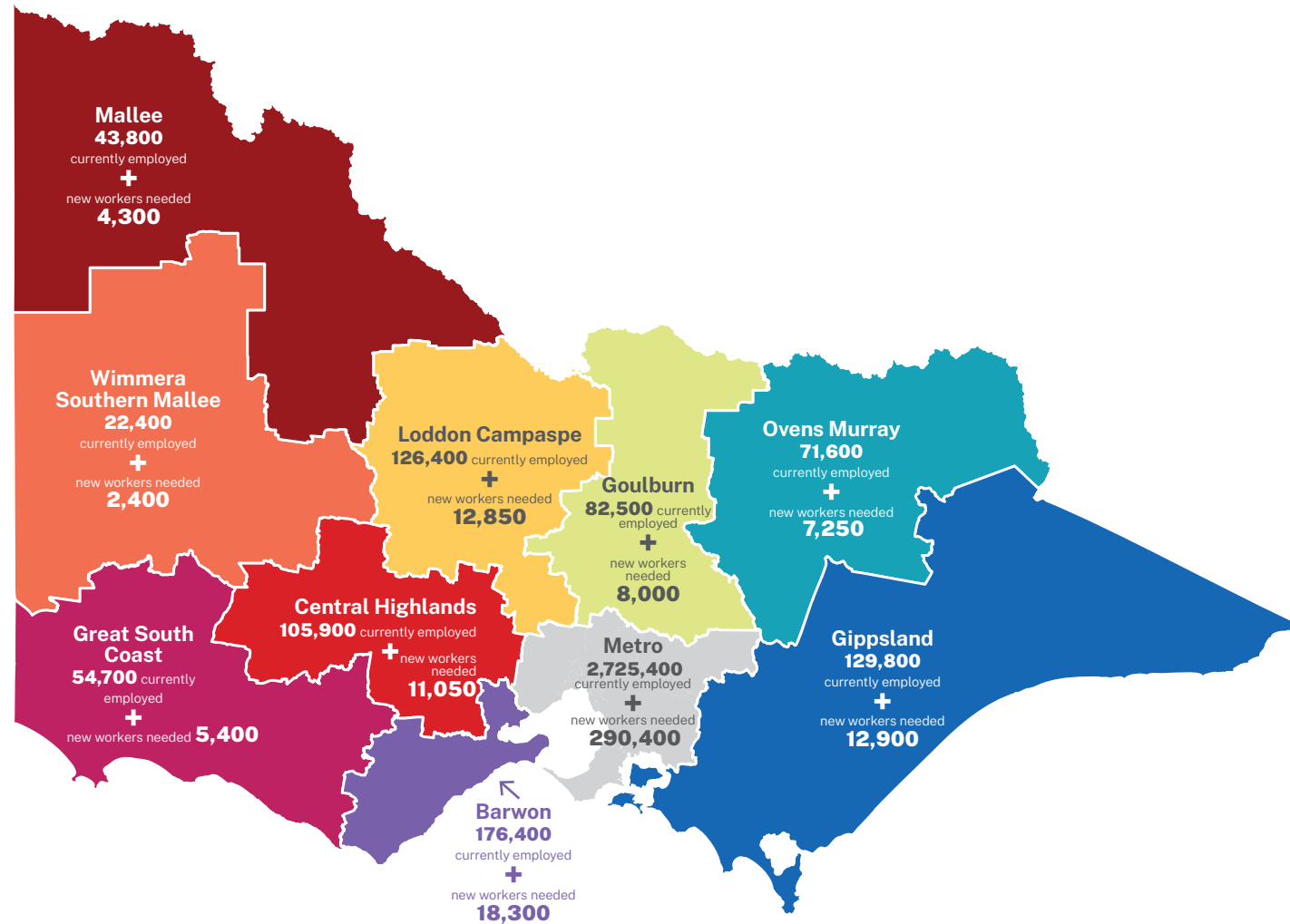
Regional Victoria represents over 20 per cent of the state's total workforce.

Almost 75 per cent of Victoria's agriculture, forestry and fishing, 44 per cent of mining, 26 per cent of administrative and support services and 26 per cent of construction industry workforces are based in regional Victoria.

As the Victorian economy grows, an extra 82,400 workers will be needed by 2025 to meet regional workforce demands.

While many factors contribute to economic development – including the availability of housing, childcare and transport – the Skills Plan is centred on skills and training solutions to local industry issues.

**VICTORIAN REGIONAL JOB DEMAND: NEW WORKERS NEEDED BY 2025**



Source: *Current worker*: VSA and Nous analysis (2022); *New worker demand*: represents employment growth + workers needed to replace retirements, (figures rounded), National Skills Commission employment projections, Nous and VSA analysis, (2022); *New workers needed*: National Skills Commission employment projections, Nous and VSA analysis, (2022)



## Realising growth across regional Victoria

Victoria's regions are well positioned to reap the benefits of the return of tourists, infrastructure investments, significant demand for locally made products and soon the stimulus that will be generated by the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

From advanced manufacturing of products like hydrogen, through to clean energy infrastructure or new agricultural practices, regional Victoria is at the forefront of innovation and opportunity.

Demand for workers is high in all industries, with the largest growth anticipated in health and community services and accommodation and food with 16,900 and 10,300 new workers needed respectively.

Across the Great South Coast and Barwon, home to the iconic Great Ocean Road, around 5,450 workers are needed to service the visitor economy. In Loddon Campaspe, Central Highlands and Wimmera Southern Mallee, manufacturing investment will fuel the need for an estimated 1,300 new workers. Strategic logistic hubs in Ovens Murray and Goulburn will see 900 new workers needed in transport.

Regional Victoria also has distinctive occupational needs. Farm forestry managers are needed in Gippsland, transmission line workers are needed in the Mallee, livestock farmers are needed in the Great South Coast and drillers, miners and shot firers are needed in the Wimmera Southern Mallee.

Seasonal workforces will also remain important to regional areas. Growing and harvesting, and tourism cycles will continue to influence workforce needs across regional areas in roles such as fruit picking, tree planting and ski lift operations.

Across all regions, a more highly skilled workforce is needed. Technological advances and data-led decision-making mean workers need greater analytics, engineering and innovation skills, while increasing customer service expectations mean employees need greater resilience, innovation and problem-solving skills.

Supporting a higher proportion of regional Victoria's population through further education and training is crucial. This needs increased engagement in education and employment, promotion and support for local pathways, addressing barriers to education and training, including the availability of trainers, servicing education and training locally and the strengthening of connections between individuals, education providers and industry to meet demand.

### OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND UNIQUE TO REGIONAL VICTORIA

Transmission line workers

Farm forestry managers

Livestock farmers

Shearers

Drillers, miners and shot firers

## Government investments in infrastructure and social recovery

The Government has invested billions of dollars in its economic and social recovery agenda, with a focus on getting people back to work.

### The Government's Jobs Plan sets an ambitious jobs target – to create 400,000 new jobs by 2025.

Government priorities are creating job opportunities across a wide range of sectors including social housing, health, early education, infrastructure, tourism, clean energy, school building and in re-orienting services that are key in responding to recommendations of Royal Commissions into mental health, aged care and domestic and family violence.

Key investments in training and skills will support the jobs target. These include expanding opportunities for apprentices and trainees through Victoria's *Big Build*, supporting the TAFE system to help more Victorians reskill, upskill and find work. It will also support the development of skills for emerging industries, including a new Clean Economy Workforce Capacity Building Fund.



### CARE ECONOMY

The healthcare and community services sector, the 'care economy', is one of the fastest growing sectors in Victoria.

As more healthcare jobs become available, delivering the pipeline of skilled workers becomes even more important. The Government has added relevant courses to the Free TAFE initiative to boost the number of workers qualified to work in the sector.

Certificate IV Mental Health Peer Work was added to Free TAFE in mid-2020, leading to an increase in people joining the sector.



### CONSTRUCTION

The Government recently announced \$5.3 billion in spending on new and refurbished public housing, estimated to create around 10,000 jobs a year for the next four years.

Across the broader construction sector, \$33 million *Big Build* Apprenticeships will provide 1,500 opportunities for apprentices across Victoria.



## NURSING AMBITION REALISED THROUGH TAFE

Elise Stewart demonstrates that having a disability shouldn't prevent anyone from achieving their goals. Initially Elise was told she couldn't become a nurse because she is profoundly deaf and could put patients at risk.

Through resilience and determination, she became the first deaf person to complete a Diploma of Nursing at Bendigo TAFE.

To accomplish this Elise accessed full-time interpreters, lobbied to have electronic materials subtitled, and worked with an audiologist to have equipment amplified so she could hear bodily sounds. Elise's inspiring work helped to break down the communication barriers for teachers, peers and patients, and her current workplace now has deafness awareness training.

*Bendigo TAFE helped profoundly deaf student Elise Stewart realise her nursing dream.*



## Victoria's Big Build

Victoria's *Big Build* is stimulating economic growth and driving demand for more than 18,000 jobs, primarily for skilled workers in the construction sector and supporting services.

Projects include the Metro Tunnel, removal of 85 level crossings across Melbourne, the West Gate Tunnel, major road upgrades, Melbourne Airport Rail, Suburban Rail Loop and upgrades to every regional passenger line in Victoria.

The Victorian Government has invested in a range of industry and inclusive workplace training programs to address skills shortages and create a pipeline of workers to help deliver these critical projects; and new government arrangements for skilling in Victoria, such as Apprenticeships Victoria and the VSA, will help plan for skilled workers to be available for these projects.

The Local Jobs First - Major Project Skills Guarantee policy helps create opportunities for Victorian apprentices, trainees and cadets to work on some of Victoria's biggest building and infrastructure projects.  
[www.localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au](http://www.localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au)

The *Big Build* Apprenticeships program is increasing the supply of apprenticeships, better leveraging government procurement and improving the quality and accessibility of training.

Industry focused apprenticeships and traineeships will build key competencies critical for delivering major road, bridge and rail projects.

The Government is increasing diversity and inclusivity of workers in rail and transport projects by providing earn-and-learn opportunities to disadvantaged students, creating pathways for youth to gain formal qualifications while working and supporting women to enter employment in the transport sector.

### TOP 10 JOBS REQUIRED TO BUILD PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (2023 TO 2025)

Structural Steel Construction Workers

Building and Plumbing Labourers

Civil Engineering Professionals

Other Mobile Plant Operators  
(e.g. Railway Track Plant Operator)

Other Miscellaneous Labourers  
(e.g. Road Traffic Controller)

Electricians

Architectural, Building and Surveying  
Technicians

Concreters

Earthmoving Plant Operators

Construction Managers





## BUILDING ROCK-SOLID CAREERS

Terra Firma Laboratories conducts field and laboratory analysis of geosynthetics, soil and rock materials used in civil engineering and construction projects across Australia.

Managing director Tom Seymour said Terra Firma trains 30 to 40 people each year – many of them with no qualifications or experience in the field. “Today, three of our four base labs are run by people who started with no qualifications,” he said.

“The VET sector is a fabulous source of employment. The energy that comes with the young and eager is really uplifting for the whole business.

“But we don’t just train young people. We also re-train people who come to us from other industries who have no lab skills at all.”

Terra Firma Laboratories does its training through LTT, a Registered Training Organisation in Victoria.

“Trainees have benefited us greatly because it’s enabled us to grow quickly when required and send people basically anywhere in Australia,” Tom said.

“But we also invest in training so staff can build a sustainable career in the construction materials testing industry, including being equipped with transferable skills in a sector that is changing rapidly.”



# Digitisation and new opportunities

Digitisation, digital tools and automation are changing the way Victoria operates –and creating new opportunities.

Today’s mechanic is tomorrow’s electric vehicle technician. Health carers and professionals enhance their clinical practice with medical technology. Drones and agtech machinery transform farming practices. The Internet of Things allows Victorian firms to monitor machinery around the globe.

Through advances in technology, new business models can be put in place, work practices can be enhanced, digital businesses can be created and the digital services industry can grow.

Australia’s tech industry is on track to create 1.2 million tech jobs by 2030 –filling those jobs is the challenge.

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The National Skills Commission estimates skills clustered around the digital economy will increase 28% between 2022 and 2027.

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Lightcast found around 40% of Victoria’s job ads in February 2020 called for digital skills.

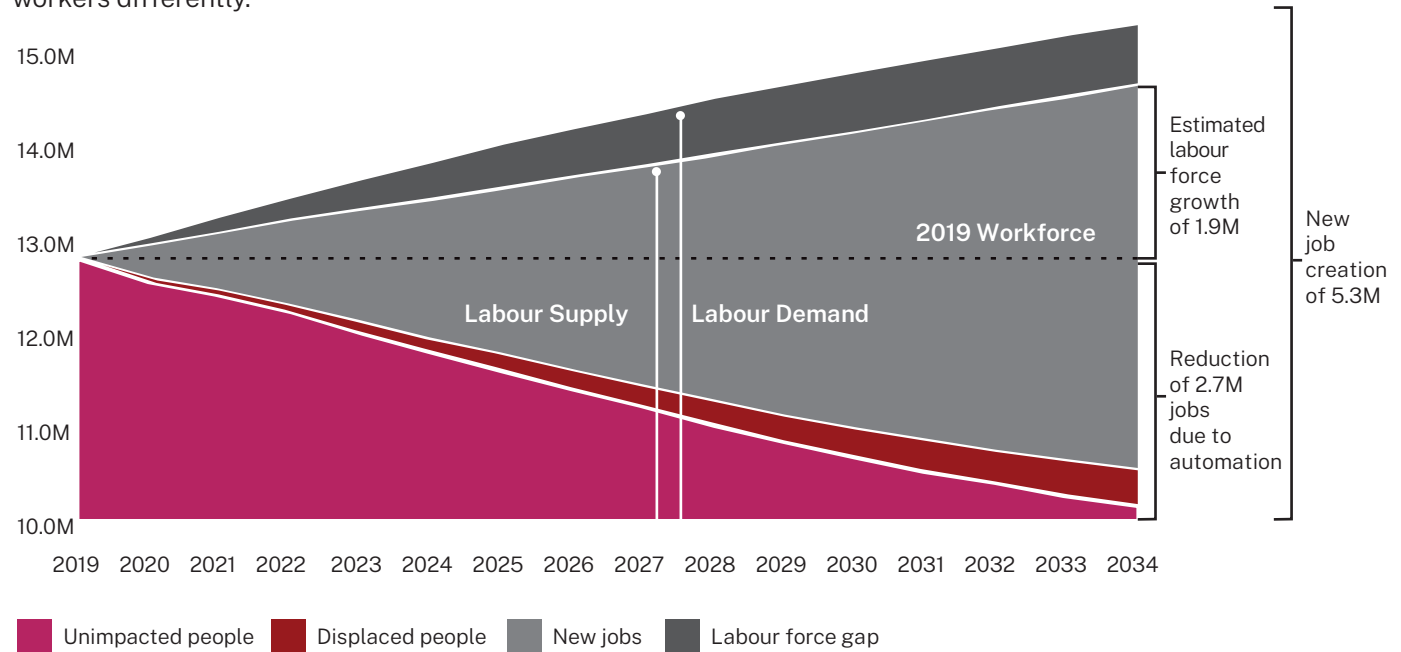
## DIGITISATION CAN ACCELERATE JOBS

Innovation and efficiency resulting from digitisation and automation can create new higher-level jobs, including new technology jobs.

In 2019, an analysis of Australian industry concluded that 2.7 million jobs could be lost to automation over the 15 years to 2034 –with 4.5 million augmented by technology. But jobs grow overall.

Digitisation and automation affects jobs and workers differently.

Workers whose jobs are at risk could find digitisation creates new opportunities; but those opportunities require new digital skills. Workers whose jobs are augmented by technology will need new digital skills to use that technology. Workers without basic digital skills will need access to training to ensure they have the skills to find a good, secure job.



Source: Technology Impacts on the Australian Workforce, Faethm March 2020

## DIGITAL SKILLS ARE THE NEW CORE SKILLS FOR WORK

### THERE ARE THREE DOMAINS OF DIGITAL SKILLS

#### Digital Foundations

The basic understanding of digital tools and how to use them

#### Digital Application

The ability to apply and adapt digital tools and software in work practices

#### Tech Jobs

Advanced understanding and use of digital approaches and tools

Although these skills apply differently, depending upon the industry and the work context, several things are clear.

Digital foundations are basic skills needed to engage productively online – at work and in society. The International Labour Organisation describes this as the ability to use basic software and hardware and to operate safely in an online environment.

Digital applications will soon become the new benchmark for effective workers. Many of the new skills for success in work relate to data analytics, software design, testing and application and the integration of tools into work practices. This includes occupations previously regarded as craft or operator roles.

Tech jobs require an advanced understanding of digital tools and practice as the starting point, leading up to specialist and research roles critical to keeping Victoria at the technology frontier.

Digital skills are not limited to the sterile application of technology. Art, aesthetics and understanding human and group behaviours bring digital approaches to life for users, consumers and society more broadly.

### BRINGING DIGITAL SKILLS TO VICTORIA

The Victorian Government's Digital Strategy 2021-2026 identifies skills as central to growing digital capabilities and ensuring fair access to opportunities.

#### THIS STEP UP IN DIGITAL SKILLS REQUIRES RESPONSES ACROSS THE VICTORIAN ECONOMY.

- **Businesses:** need their workers to be able to access training for the digital uplift
- **Workers:** need assurance they can access training to build their core digital skills
- **Students:** need to know their course will deliver the core digital skills for the career they are pursuing
- **All Victorians:** need to know that those who lack foundation digital skills and risk joblessness have access to targeted support, through education and training, to build these skills.

### THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING MODEL

Building digital capability starts in school and is a central tenet of the Victorian curriculum. Foundations such as systems thinking and logic, mathematics and science are taught at school and underpin success in digital skills.

Deep digital skills are built progressively through coherent curriculum and well-structured learning through qualification streams.

Victoria's vocational education and training sector needs new approaches to curriculum and qualifications design that develop digital capabilities as the learning outcome. This reflects the fact that digital capabilities apply across industries and occupations.

Currently, higher education provides most entry preparations for digital professionals. The growth and speed of digital transformation means this path alone is insufficient; VET entry level qualifications for the tech industry need to be lifted.

Industry feedback indicates that the skills required for many new roles are a blend of higher education and applied vocational learning, with capacity to learn on the job if the foundation knowledge is in place.

The VSA will work with the education and training system, and the tech industry, to build the steps for success in digital transformation – to build the tech industry itself and develop digital workers to support businesses to move to new levels of productivity.

## Early Childhood: Best Start, Best Life

The Victorian Government has an ongoing commitment to strengthening early childhood education. This work commenced with the release of the Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan, ready for kinder, ready for school, and ready for life; and the delivery of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten across the state.

In June 2022, the Victorian Government announced it will expand the Best Start, Best Life reform with three major new initiatives:

- Making kinder free for three- and four-year-olds in participating services across the state
- transitioning Four-Year-old Kindergarten to 'Pre-Prep', a universal, 30-hour a week program of play-based learning
- Establishing 50 government-owned and affordable childcare centres.

### **A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE**

A nation leading early childhood education program requires a nation leading workforce, which is why more than 3,000 scholarships in early childhood education have been awarded since 2018. In 2020, the Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care were both added to Free TAFE, attracting over 6,500 commencements in both courses since then.

There have also been more than 100 incentives awarded over the past two years to attract early childhood teachers to where they are needed most, with incentives of \$9,000 to \$50,000 available for eligible, qualified early childhood teachers who secure roles at services in hard-to-staff locations.

There will be a significant requirement for additional childhood teachers and educators over the next decade, and the Victorian Government has already invested over \$200 million to attract and retain teachers and educators to help them deliver high-quality kindergarten programs.





## FINDING YOUR PASSION: FREE EDUCATION FOR FUTURE EDUCATORS

Like so many school leavers, Ethan Drummond found it nearly impossible to decide the career he should pursue. Guided by the principle that the best career choices occur where practical considerations intersect with personal interests, Ethan began by envisaging a job that worked to his strengths.

It was while scrolling through his Facebook feed one day that an answer presented itself to Ethan.

“I saw an advertisement for a Free TAFE course... I took a look and found that early childhood education courses were among the list of courses offered,” Ethan says.

Free TAFE for priority courses covers tuition fees for students who are eligible for government-subsidised training.

In short time, Ethan completed his application and was accepted into the Diploma of Early Education and Care at Gordon TAFE in Geelong.

“Working in a long day care with children is a lot different to studying about it, and I found the work really rewarding” Ethan says.

Ethan is also keen to dispel lingering myths about educating pre-school children, particularly among men.

“I think a lot of guys don’t really know what early childhood education is about,” Ethan says. “There’s plenty of people who think it’s just looking after kids. But it’s a lot more than that.”






*Ethan Drummond, Diploma of Early Education and Care at Gordon TAFE, Geelong*

## Towards 2025: The future of work









The Skills Plan segments demand into 13 industry clusters that, between them, are forecast to need around 373,000 more workers over the next three years.

While most industries will need many more workers, there are also some occupations that are critical for the functioning of industries and regions that require smaller numbers of workers.

Examples include saw technicians, metal casters, specialist engineers, software architects and harbour pilots. The value of these occupations from an industry perspective is high. But the small numbers of workers in these occupations makes it challenging for training to be delivered. The VSA is working across the economy on potential solutions.

SECTOR	CURRENT WORKERS (2022)	NEW WORKERS NEEDED (Next 3 years)	OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND
 HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	515,050	65,000	Aged and Disabled Carers; Registered Nurses; Welfare Support Workers; Physiotherapists; Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers; Health and Welfare Services Managers; Social Workers; Generalist Medical Practitioners; Child Carers; Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers; Medical Technicians
 PROFESSIONAL, FINANCIAL AND INFORMATION SERVICES	628,700	64,000	Software and Applications Programmers; Solicitors; Management and Organisation Analysts; Accountants; Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists; Graphic and Web Designers, and Illustrators; ICT Managers; Financial Investment Advisers and Managers; ICT Support Technicians; Financial Brokers
 EDUCATION AND TRAINING	308,900	41,000	Education Aides; Primary School Teachers; Secondary School Teachers; University Lecturers and Tutors; Early Childhood (pre-primary school) Teachers; Private Tutors and Teachers; Special Education Teachers; Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists; Vocational Education Teachers
 SERVICE SECTOR	811,150	90,000	Waiters; Sales Assistants (General); Café and Restaurant Managers; Kitchenhands; Chefs; Fast Food Cooks; Bar Attendants and Baristas; Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers; Delivery Drivers; Shelf Fillers
 CONSTRUCTION	305,700	34,000	Electricians; Construction Managers; Plumbers; Architectural, Building and Surveying Technicians; Building and Plumbing Labourers; Civil Engineering Professionals; Carpenters and Joiners; Insulation and Home Improvement Installers; Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers; Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics; Concreters



SECTOR	CURRENT WORKERS (2022)	NEW WORKERS NEEDED (Next 3 years)	OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND
 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SAFETY	206,600	15,000	Police; Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists; Other Information and Organisation Professionals; Inspectors and Regulatory Officers; General Clerks; Welfare Support Workers; Aged and Disabled Carers; Software and Applications Programmers; Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers; Management and Organisation Analysts
 TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS	183,350	26,000	Automobile Drivers; Truck Drivers; Bus and Coach Drivers; Delivery Drivers; Storepersons; Air Transport Professionals; General Clerks; Mail Sorters; Forklift Drivers; Supply and Distribution Managers
 ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES	105,200	10,000	Human Resource Professionals; Gardeners; Commercial Cleaners; Human Resource Managers; General Clerks; Aged and Disabled Carers; Domestic Cleaners; Welfare Support Workers; Garden and Nursery Labourers; Software and Application Programmers;
 RENTAL, HIRING AND REAL ESTATE SERVICES	52,250	6,000	Real Estate Sales Agents; General Clerks; Land Economists and Valuers; Other Sales Assistants and Salespersons; Advertising and Sales Managers; Office Managers; Contract, Program and Project Administrators; Finance Managers; Financial Investment Advisers and Managers
 MANUFACTURING	260,300	16,000	Production Managers; Food and Drink Factory Workers; Meat, Poultry and Seafood Process Workers; Manufacturers; Software and Applications Programmers; Meat Boners and Slicers, and Slaughterers; Graphic and Web Designers, and Illustrators; Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists; Management and Organisation Analysts; Other Specialist Managers
 MINING	15,850	<1,000	Drillers, Miners and Shot Firers; Other Building and Engineering Technicians; Mining Engineers; Production Managers; Management and Organisation Analysts; Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists; Human Resource Managers; Occupational and Environmental Health Professionals; Other Specialist Managers; Software and Applications Programmers
 UTILITIES	48,750	4,000	Other Specialist Managers; Electrical Engineers; Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists; Management and Organisation Analysts; Other Information and Organisation Professionals; Electricians; Contract, Program and Project Administrators; Human Resource Managers; General Clerks; ICT Managers
 AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	68,000	3,000	Crop Farmers; Agricultural, Forestry and Horticultural Plant Operators; Meat, Poultry and Seafood Process Workers; Food and Drink Factory Workers; Production Managers; Animal Attendants and Trainers; Other Specialist Managers

Source:  
 Current workers: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, February 2022; New worker demand: represents employment growth + workers needed to replace retirements, (figures rounded), National Skills Commission employment projections, Nous and VSA analysis, (2022); Occupations in demand: National Skills Commission employment projections, Nous and VSA analysis, (2022). Several occupations are shared across a number of sectors.

## OUR PLAN FOR ACTION

### Achieving more together: Collective impact and collaboration

If Victoria is to thrive in a rapidly changing world, it needs to draw on the strengths of everyone who contributes to the training and skills sector.

Prior to the VSA, there was no systemic way to bring together industry, providers and other stakeholders with a shared commitment to meeting skills needs.

Around half of all new jobs needed by 2025 will be filled by learners coming through higher education and, potentially, higher-level vocational education.

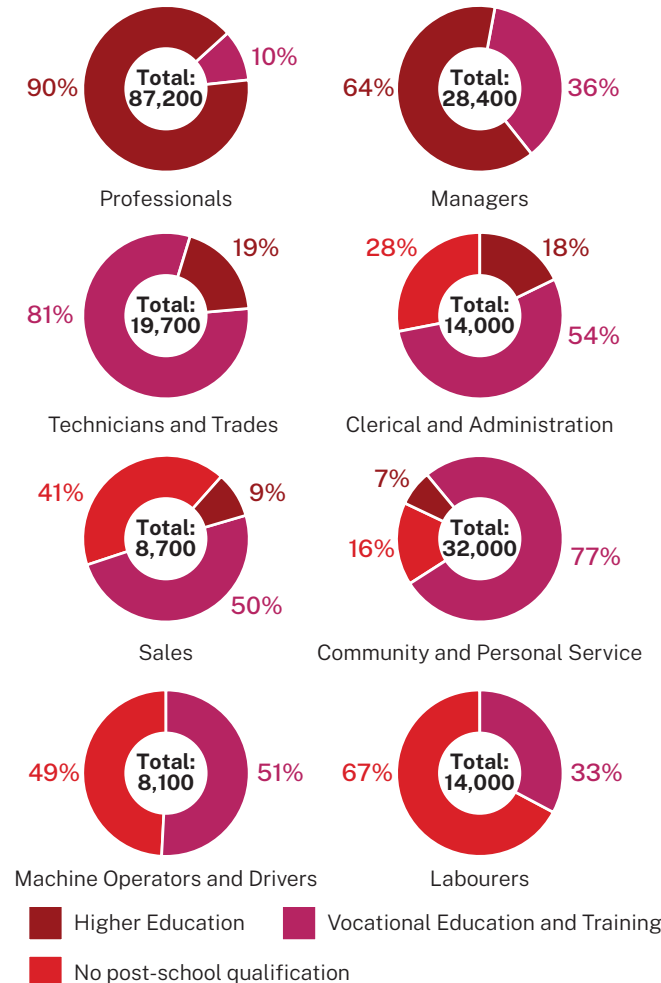
So collaboration across the state's education community is vital to economic and social success.

A collective approach—where the sector buys into the behaviour change required—will be more effective than individual attempts at change.

The skills sector needs to come together across schools, Learn Locals, TAFE and training providers and universities to map career pathways, provide adaptable skills development opportunities and clear, flexible entry points for all learners.

Working together, connecting locally, delivering new approaches and acting with integrity is the key to success in building a world-class approach to skilling.

Share of forecast employment growth by education attainment, Victoria 2022 to 2025



Employment growth is net new jobs only (and excludes replacing retirements or existing workers that move jobs).

“Supporting Victoria’s priorities for its industry and its people does not come from a single action. Achieving quality and relevance of training in such a dynamic environment will be delivered when all parties with a stake in the outcome are engaged in developing solutions.”

*Craig Robertson, Victorian Skills Authority  
Chief Executive Officer*

Holmesglen Institute's Victorian Tunnelling Centre offers specialist training to workers in the construction and operation of tunnels.

Victoria's *Big Build* is delivering the rail and road projects that will keep Victorians moving for decades to come. Tunnels play an important part in that infrastructure, so ensuring a workforce with relevant skills is vital.





## Action 1: Start the VET journey at school



Victoria's standing as the Education State, and the quality of its talent pool will be strengthened through reforms to improve access to, and the quality of, vocational and applied learning pathways in senior secondary schooling.

The *Firth Review into vocational and applied learning pathways in senior secondary schooling* (November 2020) recommended generational reforms, including the integration of academic, vocational and applied learning pathways in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), universal access to a core offering of VET pathways for secondary students, and improved support for School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

Together these reforms will ensure that all students have access to pathways that meet their strengths and interests, gain skills that align to their aspirations and get the jobs they want in Victoria's growing economy. Importantly, over the next 30 years, school leavers will be the agents of action on climate change. Applied learning in senior secondary education will help prepare Victorians for these challenges and opportunities.

Starting from 2023, the Skills Plan will inform periodic updates to the core offering of priority VET pathways and certificates, to ensure that VET for secondary students remains aligned to growth areas and local industry needs. The VSA's research and insights will also support career guidance in schools, ensuring that students and their families are aware of high-skill and emerging employment opportunities.

The skills and experiences acquired at school should set students up for success in vocational and higher education and the workplace. The VSA and government will work together to identify and minimise any barriers students may face in building on their school achievements.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Work with the secondary school system through the Department of Education and Training (DET) and linking with TAFEs to provide contemporary and relevant advice about occupations in demand, promoting vocational education and training as a pathway for senior secondary school students to secure successful careers

Work with industry representatives to articulate opportunities available for good jobs and long-term careers, especially as an industry digitises or adapts to climate change

Develop a tailored Skills for the Future forecast to inform the ongoing implementation of the senior secondary pathways reforms

## INSIGHTS TO GUIDE CAREER EXPLORATION AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

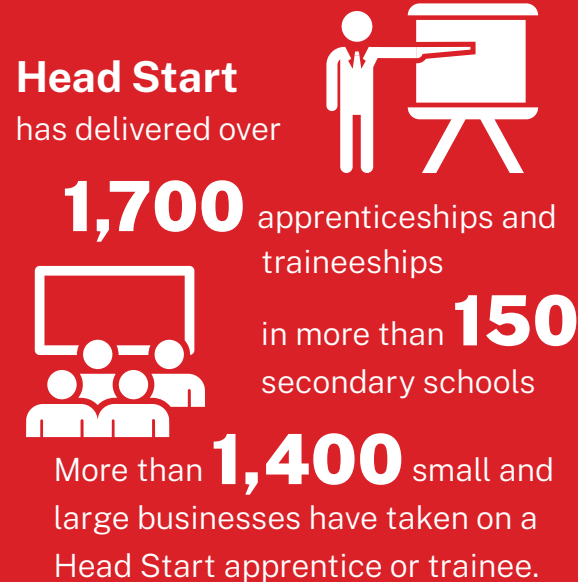
Strengthened approaches to vocational education for senior secondary students offers a new foundation for talent development for Victoria.

Success in school creates the base for people to participate and engage in the further education and training that helps prepare for work and entrepreneurship.

Ongoing analysis by the VSA will identify the trends in Victoria's industry and services base and the core skills students need. The research and insights generated by the VSA will inform career exploration and decision making undertaken by students in schools.

The Head Start program gives senior secondary students more opportunities to build the skills they need for in-demand jobs of the future, giving them the chance to develop their skills with on-the-job training while completing their senior secondary education.

Head Start students spend more time doing important, paid, on-the-job training while completing their schooling.



Van Sui Thawng and his family fled war-torn Myanmar and spent time in a Malaysian refugee camp before arriving in Melbourne. He heard about the Head Start program at school and went on to complete VCE while training for an electrical trade.



## Action 2: Enable learners and workers to make informed skilling and career choices



Victorians have a wide range of courses available. Some are preparatory, others vocational or higher learning, as well as those offered through the network of Learn Locals. The market of digital learning services, often labelled as micro-credentials and resulting in digital badges, is also expanding.

Selecting the courses that best build pathways to work and a career, or that improve performance and advancement in work can be challenging. Employers also struggle to identify the relevance of courses, whether in employing someone or organising courses for skills development of their workers.

In a world that seems to have limitless options, learners and employers need trusted advice.

The state-wide network of over 30 Skills and Jobs Centres and the Victorian Skills Gateway can help deliver this advice.

Skills and Jobs Centres provide services for:

- prospective learners
- apprentices and trainees
- unemployed or retrenched workers
- women returning to work
- recent migrants or refugees
- anyone seeking a career change
- employers.

Centre staff have strong local connections with employers and communities.

They understand the learning and skilling that can lead to work and can help clients understand the implications of their learning choices. This is particularly important for new members of a community who may not be familiar with work options and the learning that helps improve their success.

Skills and Jobs Centres can play a greater role in their communities by expanding their engagement with employers and deepening their work with adult community education providers to help more vulnerable Victorians successfully transition into training and employment.

The Victorian Skills Gateway provides guidance on the link between training and careers, highlights occupations in demand and shows local learning pathways for prospective students. It provides employers with advice, linking to TAFE and other education and training providers.

Education and training sectors are adapting delivery to transferable skills, skills sets and top-up training to complement core qualifications. The digital market continues its expansion. The Gateway can be enhanced to guide people in their learning journey and indicate the skills that are needed for jobs of the future.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Work with Skills and Jobs Centres staff and provide tools that can help them provide the information and advice local learners and employers need

Provide all-age advice through the Victorian Skills Gateway on local occupations in demand, now and in the mid-term, and the learning pathways to those jobs

Leverage existing information and insights to develop a tool which can show the core and transferable skills that will be in demand for future jobs, for use through Skills and Jobs Centres and the Skills Gateway

# SKILLS AND JOBS CENTRES



## SKILLS AND JOBS CENTRES

Skills and Jobs Centres provide expert advice on training and employment opportunities. They engage with local industries to ensure they can meet the needs of their local communities. They also work with local councils, State and Commonwealth government departments to support key projects including:

- Metro Tunnel project
- Victoria's *Big Build* projects such as the Footscray Hospital, the North East Link and the Warrnambool Learning and Library Hub
- Free TAFE for priority courses initiative
- JobTrainer
- Reconnect
- Jobs Victoria

Skills and Jobs Centres also have strong relationships with local and state-wide organisations and initiatives.

**Career advice:** Sue Glover welcomes jobseekers at The Gordon Skills and Jobs Centre.

## Action 3: Expand opportunities and approaches for students to put theory into practice during their course



Work-integrated learning is increasingly seen as an approach that brings teaching and learning to life. Work placements are a more prominent feature of many vocational and higher education qualifications. Some placements are optional to enhance the learning; many are structured, skill-based experiences mandated within qualifications.

At their core, they enable students to put theory into practice, refine skills in a work environment and build an understanding of an industry, trade or profession and its culture.

Employers benefit from work placements. Many see them as a recruitment strategy where they can assess the talent and suitability of the student to their workplace. Students also bring the latest thinking and practices. A strong motivator for many in offering placements is to contribute to the health and growth of their industry.

The pandemic made securing work placements difficult, with businesses being closed or operating under restricted access to their premises. This created a workforce supply issue. It is particularly being felt in the care economy, which has a strong tradition of clinical placements, yet it had to put in place very strict access controls to manage infections, especially for placement students.

These circumstances exposed the significant costs to employers, students and providers in arranging placements.

Ongoing concerted effort is required to deal with the backlog of placements, otherwise there is a risk that students will withdraw and be lost to the industry. The operation of placements—between providers, employers and students—is also worth examining.

In some instances the duration of placements relative to the occupation seem excessive with the cost borne by the student. In some instances, there is risk that providers will no longer deliver the training, given the coordination costs they carry, plus the responsibility to comply with the qualification.

The pandemic has given rise to new thinking about how practical experience can be gained and certified. Virtual experience can be impactful and a broader range of work situations, especially those that otherwise are impractical to experience in a workplace, can be simulated and tested—like pilot training simulators.

These new approaches can be implemented to complement placements without compromising quality. More work needs to be done to ensure the balance is right:

- That the period of time dedicated to work placements is set to maximise the benefits and not be unnecessarily onerous.
- That different approaches shown to be valuable are appropriately supported and utilised.

The work is urgent, as many businesses are operating under Industry 4.0 and implementing simulated systems for operations and maintenance. They expect graduates to be proficient in their use.

While the balance between real and simulated environments might shift, work placements will continue to be a feature of the TAFE and training system. Industry has a responsibility to redouble its commitment to providing these opportunities to learners—it's important for the learners and good for business.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Facilitate a series of industry roundtables with the aim of better understanding and reducing the barriers to work placements to assist industry to make better use of this training and recruitment pathway

Examine which courses and occupations are experiencing placement shortfalls that are contributing to workforce supply issues

Review the role of work placements and quality simulations in vocational qualifications and advocate for alternative approaches, where required





## PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Tanya McDonald was 38, a survivor of family violence and the single mother of four young children when she decided to enrol in a Diploma of Community Services at South West TAFE – a course that included a very substantial work placement requirement. It was a decision that changed her life.

“It has taught me to be confident in myself and capable of achieving anything I can put my mind to, no matter how challenging it may be,” Tanya said.

At the same time, Tanya completed a Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy and worked as a paralegal at a law firm, supporting vulnerable women with legal issues arising from family violence.

Tanya is a strong advocate for the Indigenous community. She wants to make a positive impact on their health needs and encourage young Indigenous people to further their education.

After completing her initial studies at TAFE, Tanya returned to complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. She is now moving to Alice Springs to teach Community Services at Charles Darwin University.

“Studying at TAFE has opened so many doors and given me so many opportunities – more than I could’ve ever imagined,” Tanya said.

“I’m so looking forward to the many experiences life has to offer to gain a better future for myself and my family.”

*Training the trainers:* Tanya McDonald wants to give back to the TAFE that changed her life.

## Action 4: Build foundation skills to enhance workforce participation



Foundational skills in language, literacy and numeracy underpin participation in education and employment.

Investment in increasing the literacy skills of adults has a direct and positive impact on labour productivity and gross domestic product per capita. The greatest impact can be gained by investing in improving the skills at the lower levels. Even small gains in adult literacy can have long lasting impacts.

While teaching foundation skills is the primary domain of schools, gaining these skills may need to occur later in life – for example, when English is not a first language or there is disability, or a disrupted education.

Alongside this, social and economic transformations are changing the skills needed for work and life. Basic digital skills are now essential.

Victoria's Adult Community Education sector has a proud history of supporting learners – through a network of more than 260 Learn Locals – to acquire the adult literacy, digital literacy, numeracy and English language skills they need for full participation in the community and to enter further study or get a job.

These skills are more important than ever as industries and jobs undergo structural changes in response to the pandemic. These changes may further challenge educationally disadvantaged Victorians seeking to enter the workforce or those in existing jobs that are changing.

Learn Locals are located across Victoria and many work closely with local employers to link learners with work opportunities. Job readiness support delivered through programs like Jobs Victoria also plays a key role.

Access to job-specific technical training, or general introductory work skills, that prepare people for job opportunities can lift confidence and put them on a path to employment or a better job.

A broad range of services are needed to support people to participate in education and employment.

Building and sustaining effective collaboration and stronger connections between the education and training sector and the wider community support services sectors is critical.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Partner with DET, ACFE and other agencies across government, including Jobs Victoria, to develop and make available programs and courses designed specifically to support people to move into work – across foundation digital, introductory work and essential industry skills, building on existing good practice

Implement a comprehensive pre-accredited training framework for foundation skills that meets learner need

Continue development of place-based relationships between the Learn Local sector, local communities and industries to understand and support current core skill shortages and future industry workforce needs

Develop and promote partnerships between the Learn Local sector and industries to support core skill training within industry settings to increase job security and career options



## LEARN LOCAL GIVES VOICE TO A NEW FUTURE

Just four years ago, Omer Ntunzwenimana arrived in Australia as a refugee from Burundi. He had spent the three years before that in a refugee camp in Kenya.

When he settled in Mildura, Omer had no family in Australia, spoke little English and had a severe leg injury that meant he was unable to walk.

In 2020, Omer first visited the Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council's Learn Local Conversation and Reading Café.

The weekly four-hour classes give participants the chance to practice their English talking to volunteers in 10-minute rotations.

Omer, now in his early 30s, surprised his trainers, quickly developing to a confident speaker and rapidly improving reader. "The class was helpful for me in having confidence to speak English and build my vocabulary," he says.

This year, Omer started at La Trobe University, studying a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Sociology but he still attends the weekly Conversation and Reading Café. "Even if I was doing my Masters, I would still come to Conversation Class. It is too important to miss."

Now, after surgery and rehabilitation, Omer has begun to walk again – and is striving to achieve his dream of working for the United Nations and being able to help his countrymen in Burundi.

**Finding a voice:** Learn Local conversation cafe gave Omer Ntunzwenimana the confidence to speak English.



## Action 5: Bridge the gender gap



Diversity in workforces means women are offered more opportunities for success in work and careers.

Since 2019, government funding for women in VET courses has outpaced funding for men – bucking a long-term gender bias towards men in VET.

Strong progress has also been made in attracting women into vocational education and training in areas of occupational demand, particularly through Free TAFE.

However, employment outcomes after training do not reflect these improvements in funding and participation.

Meeting workforce demand and addressing inequality will require more effort to attract women into the labour force and increase demand for female workers, particularly in industries and occupations where women are under-represented. It will also require action to support more males to move into traditionally female dominated occupations such as aged care and child care.

The skills system can support and encourage young women to prepare for jobs traditionally seen to be for men, and vice versa, and there is a significant role for the education and training sector, unions and governments to educate employers about the benefits of diverse and gender balanced workplaces.

For example, the most gendered industries – Healthcare and Community Services (women-dominated) and Construction (men-dominated) – have women’s workforce representation rates of 75 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. These differences are borne out in student choices in training.

The Government has formed partnerships with industry on several projects to attract and retain women into traditionally men-dominated trades.

Addressing inequality and lifting women’s participation goes beyond the education and training sector or employers. It includes eliminating violence against women and ensuring affordable and accessible childcare, transport and housing. These and other gender equality issues are being addressed through the Government’s response to the Inquiry into Economic Equity for Victorian Women (the Skills Plan contributes to the Government’s response), *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, and the efforts of individuals and groups.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Conduct an annual gender impact assessment of the implementation of the Skills Plan to inform subsequent skills plans and guide the sector

Monitor the education and employment outcomes of women who enrol in training

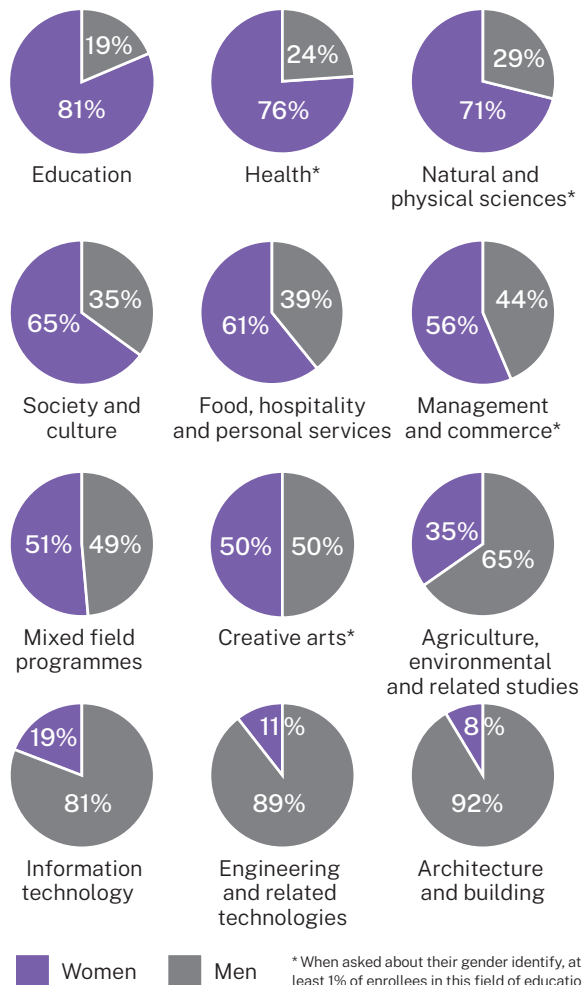
In partnership with providers, engage women from diverse backgrounds and report on perspectives and challenges associated with participation in education and training

Partner with other agencies to address localised barriers to both female and male participation in education and training and the labour force

Expand and further develop work with employers, their representatives and unions to raise awareness and collaborate on initiatives that increase both demand for female workers and the representation of women in non-traditional occupations, industries and management and leadership positions, and for males across the care economy occupations in significant demand



## Victorian VET program enrolments by field of education and gender in 2020



**Plumbing a new trade:** Breanna Szitarity switched from beauty therapy.

## CHANGING COURSE: FROM BEAUTY THERAPY TO PLUMBING

Working as a qualified beauty therapist was not giving Breanna Szitarity the stimulation she craved. Needing a new challenge, the then-21-year-old decided to take an entirely new career path as a plumber.

Breanna signed up for a Certificate III in Plumbing through the Master Plumbers' Association–Plumbing Apprenticeships Victoria—and has never looked back.

Breanna immersed herself in learning at Box Hill Institute and was rewarded by finishing her apprenticeship six months early.

Breanna said the apprenticeship taught her resilience and how to think outside the box to solve problems. "During my apprenticeship, the level of responsibility rose. I learnt resilience and problem-solving skills," she said.

Today, Breanna runs her own business. "I'm happy to have found plumbing and I'm a big advocate to encourage women into trades," she said.

## Action 6: Build skills to support Victoria's clean economy intentions



Victoria's workforce needs new skills and capabilities to enable the state to achieve its targets of halving emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. Most aspects of economic activity will be transformed in response to the targets and as global markets demand lower emissions throughout production supply chains.

The skills system needs to adapt so it can deliver the number of skilled workers when they are needed. For many existing workers, this will mean building on their current trade qualifications, particularly electro-technology qualifications. 'Clean economy' skills – for renewable energy, the circular economy and climate adaptation – will need to be built into qualifications for initial vocational education so new entrants to sectors are well placed to support adaptation and new opportunities that will arise from clean economy responses.

Clean economy aspirations are expected to flow through most parts of the economy and industry. In addition to the rapid move to renewable energy sources, reductions in carbon emissions result from adaptations in production processes and a new focus on the circular economy.

The Government has established the Clean Economy Workforce Skills and Jobs Taskforce to identify the skills and workforce required to support the major clean economy pivot across industry and society over the next 30 years.

The Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy, due for release in the next six months, will outline priorities for schooling, TAFE and training and higher education providers to empower businesses, workers and households to take up the de-carbonisation challenge.

Investors and businesses told the VSA they are already factoring in the risks of inaction in adaptation and abatement and that there is an immediate need for new skills.

Modelling shows the workforce impact of clean energy projects points to new skills being required across Victoria, particularly in regional areas as new forms of energy generation, transmission and distribution are put in place.

As with most change and innovation across industries, leadership will be key.

Employees in new and changing industries will need to build appropriate contemporary skills. New services to facilitate change across supply chains and within companies will be critical and have unique education and skilling needs.

**Employees in industries transitioning away from heavy emissions need support and reskilling as they take up the new roles or move to other industries with jobs in demand.**

The extent of this change needs a structured approach to workforce development, which will be outlined as part of the strategy.

The government's investment in skills directed to these outcomes will become a priority for future skills plans.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Further develop Victoria-wide project-based workforce planning tools to provide insights to education and training sectors to inform skills delivery planning

Embed Clean Economy Workforce Priorities identified in the strategy into future skills plans

Develop innovative approaches in conjunction with the Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery, to scope and deliver programs for new clean economy skills



## PARTNERING FOR THE WINDS OF CHANGE

New skills and capabilities will be required in the workforce to achieve Victoria's targets of halving emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

Communities need to re-gear for a lower carbon future. Households need to reduce waste and recycle.

Australia's first wind turbine training tower will help Federation University train skilled workers for Victoria's fast-growing clean energy sector.

The 23-metre tower is the first stage of the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre (APRETC) – a partnership between Federation University and the renewable energy industry.

It is a \$1.8 million project funded by Vestas, ACCIONA, GPG and Tilt Renewables to allow the companies to train workers at heights in a simulated wind turbine in Ballarat.

The project was made possible by the first Victorian Renewable Energy Target Auction, which mandated strong local content and training requirements from projects to produce the skilled workforce that the industry needs, as it rolls out and maintains renewable energy projects across Victoria.

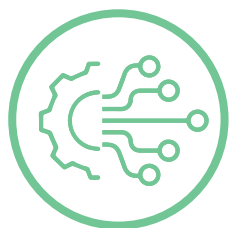
Federation University Pro Vice-Chancellor – Vocational Education and Training, Liam Sloan, says the facility will provide training to workers wanting to get involved in the construction and maintenance of wind turbines.

“Industry spoke and we listened – with this new tower, some of the industry's biggest renewable energy companies can now train wind turbine technicians in Ballarat instead of using fly-in, fly-out workers.”

Federation University will start delivering Global Wind Organisation Standard Basic Safety Training and Basic Refresher Training in the second half of 2022.



## Action 7: Create innovative solutions to support future skills development



The industries and jobs of today will not necessarily be the same tomorrow, as innovation and disruption lead to new products, services and changes to work and lifestyles. New occupations are emerging and, in many existing occupations, the skills required for success are changing.

The Macklin Review recommended establishing Skills Labs, a new methodology to bring together leading universities, TAFEs and other education and training providers, industry, unions and communities to co-design new approaches to skills development, informed by leading industry practices and technologies and aligned with industry policy.

This will empower stakeholders to collaborate to design new skills and new approaches to teaching and learning materials, to improve outcomes and account for new expectations of workers.

This could include:

- A range of new qualifications that bring together relevant study across the TAFE and training and university sectors, industry knowledge, vendor training and international research, auspiced by the VSA with pathways suitable for both existing workers and new entrants

- New approaches to training delivery which see learners undertaking their studies across TAFE and training providers and universities, in industry and with major equipment suppliers using advanced digital and real-world approaches
- New industry approaches to skills development through new work-based learning approaches.

Innovative approaches will be driven by a shared commitment to a common good and co-design principles; they will use detailed data and knowledge sharing, discussion and participation to propose and test potential solutions. Skills Labs are one approach; there are a range of other collaborative approaches which will be considered to support future skills development.

### THE DIGITAL CHALLENGE

The tech sector contributed \$167 billion to the Australian economy in 2020-21 and will continue to grow as more digital businesses start and others adopt digital tools to improve productivity.

COVID-19 has accelerated digitisation trends, resulting in high demand for digitally skilled workers. An estimated 87 per cent of Australian workers now require digital skills for their role.

The skilling challenge is threefold: digital foundations - skills which enable all workers to engage successfully with digital tools; digital applications - advanced skills in applying digital techniques in the process of work; and tech jobs - skills for the specialist occupations in the ICT industry itself. In the main these skills can be acquired in one setting but applied to many more - that is they are transferable. How they are organised for delivery as key future skills is an important area of investigation.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Partner with the TAFE Network to co-lead innovative approaches to identify new skills and new models for skills development and delivery

Lead work to identify the digital skills needed across occupations - horizontal digital skills

As a priority commence work on innovative approaches to step up to Victoria's digital skills challenges





Trainer Rebecca Smith says digital literacy is a critical part of skills and training.

## DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS: A FOUNDATION FOR A GREAT JOB AND LIFE

After 10 years in the corporate and banking sector, and time running her own yoga teaching business, Rebecca Smith moved into coordinating vocational training at the CAE.

This in turn led to developing pre-accredited courses for Kensington Neighbourhood House (KNH), where she has worked since 2014.

Rebecca introduced classes in digital literacy and English as an Additional Language that aligned course content with participants' employment aspirations.

This included KNH's first social media course and an English course centred on communication skills required for learners who were preparing to study a Certificate III in Childcare.

"We are teaching the sort of digital literacy that is needed to run your life. It's foundational digital literacy," she said.

"This year we have gone right back to basics because we found that during the pandemic we have had people with zero digital literacy and they need to be able to apply for jobs online, and upload photographs of documents to support their application."

Rebecca also values industry and community engagement. Over the years, she has brokered partnerships with Gowrie Victoria, Linfox, and Service Stars Community Jobs Alliance to provide pre-accredited training linked directly to employment in different sectors.



## Action 8: Align qualifications to new needs



Skilling is more successful and longer lasting if students are prepared for upskilling and ongoing learning through their careers, including during times of change.

Most current VET qualifications are based on an established occupation. However, industry representatives and training providers told the VSA that this hampers their ability to respond to emerging and local skills needs.

VET qualifications need to be enhanced in a way to ensure deep technical skills and knowledge can be applied across multiple occupations.

For example, many occupations share the same need for intermediate digital skills such as coding, data security, privacy protection, data governance and data presentation. These skills need to be structured for teaching in a way that they are transferable and easily applied across occupations.

New approaches to VET qualifications should consider bold curriculum reform which would:

- Encourage the development of discipline-specific knowledge with application beyond a single occupation
- Build skills for adapting and applying technical knowledge and skills in different contexts
- Reduce the lead time required to update qualifications for emerging knowledge and skills requirements
- Reduce onerous prescription and unnecessary complexity
- Facilitate the delivery of programs tailored for regional and local needs.

The VSA will work with Victorian providers and industry to explore curriculum models that would support the development of transferable, industry-relevant knowledge and skills.

Jobs and Skills Australia, the new body to be established by the new Federal Government, provides a revitalised national platform for cooperation between industry, unions and governments to bring a new approach to skilling. The VSA will work closely with Jobs and Skills Australia, and with similar entities in other States and Territories, to explore new approaches.

There is a unique opportunity through a new compact with industry and unions, and new approaches to qualifications and skilling, that can lift the skills of workers and support productivity improvement that can underpin wages growth. Flexibility is required in any new national arrangements, so Victoria has the capability to meet the unique needs of Victorian industries.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Work through national skills bodies, including the proposed Jobs and Skills Australia, for vocational education and training qualification reform directed to supporting future skills

In priority skills needs areas where national processes are a drag on a timely response, the VSA will use the local accreditation authority for the quick production of accredited micro-credentials and full qualifications

In conjunction with the Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery, training providers and industry explore new curriculum models and modes of delivery that support quality learning and faster responses by the training sector including for critical niche occupations



## SKILLS, THE ENGINE ROOM FOR FUTURE JOBS

Josh Reynolds formed a love of engines tinkering alongside his grandfather on the old 1940 motors of yesterday.

Today, the apprentice fitter and turner uses the skills he learns at South West TAFE to help build the energy systems of tomorrow, including components for wind farms, with his employer Keppel Prince.

Josh is one of many apprentices to have honed their skills at South West TAFE as part of its 30-year partnership with Keppel Prince, Portland.

South West TAFE Executive Manager of Education John Flett said the two organisations collaborate to develop skills training to reflect changing needs.

“We developed and delivered a Certificate III in Surface Coating and Protection, which was a qualification identified as part of the Victorian Skills Commission’s 2018 Regional Skills Profile,” he said.

“We have also run a re-skilling program for their employees and are working on an industrial welders program based on Certificate III in engineering to train up to 70 new welders by 2023.”

Josh Reynolds takes what he learns through his apprenticeship and mentors other students.

“I’m pretty lucky where I am, as a fitter and turner in our workshop we really do a touch of everything. I enjoy that every day you walk in you’re doing something different.”

*Skills collaboration:* Josh Reynolds works at Keppel Prince.



## Action 9: Build the VET Workforce



Skills shortages are being experienced by the vocational education and training workforce and this is having the effect of limiting training delivery to varying degrees across the State.

To be a VET teacher two conditions must be met: the individual must hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and have current industry expertise in the field in which they are teaching. Both are necessary to be able to deliver accredited vocational training in TAFEs, private and industry-based training organisations as well as secondary schools with vocational programs and each are creating issues now.

Needing to gain a training and assessment qualification is seen by industry as a barrier for experienced and passionate individuals to support VET delivery. Also, there are concerns with the qualification itself and a widely held view that it does not adequately prepare people to deliver teaching excellence.

These qualification-linked issues are exacerbated by general skills shortages which mean fewer people are moving from industry roles into teaching roles and people who have moved into teaching are increasingly returning to their former occupations where the pay and conditions are often more favourable.

For the existing workforce, current VET teachers and assessors are in demand and turn over in this largely casual and ageing workforce is high.

Workforce growth and renewal is required.

Promotional campaigns and inclusion of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment on the Free TAFE list are helpful but not sufficient.

A workforce strategy is needed for the VET sector, including a review of practices to attract, retain and make best use of industry expertise. Providers need guaranteed access to an education workforce and VET trainers and assessors need quality professional development.

Developing the next generation of educational professionals and leaders will help deliver a skilled and sustainable education workforce to meet existing and emerging occupational demand.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Develop a Victorian VET workforce strategy to provide a comprehensive approach to deepen and broaden the vocational teacher workforce, building out the role for industry to provide and support the next significant wave of VET teachers

Work to influence national and state regulators to establish a differentiated approach to teacher qualifications to meet contemporary skills needs

Led by the VET Development Centre, partner with the VET teacher workforce to establish a contemporary professional development framework that builds capability and promotes excellence





## TURNING CYBERSECURITY LESSONS INTO A VET CAREER

It was an entry-level Commodore 16 home computer that kick-started Steve Cranage's passion for information technology almost 40 years ago. The 10-year-old was hooked.

After working in a range of jobs as an adult, including in IT at Telstra, Steve decided to return to study in 2018. He enrolled in the Free TAFE Certificate IV in Cybersecurity, then in the GOTAFE Certificate III in Information, Digital Media, and Technology. Then his trainers suggested he do Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

“Even though I had a lot of prior knowledge, I never had a day walking into the classroom where I felt as though I wasn't going to learn something new or exciting,” says Steve, who is a proud descendant of the Yorta Yorta, Bangerang and Wiradjuri peoples.

Now working as a trainer and assessor with GOTAFE, Steve says he loves being part of the VET workforce: “In my own small way, I feel like a modern trailblazer for my community, as I show there are paths we can take to dive into new careers like cybersecurity.”

Steve Cranage went from IT student to teacher at GOTAFE.

## Action 10: Expand reskilling and upskilling opportunities through skill sets



While many workers are benefiting from the rapidly changing Victorian economy and moving into higher paid or more secure jobs, others will need new skills to get the job they want.

Skill sets and micro-credentials developed with industry will play an increasing role in helping employers to get the skills into their workforces to meet urgent needs. They also provide the avenue for workers and job seekers to reskill or upskill for new work opportunities.

They also play a complementary role to full qualifications, helping people to top-up their existing skills in a time-efficient and targeted way that meets immediate workforce needs.

Industry, unions and learners told the VSA:

- Full qualifications remain important for providing a solid grounding in fundamentals of the industry and the suite of skills and knowledge to be an effective worker.
- However, new processes, technologies and ways of working mean that, over time, people's skills can be outdated or no longer needed.

- Skill sets and accredited micro-credentials can support worker mobility and career progression while also ensuring industry can rapidly adapt to innovate and grow.
- These shorter forms of recognised learning can be delivered in a way and form that suits the time available to the learner.

Skill sets and micro-credentials can therefore be used for upskilling and reskilling workers, and in some selected cases entry to an occupation.

Every effort should be made for micro-credentials to be accredited forms of learning and training. This helps employers recognise the learning and that it is backed by the quality assurance processes of government. The learner is also able to use the credit to build on further learning.

At times however, short forms of unaccredited learning needs to be deployed by the Government or by Victorian industries for important initiatives. The VSA can work with sponsors of this learning to feed into formal accreditation, if this is needed. This brings longer term benefits to the industry, can lift a person's commitment to the industry and to ongoing learning.

While frequent episodes of short form learning may be seen as necessary by many, there is the risk that those who are new to learning or find it difficult may not participate and risk falling behind in job opportunities. These people would benefit from structured advice about skill sets and micro-credentials and their relationship to qualifications that help them get a good job.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Work with DET, to support reskilling and upskilling in priority areas through the Funded Skill Set List

Offer support across the Victorian Government on ways to facilitate formal recognition of micro-credentials if required for new areas of learning

Support partnerships between industry and training providers to develop new skill sets through the Workforce Skill Set Fund

Provide advice to learners on the link between skill sets, employment and full qualifications through upfront advice and outreach





## RESKILLING FOR JUSTICE

After starting his career as a carpenter, proud Bangerang man Matthew Atkinson forged a path into justice so he could provide direct support and services to the Aboriginal community.

Working as a Koorie Case Manager, Matthew thought he was well equipped for the job but decided to undertake a Certificate IV in Community Services with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association (VACSAL).

Each Wednesday, Matthew travelled from his home in Shepparton to Melbourne to study at VACSAL, which is a registered training organisation (RTO) under the Learn Local umbrella.

“Being able to study at an Aboriginal organisation that has an Aboriginal curriculum, I found there was a lot that I didn’t know and a lot to learn,” Matthew said. “So I am now putting that knowledge into how I case manage my community. It was the best course I’ve ever done.”

Today Matthew works as Koorie Case Manager at Shepparton Magistrates Court, is Chair of the Shepparton Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, and is passionate about equity and reducing the detrimental impacts of family violence.



## Action 11: Drive for higher skills and progression through education and training



The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the basis for recognition in the community of formal learning across schooling and vocational and higher education and sets out progression in knowledge and skills.

The increasing sophistication in the application of skills and knowledge today and the rate of change in work will also require the ability to learn and adapt on-the-job. This adds weight to the recommendations of the Australian Qualifications Framework Review released in October 2019 which Education and Skills Ministers are looking to implement.

At the same time, the focus on skills as the outcomes of education and training is a growing trend. Many industries and employers are targeting skills as the basis of hiring and enhancing the capability of their workforce.

Big data techniques are being used increasingly to identify the skills being advertised by employers and the National Skills Commission has developed a skills classification tool based on these approaches.

One of the limitations in the development of this skills plan is the lag in identifying new and emerging skills. Using these indicators of skills alongside qualifications can assist in planning for future skills. Importantly, it uncovers those that are becoming critical for success such as analytical and digital skills and important skills for working with others and problem solving and adaptability in work practices.

Harnessing the information on skills identified through big data techniques with the new structures offered through the revised AQF provide an exciting opportunity to design contemporary skills solutions. The VSA can work through a new model to pilot this approach, in the digital economy for example.

An important design feature will be to highlight the significance of applied skills and knowledge as the foundation of vocational learning to successful careers and as a credit toward higher learning. These features will also need to be considered as the basis of the new teaching skills in vocational education and training to support these new learning expectations.

### OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS, WE WILL:

Pilot aspects of the revised Australian Qualifications Framework to design contemporary skills solutions and strengthen recognition and credit arrangements

Use existing skills classification tools to identify new and emerging skills to supplement existing qualifications





Education  
and Training

**Cover image:** Ebony O'Doherty-Bowman, electrical apprentice with Powercor Australia and trainer Ray Borowiak at Australia's first wind turbine training tower at Ballarat's Federation University, where wind turbine technicians can train instead of using fly-in-fly-out workers.