

Goulburn Regional Skills Demand Profile

Snapshot 2023



**Victorian
Skills Authority**



Jobs, Skills,
Industry
and Regions



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) acknowledges and recognises the Traditional Owners of the land within the regional area of the Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Nations and its people, their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce

The VSA acknowledges the time, contribution, and insights of the Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce (and additional representatives from industry, local government, training providers, and related agencies) who contributed to the development of this profile.

The findings in this profile would not be possible without their openness, generosity, expertise, and commitment to the Goulburn regional economy and community.

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About the Victorian Skills Authority

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) was established by the Victorian Government in July 2021 in response to the recommendations of the Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy Review.

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 build a better Victoria.

The VSA has a critical role to play in understanding and communicating the skills needed to ensure Victoria can meet the current, emerging, and future skills and industry demands that enable inclusive growth and prosperity for all Victorians.

Regional Skills Demand Profiles

Regional Victoria is at the forefront of key priorities for the Victorian Government. This includes the establishment of the State Electricity Commission (SEC), which will help deliver more than 59,000 new jobs. These new opportunities, along with increasing regional populations, and existing and emerging industries, highlight the critical need to grow and advance skills in the regions so that the people, businesses, and communities of regional Victoria can thrive.

The VSA worked with Regional Skills Taskforces and industry roundtables during 2022 and early 2023 to develop Regional Skills Demand Profiles that identify current, emerging, and future skills needs across Victoria's regions. The profiles have been prepared with support from Regional Development Victoria (RDV) in the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR). The profiles are a valuable resource for regional Victoria and the Victorian Government. The VSA is working closely with stakeholders to address the opportunities and issues identified in the profiles.

This document is a summary of key findings. The profiles are available on the VSA website at: skillsauthority.vic.gov.au

To access the latest data, readers are directed to the VSA employment forecast dashboard at: www.vic.gov.au/victorian-skills-plan and the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) interactive data dashboards at: <https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/resources/regional-economic-development-strategies>



About the Goulburn region

This profile provides a 3-year outlook for Goulburn, and the education and training opportunities that can help develop the workforce required for the region.

The Goulburn region is situated in the heart of regional Victoria with a population of more than 175,000 people. It encompasses the local government areas of the Mitchell, Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira, and Murrindini. The region is home to Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Nations, who have lived, worked, and cared for their Country and resources for many thousands of years.

Since 2011, the region's population has grown more than 18% – or 27,000 people – with the Mitchell Shire experiencing a 40% population increase between 2011 and 2021, growing by more than 14,000 residents.

This growth is expected to continue, with the region's population estimated to reach around 236,800 by 2036.

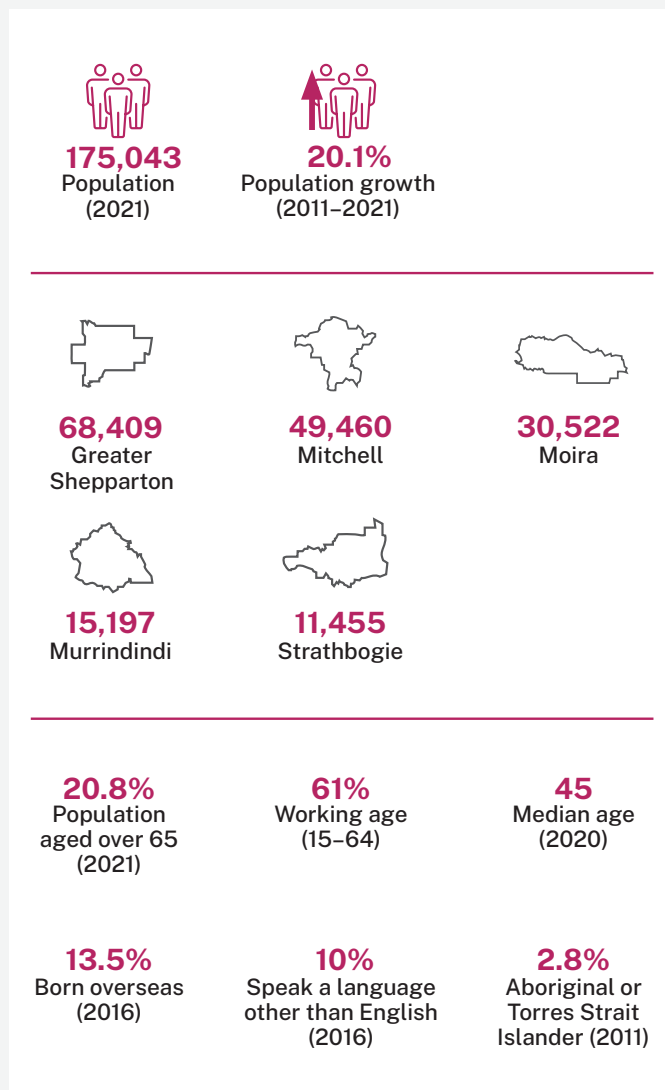


Figure 1 | Overview of Goulburn region

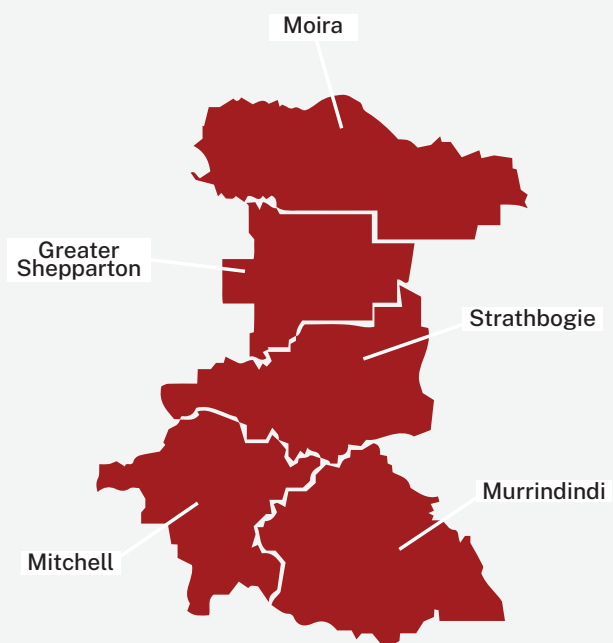


Figure 2 | Map of Goulburn region



Industries in the region

The local economy was largely founded upon agricultural activity, and this is a legacy that continues today with Goulburn recognised as one of the largest food bowls of Victoria.

There is growing industry investment and a desire for growth within Goulburn among current and emerging industries, particularly in the clean energy sector. This sector is developing at a rapid pace due to geographic location and new investment across business, government, and local communities.

Goulburn's strong economic outlook, coupled with accelerated population growth, will require greater investment in social infrastructure and services and a skilled workforce to support current and emerging industry growth.


Outlook on jobs growth

The VSA's 3-year employment projections show significant demand for workers in the region – with more than 4,080 additional new workers required in the 3 years between 2022 and 2025.

At least 3,600 workers will also be needed to replace retirements. The type of skills required by industry are becoming more complex. This highlights the need to ensure workers have the skills to meet industry's evolving needs.

Estimates of total new workers for 2022–25 across the 7 key industries in Goulburn are as follows:

- agriculture – 330
- clean energy – 180
- construction and housing – 830
- education and training – 850
- health care and community services – 1,500
- manufacturing – 430
- visitor economy – 1,620



The diversification of industry has changed the nature of skills and training required in the region.



Goulburn challenges and opportunities

Challenges

Current worker shortages in Goulburn region highlight a need to engage and upskill the existing population, while looking to grow the emerging and future workforce.



Figure 3 | Priority skills needs across Goulburn's major industries

Like other parts of Victoria, Goulburn is affected by cost-of-living pressures, significant labour shortages and continued recovery from the pandemic.

These are exacerbated by underlying challenges in the region such as housing accessibility, access to childcare, and teacher and trainer shortages.

The types of skills required by industry are becoming more complex. Most industries are reporting the need for higher skill levels, driven by the increasing use of digital and automation technologies to respond to clean economy adaptation, new markets, and higher consumer expectations.

Goulburn is also experiencing some challenges that are resulting in barriers to education, training and workforce participation, attraction, and retention.

Feedback from the Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce indicates that the education and skills system and industry will need to transform to meet the changing needs of students, workers, industry, and community.

The Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce and industry roundtables identified a common set of priority skills requirements across all major industries in the Goulburn region, as per Figure 3.



The Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce and industry roundtables raised 4 common challenges related to workforce skills and training in Goulburn along with opportunities to address cross-cutting workforce and skills needs.

Table 1 | Workforce challenges and opportunities in Goulburn

Challenge	Opportunity
Barriers to accessing vocational and higher education	Identify and address barriers to participation in post-school education and the transition to employment
Alignment between higher and vocational education and workforce needs	Enhance inter and intra-sector collaboration and coordination to address Goulburn's workforce challenges
Scale and reach of existing programs and initiatives	Leverage industry experience to develop innovative training approaches
Risk of a low-skilled workforce	Leverage industry experience to develop innovative approaches for preparing for work





The Goulburn region has unique strengths and future opportunities.



Opportunities

Goulburn supports several pockets of concentrated industry activity. These include industrial enterprise in Seymour, equine industries, Australian Defence Force activity in Puckapunyal, tourism around the Lake Eildon area, and National Parks and border-town communities in the north of Moira Shire.

With significant labour shortages being felt by industry in Goulburn, there are opportunities to engage under-represented cohorts and increase workforce participation across major industries.

The Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce identified 7 industries of focus within the Goulburn region:

- agriculture sector
- construction and housing
- education and training
- health care and community services
- manufacturing
- visitor economy
- clean energy

The health care and social assistance industry is the largest employer in Goulburn, employing about 14% of the workforce. This is followed by manufacturing and construction employing 11% of the workforce each.

Consultation identified a range of potential education and training responses to address the current and emerging challenges facing major industries.

There are also specific opportunities for growth in the region.

Opportunities for growth

State Electricity Commission

The Victorian Government is bringing back the SEC to help drive down power bills and create thousands of jobs to enhance use of renewable energy like wind hydro and solar, and to store it, such as with batteries. An SEC Centre of Training Excellence will be established to coordinate and accredit courses in clean energy, connecting with TAFEs, Registered Training Organisations, unions, and the industry, supporting 6,000 positions for trainees and apprentices.

Construction and housing

Goulburn continues to establish itself as a key growth corridor of the state with several arterial roads, freight tracks and airports within the region which suggests it is well positioned to take advantage of ongoing demand for construction across the region. Recent investment and works across the state, including the North East Link, provide increased opportunities for further training and employment.

Clean energy


The clean energy industry is an important and growing industry for Goulburn, with a forecast annual employment growth rate of 2.2% expected over 2022 to 2025. Clean energy in Goulburn is an industry of its own market significance and specialisation but is also an enabler of growth in other industries. Investment in the clean energy sector generates dual benefits for the region as it supports the future energy needs of a rising population and drives industry activity and productivity.

The biodiversity of Goulburn allows the region to tap into many kinds of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydro, bioenergy, and gas.

Visitor economy

The Goulburn region is home to many nature-based attractions and activities, including Lake Eildon and Surrounds, the Murray River, Barmah and Lower Goulburn, Kinglake National Parks, and Steavenson Falls in Marysville. Many of these places are important cultural assets to the Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Wurundjeri peoples and there is opportunity to increase the recognition, self-determination and experiences associated with their role as Traditional Custodians of the land.

Increased activities, strategic planning, and public interest in sharing this heritage, culture and expertise are likely to further increase employment in the sector.

An aerial photograph of a large-scale solar farm. The image shows a vast field of solar panels arranged in neat, parallel rows. A central feature is a large, circular water reservoir or pond, surrounded by a dirt embankment. The surrounding landscape is arid and sandy, with some sparse vegetation. The overall scene illustrates a significant investment in renewable energy infrastructure.

The biodiversity of Goulburn allows the region to tap into many kinds of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydro, bioenergy, and gas.

Next steps

The Goulburn Regional Skills Taskforce identified next steps to address regional skills and workforce needs.

The VSA will seek to address some of these over the coming year, while others require coordinated action by industry, government, and the education sector. Next steps have been classified by how long it will take for benefits to be realised, immediate, medium term, or long term. An action plan will be developed in collaboration with the community.

Immediate impact (1–2 years)

1. Undertake explorative research to better understand the data, trends and factors affecting participation in education and training.
2. Targeted engagement with current and prospective learners – including under represented and vulnerable communities, and their support networks to build awareness of higher and vocational education, skills development, and employment opportunities.
3. Develop a clear pathway for prospective students to transition from non-traditional training opportunities into higher and vocational education.
4. Provide data and insights to support the Goulburn region's workforce planning.
5. Actively support and bolster initiatives of the Shepparton education plan.
6. Collaborate to scale reach of programs and initiatives that showcase the diverse range of career opportunities and employment trajectories in the Goulburn region.
7. Increase access to mentoring opportunities for businesses and workers, including through peer-to-peer learning and cross-business programs.
8. Publish industry data and trends for current and prospective students, parents, and career counsellors.
9. Provide wider access to existing industry-specific training materials and facilities to prepare students and prospective employees for employment.
10. Promote micro-credential courses that can meet industry and employee skill development needs.
11. Collaborate across industry and education and training institutions to design and deliver industry-recognised short courses, including micro credentials.
12. Review and redesign recruitment processes to prioritise core skills, alongside technical competency.





Medium-term impact (2–5 years)

1. Support the Senior Secondary Pathways reform agenda through facilitation of local opportunities to improve Vocational Education and Training (VET) within the region.
2. Implement the Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy.
3. Expand engagement activities with students and their networks.
4. Advocate for simplifying participation pathways for workers in transition across industries or mature and retiring cohorts.
5. Support the Goulburn Tourism Partnership to accelerate planning and delivery of a more coordinated tourism plan for Goulburn.
6. Explore opportunities for shared recruitment pools across organisations where appropriate or feasible.
7. Work with the VET Development Centre (VDC) and industry experts to support skills development for the teacher workforce.
8. Support industry and education providers to continue to take a place-based approach to course design and delivery.
9. Increase access and provision of support for Aboriginal people to enter education, training, and employment through working closely with Traditional Owners.
10. Support and promote an attitude of lifelong learning through organisational and industry-based initiatives.

Longer-term impact (5+ years)

1. Review and refine the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) to ensure that education and training offerings are accessible, aligned and tailored to Goulburn learner and local industry needs.
2. Empower and equip businesses to employ and create positive working environments for under-represented and under-represented cohorts.
3. Advocate and support local initiatives to address housing, transport, and childcare accessibility that impact participation in higher and vocational education, and the employment and upskilling of current and prospective learners and workers.
4. Partner with regional, community and other industry bodies to improve access to a holistic suite of support services for new and prospective learners and workers.
5. Incentivise trainers to gain accreditation and enter the education system.
6. Provide local insights to support the development of the Victorian Skills Plan.
7. Facilitate a smooth flow of teachers between industry and training.
8. Future skills requirement planning and mapping.

Goulburn case studies

VIC VICE

VIC Virtual Industry Career Experiences (VICE) is a virtual reality platform that will allow secondary school students to see, touch and experience different workplaces. Currently being developed by Goulburn Murray Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) in partnership with VIC VICE, the platform is a modern solution to growing workforce shortages and a widening skills gap.

VIC VICE will bring to classrooms across Victoria:

- 360* virtual workplace environments with interactive touchpoints
- engaging video content featuring real people working in different industries
- immersive 'hands-on' experiences that simulate workplace activities.

How Work Works

How Work Works came about as a collaboration between 4 adjacent LLENs and was supported by Regional Development Victoria.

Murrindindi Shire's 2021-22 How Work Works Program provided 6 interns with the opportunity to learn about employers and pathways in the Goulburn region.

This program also included the delivery of a report to assist young people in the region with the first practical steps in finding and securing work.





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