



STRATEGIES FOR SKILLS AND JOBS IN MELBOURNE'S WEST

Mitchell Institute: Centre for International Research
on Education Systems, Victoria University

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Acknowledgement of Country

This research was conducted at Victoria University which acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria.

As we share our own knowledge practices, may we pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community and their ownership of Country. The Wurundjeri people were the custodians of the land in the Port Phillip Bay region, including the West of Melbourne area which is the focus of this project, for over 40,000 years before European settlement.

The West of Melbourne also lies within the area occupied by the clans of other groups including the Kurung-Jang-Balluk Marin-Balluk, YalukitWillam and Marpeang-Bulluk, clans of the Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) who form part of the larger Kulin Nation.

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is a place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin people's living culture has a unique role in the life of this region.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The turmoil brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has given pause to our regular lives and prompted reflection on what is truly important to us, our families and our region.

Many decades of disadvantage for people in the West have seen numerous well intended government policies miss opportunities to make long lasting improvements in a systemised approach.

Over the past year, the Victoria University project ‘Skills and Jobs for Melbourne’s West’ has reflected on the challenges facing Melbourne’s West, identifying what future we should be aspiring to, and how that future can be realised. This research has applied an evidence-based approach—identifying the specific problems facing industry and skills provision—and co-designing solutions to these problems with industry, education and government.

We’ve uncovered a paradox of local industry seeking skills but many people of the West commute out of the region to work. Better matching the skills of people to the work opportunities in the West will be key to greater future prosperity. Much more than simply money, prosperity is more time for wellbeing, social connection and community connection. Reduced commuting also helps our environment through lower emissions and energy consumption.

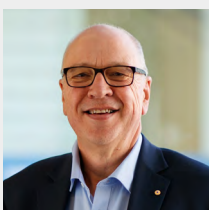
This report is future focused with Victoria University anticipated to impact our city-region through both a leadership role and developing new ways of working with and supporting industry. Achieving a better future will require targeted investment to increase local jobs, alongside implementation of enabling strategies to sustain these jobs into the future.

This project is part of a broader initiative called the Victoria University ‘Recover, Innovate, Sustain and Evolve’ (VU RISE) funded by the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund (VHESIF). The Skills and Jobs for Melbourne’s West project is focused on the area covered by the following six Councils : Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley, and Wyndham.

The research was supported by economic modelling by the Victoria University Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS) to increase understanding of the economic outlook in the West of Melbourne.

The West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WoMEDA) of which I am the Chair, is a proud project partner.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Victorian State Government.



Professor Peter Dawkins AO
WoMEDA; Chair, Skills and Jobs for Melbourne’s
West Project Reference Group.

Funding partner



Education
and Training

01 KEY FINDINGS

This research project provides a strategic plan for achieving the West of Melbourne’s future skills and jobs needs.

Building on the findings of the first phase of the research which explored employers’ perceptions across four focus industry sectors, the Pillar 1 report identified three key impediments to sustained employment growth—fragile networks between employers and education and training providers, impediments to skill development by residents, and insufficient local jobs. While the Pillar 1 report focused on four key industries to uncover challenges faced in the West, this report extrapolates findings across all industries and its strategic plan has two dimensions.

Firstly, a set of strategic directions encompassing focal Enablers and Strategies is identified. Together these will ensure an adequate supply of skills in the West alongside strong connections, so that employer demand for skills is met. An overarching feature of these strategic directions is that they join industry and education. Secondly, an initial stimulus is required to recalibrate the labour market by stabilising the level of commuting to jobs outside the West. This is illustrated as a local jobs plan focused on Sunshine.

- Pillar 1 Focus industries:
- ◆ Infrastructure
 - ◆ Digital Economy
 - ◆ Social Services and Care
 - ◆ Manufacturing

Strategic Directions

Based upon extensive place-based research, four focal Enablers are identified in the research for achieving industry-driven skills development and sustainable local job growth in the future.

Supporting the active pursuit of the focal Enablers are Strategies developed in consultation with stakeholders. The Strategies are detailed in Section 5. It is envisaged that the Strategies themselves will only be required in the short-term to support the Enablers; the intent is that the focal Enablers will be able to be progressed by the momentum brought about by growth in Skills, Jobs and Industry.

Creating a local skill ecosystem

Creating a local skill ecosystem is where skill formation occurs in place-based settings with employers, through enhanced relationships between industry, education providers, and individuals.

Facilitating innovation, growth and change

Facilitating a culture of innovation across employers and education providers, who are looking to collaboratively redesign jobs, course content and how training is delivered.

Authentic industry engagement

Enhancing engagement between education providers and industry, ensuring that students are instilled with the skills and capabilities employers need.

Institutions as a space for industry and educational collaboration

Building capacity for educational institutions to be the hub of industry collaboration, responding to industry need, sparking innovation and providing initial and continuing training through robust partnerships.

Increasing jobs in key precincts

Economic modelling undertaken by the Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS) at Victoria University has estimated that an increase of approximately 19,500 jobs in the West of Melbourne by 2031 is required to maintain the proportion of working residents employed locally at 2021 levels. In the absence of this increased local employment this proportion is expected to decline from 52 to 49 per cent by 2031.

Previous analysis by WoMEDA has highlighted the importance of employment precincts for the economic development of the West of Melbourne. The 2017 WoMEDA report, *Economic Development Strategy for the West of Melbourne*, identified the strategic role of economic activity clusters in driving economic growth (WoMEDA, 2017). Separate WoMEDA reports have been released examining the opportunities presented by Footscray, Sunshine, Melton and Werribee.

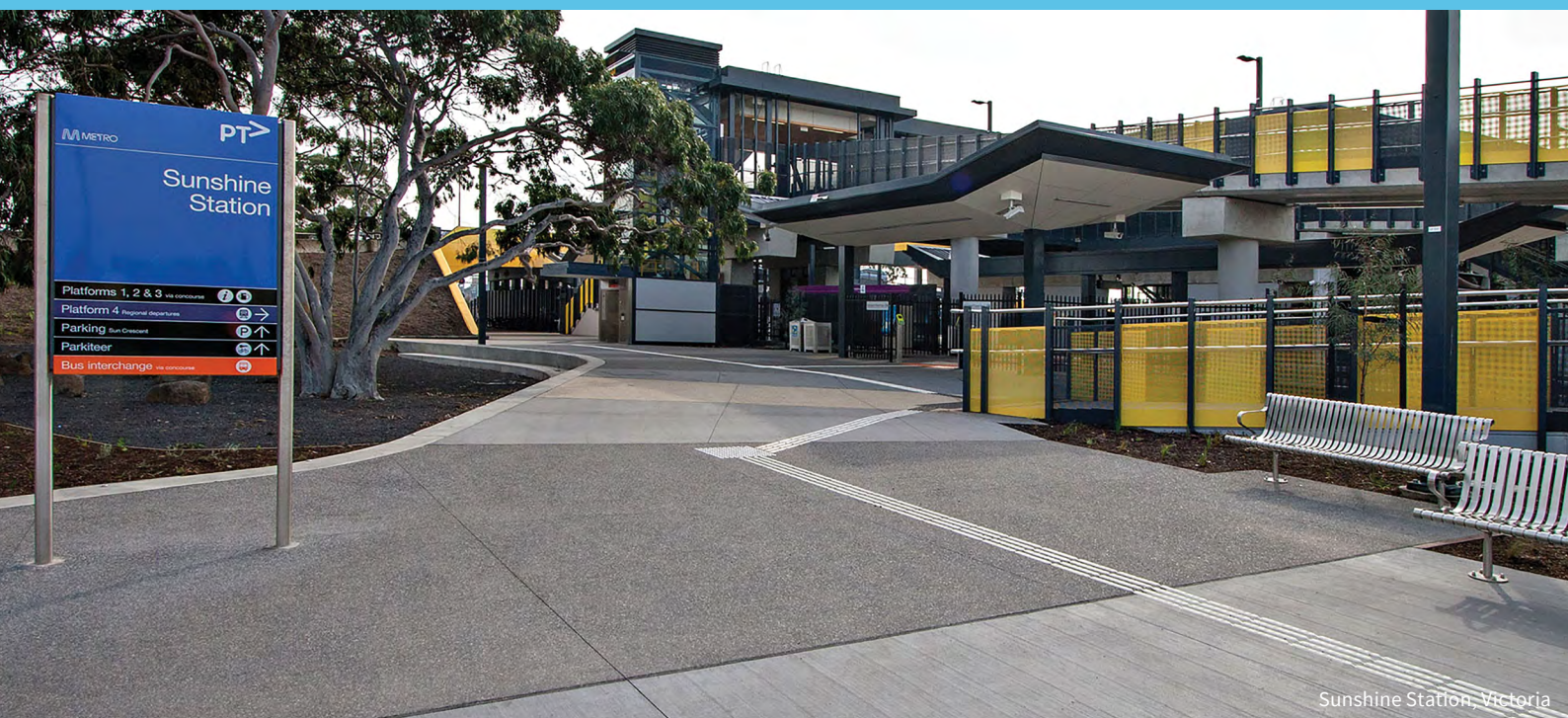
Building upon this previous WoMEDA research, a case study has been prepared focused upon the Sunshine area. This case study identifies specific opportunities for achieving the additional 19,500 jobs estimated by CoPS. The opportunity presented by the Airport Rail Link to pass through Sunshine is significant. Other major centres within the West, such as Werribee and Footscray, could also be the focus of similarly targeted employment growth.

Nearly half of these new jobs will be in Health and Social Assistance, the other half largely taken up by Public Administration / Legal along with Professional / Scientific and Technical jobs.

Achieving these additional jobs will require concerted effort by local and state governments, in conjunction with local industry. A range of specific actions will be required to realise these job opportunities. Some of these are:

- ◆ Improving road connections in the Sunshine Hospital precinct
- ◆ Developing Sunshine Magistrates' Court into a legal precinct
- ◆ Promoting Sunshine as a multicultural visitor destination.

Achieving and sustaining this level of growth in jobs in the Sunshine area will require both the strategic directions outlined above, alongside targeted investment effort.



Sunshine Station, Victoria

02

THE CHALLENGES FACING THE WEST

Three specific challenges need to be overcome if the West is to thrive. Insufficient local jobs, leaks in the skill development pipeline, and the presence of fragile networks linking education providers and industry.

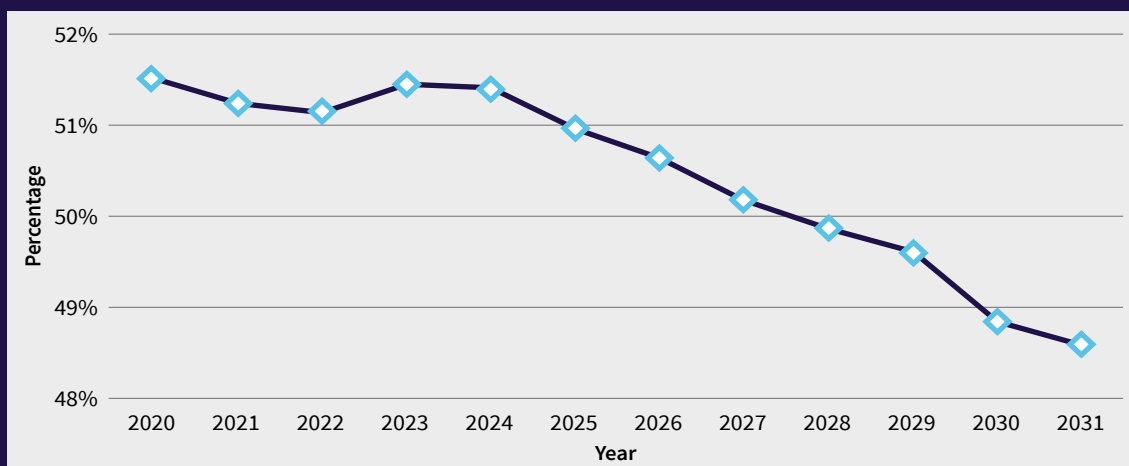
Challenge 1 – Local jobs

Strong growth in local employment is necessary to support the West’s growing population. The first stage of the Skills and Jobs for Melbourne’s West project identified there will be marked growth in the West of Melbourne working age population over the coming decade compared to the rest of Australia. Modelling undertaken by CoPS estimates that over the period 2021-31, employment within the West of Melbourne will increase by 56,000 jobs. But this will not be enough because the jobs worked in by West of Melbourne residents will increasingly be outside the West; predominantly in Inner Melbourne. The resulting increased level of commuting has a large social and economic cost.

Separately, surveys and interviews showed that the skills currently needed by employers within the West of Melbourne do not closely align with the skills possessed by the local population. Addressing this paradox of skills shortages while workers commute from the region requires an increase in local employment opportunities, while ensuring residents have the specific skills local employers are seeking.

According to CoPS’s modelling, the percentage of West of Melbourne residents working locally is expected to decline in the next decade. As Figure 1 shows, nearly 52 per cent of employed West of Melbourne residents were working locally in 2020, and this proportion is expected to decline by 3 percentage points over ten years. An injection of an additional 19,500 jobs into the region is needed to maintain the 2022 share of local employment.

Figure 1: Employed West of Melbourne residents working locally (percent)

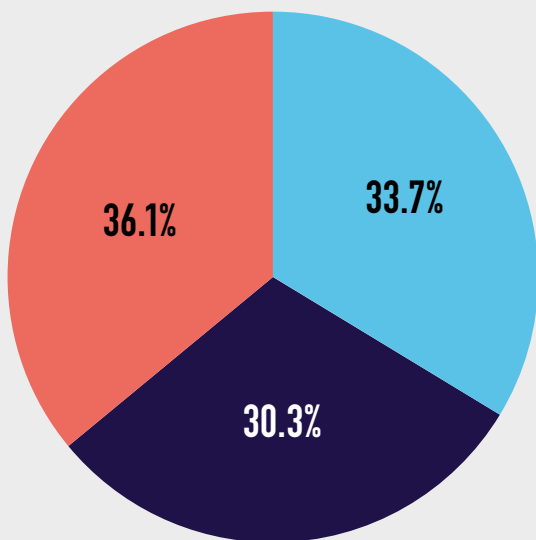


Challenge 2 – Leaks in the skills pipeline

Over one-third of employers in the West report lacking the skills they need today, with another one-third expecting a skills shortage in the next 12 months (see Figure 2). The skills challenges faced by West of Melbourne employers can be characterised as ‘leaks’ in the skill development pipeline.

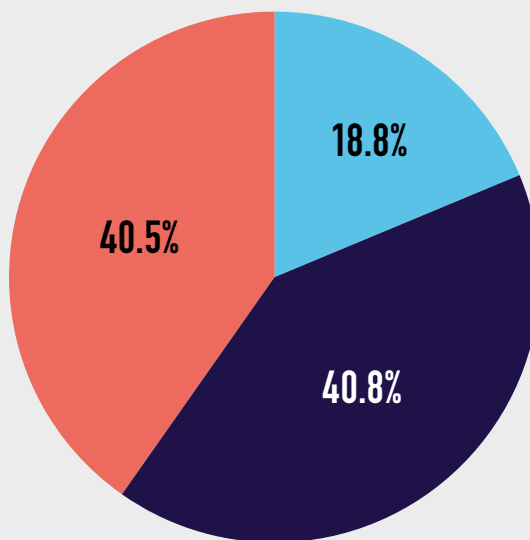
Leaks are impacting all stages of recruitment and training and include staff recruitment issues, training barriers and career development challenges. The results of surveys and interviews show that the causes of the current skills shortage are complex and skill gaps can be tracked back to different sections of the training and recruitment pipeline. More than 40 per cent of surveyed employers expressed their concern with employees’ skills to meet industry standards and another 35 per cent identified the gap in keeping pace with advancing technology.

Figure 2: Skill needs that have been met



- ◆ Employers lack the skills needed today.
- ◆ Employers have the skills needed today, but are concerned we may not in the next 12 months.
- ◆ Employers have the skills needed for today and for the next 12 months.

Figure 3: Impact of COVID-19 on employer’s organisation



- ◆ Low impact.
- ◆ Medium impact.
- ◆ High impact.

An underlying cause of the ‘leaks’ is a fragmented approach to skill formation; skilled labour, businesses and training providers typically work independently. This situation is improving in Victoria and Australia, through the efforts of the Victorian Skills Authority and National Skills Commission.

The specific concern identified in the research is problems in progression and promotion in some West of Melbourne industries more generally, and within specific occupations. A further concern is a lack of a strong local career ladder.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the leaky skills pipeline. According to the survey responses, more than four-fifths of employers from a range of industries confirmed that the pandemic has had either a medium or high impact on their organisation (see Figure 3). In particular, the COVID-19 crisis has increased workload for staff, created difficulties for employers to meet customer needs, and resulted in loss of business through increased competitive pressure. This has added urgency to the problem of leaks in the skills pipeline.

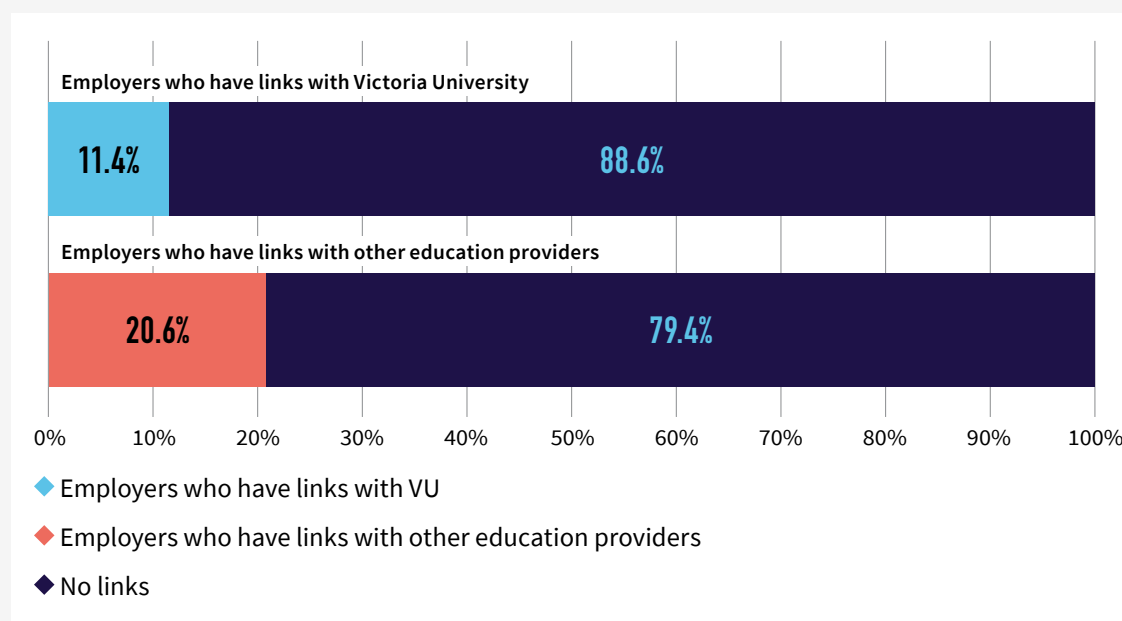
Challenge 3 – Fragile networks

A pre-requisite for education and training providers—whether they be universities or vocational education providers—to develop the skills employers need, is to have strong links with industry. A wide-ranging survey found that only one-third of industry respondents held formal links. This situation highlights fragile networks between education and training providers and industry are a major challenge. The strength of linkages between employers and education and training providers differs by industry sector. Among digital economy and manufacturing sector survey respondents, only 40 per cent report links with training providers. Worse still, only 27.5 per cent of respondents from the social services and care sector reported such links.

Collaboration between employers and training providers takes place in various forms. In most cases, employers offer placements to students in different educational settings (higher education, VET including apprenticeships and traineeships). Some respondents highlighted that small companies struggle to offer student placements due to a shortage of their own personnel. In other cases, employers contribute to course design and research. Such interactions will ensure that students are trained for today’s businesses and are work ready. But they will also deep resources of skills and knowledge that will help them respond to the unforeseen future.

Additionally, research showed weaknesses in current partnerships where they existed between education providers and employers. Almost all participants reported issues with program or course content, arguing that they were either too broad or lacking in key areas. Employers pointed out that the current curriculum does not always meet industry requirements or reflect the most up-to-date developments in the sector. Students who graduate from courses are sometimes not well prepared with employability skills, potentially meaning a substantial commitment is required from the employer to perform ‘on the job’ training.

Figure 4: Links with educational providers



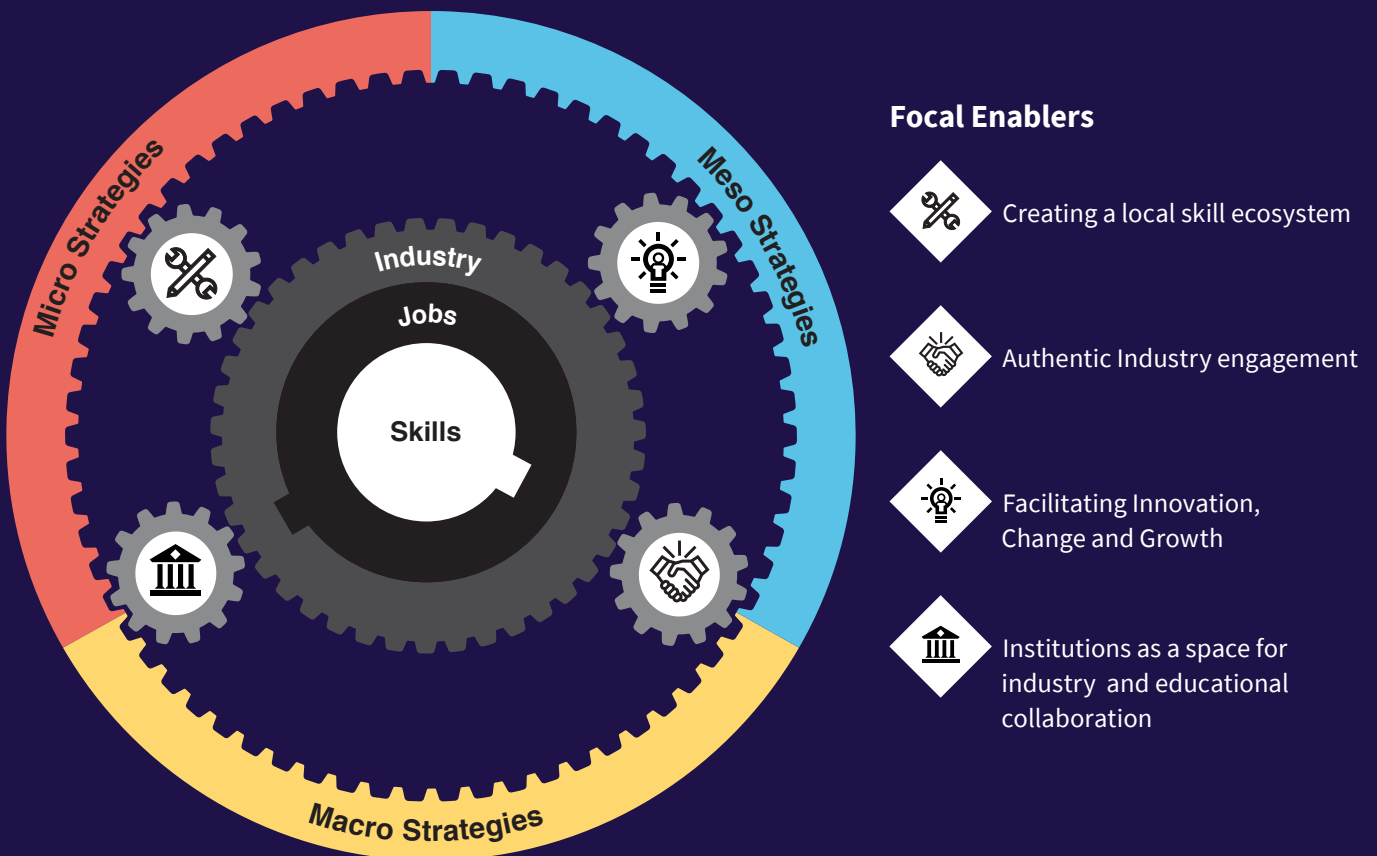
03 AN ALTERNATIVE FUTURE

A place-based approach has been developed to create a brighter alternative future for Melbourne’s West. Our approach brings together important concepts required to work together at the local level to create a strong cohesive model for future prosperity.

We have developed an employment growth cycle, where skills are at the centre (see Figure 5). These skills in turn drive job growth and ultimately industry performance. At the same time, four Enablers, or overarching directions, are required to be in progress to meet the West’s future jobs and skills needs. These Enablers will be detailed in section 4, comprising Creating a local skills ecosystem, Facilitating Innovation, Change and Growth, Authentic Industry engagement, and Institutions as a space for industry and educational collaboration.

Separately, a set of strategies is initially required to support the active progress of the Enablers. These are spread across Micro, Meso and Macro groupings, and are detailed in section 5. It is intended that over time the central elements of Skills, Jobs growth and Industry performance will be sufficient to continue the progress of the Enablers, maintaining and extending the momentum of the economic development cycle.

Figure 5: Economic development cycle



04 FOCAL ENABLERS

Four focal Enablers, or **overarching directions**, have been identified as crucial to achieving sustained growth of skills and jobs in Melbourne’s West.

These Enablers need to be progressed immediately. In the first instance they require support from a set of strategies, but over time the Enablers will progress with their own momentum driven by growing skills and with jobs meeting industry demand. These Enablers all relate to how industry relates to education and training providers. High quality interaction between industry and education and training providers are vital for ensuring alignment between the demand for, and supply of, skills.



Creating a local skill ecosystem

Local employers are not getting the skills they need, with stronger links required between education and training providers, and industry. In response, our research has identified that West of Melbourne’s residents and businesses would benefit from workforce development approaches that embody a skill ecosystem. A skill ecosystem is a ‘self-sustaining network of workforce skills and knowledge’ (Windsor & Alcorso, 2008). A skill ecosystem is much broader than the education and training system, and instead:

“captures the importance of the broader context in which skills are utilized, it recognizes that there are a range of parties who affect and are affected by skill formation and it reaches beyond the often narrow confines of formal training institutions” (Hall and Lansbury 2006, p. 576).

The overall objective of a skill ecosystem is to facilitate the development of skills, competencies and attributes useful both immediately, and of long-term value to individuals, industry and the region as a whole. Employers would have confidence that they can find people with the skills they need and the skill ecosystem would also embody a place-based approach that is flexible, responsive and offers ease of navigation. A skill ecosystem approach contrasts with the dominant market-based approach to skills development currently serving the West of Melbourne.

Skill development issues were identified by over two-thirds of survey respondents. A related problem is the movement of skilled labour between businesses. Staff ‘poaching’ is common practice in the West of Melbourne. This is where firms, driven by short-term pressures, pay high wages to attract skilled individuals from competitors, rather than invest in longer-term skills development.

Taking a place-based skill ecosystem approach can reverse this situation. It can be short circuited in the West of Melbourne through co-ordination and collaboration while maintaining benefits of the current approach such as competitiveness and retaining the intellectual property of individual businesses.

(We need) shared interest in better career outcomes for young people in the west and a model to support skills shortages for long-term gains in productivity and career development. – Industry participant

To develop and succeed a skill ecosystem will need to become a cradle for the development and deployment of human capability. The ecosystem would promote place-based skill formation serving businesses and individuals. Such a place-based workforce development approach could support individuals to participate effectively in the labour force throughout their whole working lives. There would also be benefits for businesses; they would be able to have confidence in having sufficient workers in the future and be able to focus upon developing high performance workers that reach their potential skill and value.

Authentic Industry engagement

The West of Melbourne is a prominent city-region in Victoria and must operate as a vibrant node of Greater Melbourne where industry knows it can find deep wells of talent. Major cities feature multiple business, cultural and education and training hubs spread throughout.

The geographic proximity, diverse talent pool and closeness to major infrastructure in the West means that authentic industry engagement is entirely possible. The West of Melbourne benefits from a workable scale, contrasting with the much larger Greater Melbourne or Victoria itself. This scale enables long lasting connections to be made.

The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to reimagine engagement between industry and education and training providers. To make it authentic and continuous, and not a single event. At a minimum, education and training providers need to ensure industry have clear means and mechanisms for engaging in discussions about course provision and skills needs. For education and training providers to foresee the needs of industry, they need to deeply understand industry. Regular meetings are not enough. Rather deep relationships are needed, achieved through secondments, co-location and deep collaboration on future learning content.

The development of deep relationships provides the opportunity to harness the training, research and thought leadership abilities of a major education and training provider based in the West encompassing vocational education and training and higher education, such as Victoria University.

Any industry / education engagement delivers more than expected when there is a focus on win-win outcomes. – Industry Forum

Facilitating Innovation, Change and Growth

Industry, alongside education and training providers, face a complex and uncertain post-pandemic future. Emerging from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is an ideal time for implementing continuous innovation in how industry interacts with education and training. This will also provide confidence that future skills needs will be met by fully trained people, and ultimately lead to heightened skill development and economic growth.

There are several innovation possibilities for ‘real time’ and ‘staggered’ co-operation between industry, and education and training providers in the West of Melbourne. One potential area of innovation is transforming how employers specify their skill needs. There is also a need to think beyond traditional modes of training to fit in with community and industry needs. Most training systems have not fundamentally changed since the industrial revolution.

There is scope to use technological innovations developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate engagement, such as:

- ◆ enabling a greater proportion of the workforce to engage in professional development through innovation in online training delivery
- ◆ enhancing the capacity for simulated work-placements and remote work
- ◆ developing alternative approaches for embedding training in the workplace.

A place-based approach to innovation in industry, alongside education and training, is grounded in the notion that geographic context matters. This includes having a deep understanding of the social, cultural, historical and institutional characteristics of a particular place. These factors shape the outcomes for communities, families and individual institutions.

A key element of this Enabler is to have high aspirations for workforces—innovation is underpinned by striving for lofty goals. This includes stretching skill development to a higher order and instilling advanced technical or cognitive skills. Workforces also need to have the opportunity, time and resources to think about engaging in higher order skills and development. There is a role for local education and training providers to support this thinking, as well as to facilitate meaningful opportunities for training and skills transfer.

Institutions as a space for industry and educational collaboration

Education and training providers are critical in facilitating a cultural shift in the West of Melbourne towards a functioning, thriving skill ecosystem where businesses have confidence they can find and develop skilled workers.

There is a role in the West of Melbourne for Victoria University to operate with its dual sector capabilities as an anchor institution. Victoria University can harness its deep and sprawling links into the West of Melbourne, alongside its deep embeddedness in geographical, historical, social and cultural contexts. Such a place-based approach has the potential to radically improve the social, economic or general wellbeing of individuals and communities in the West of Melbourne. Furthermore, the navigation into adulthood and between different job roles can be braced by the anchor institution to support place-based career ladders.

Taking such an approach requires breaking down institutional walls to embrace industry as core stakeholders, and the public, as participants in the skills ecosystem.

An institution like Victoria University can provide a neutral place for collaboration between businesses and enterprises. Provided this collaboration is focussed upon the joint goals of improving skills within an entire industry, it is free from concerns about collusion and other inappropriate discussions.

Analysis (is needed) of the tensions and disconnect that is evident between industry needs and education. – Industry representative

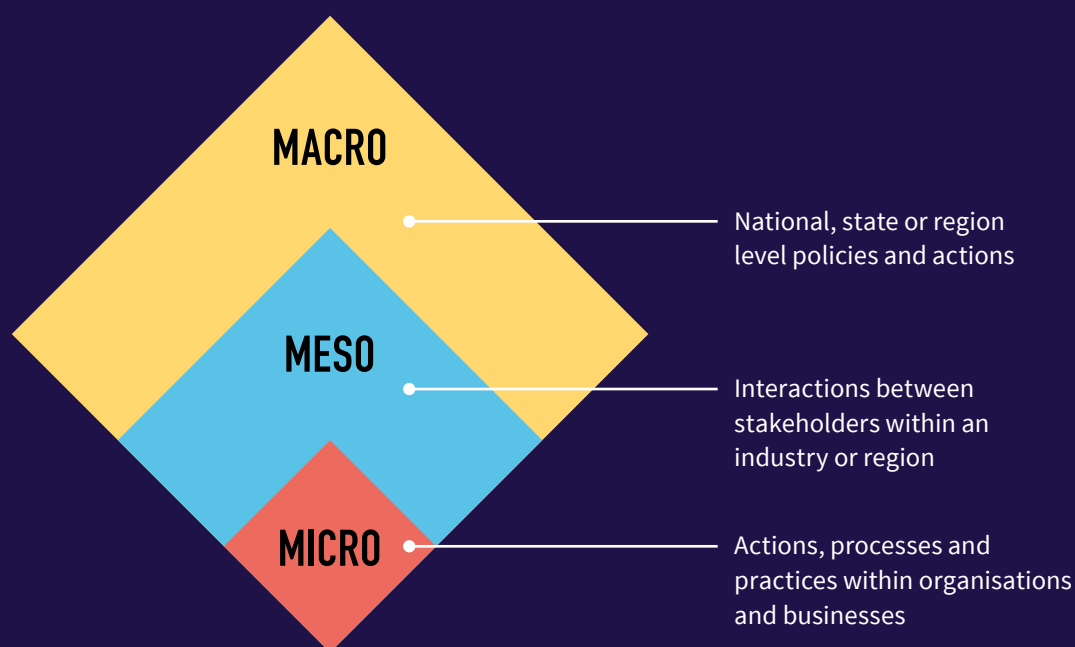
05 STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Section 2 outlined three challenges to economic development in the West of Melbourne – fragile networks between employers and education and training providers, a shortage of local jobs, and leaks in the pipeline of skill development. Interviews with national stakeholders, interviews and surveys of employers in the West of Melbourne and insights from Victoria University staff working with local industry partners were analysed to assist in identifying strategies to address these challenges.

Framework

A three-level framework is used to group and understand the strategies required in the West of Melbourne for momentum to build on the Enablers. Macro, Meso and Micro level strategies work together at their different levels to propel the Enablers, see Figure 6.

Figure 6: The three-level framework



Macro

The Macro level relates to top-down policies at the national, state or region level that speak to broader notions of economic development and skill provision. These include the visions and goals for Melbourne's West in terms of economic planning and post-pandemic recovery efforts. The Macro also includes policies, practices and long-term planning efforts made at the national, state or city-region level.

Meso

The Meso level is a complex level in between the Macro and the Micro. It describes the vital interactions between various stakeholders within the context of an industry or region, as well as the nature of culture communications that can take place. Meso level interactions occur at a local, state and national level, with each of these levels feeding up, back and between each other to develop communications and networks for skill development and job provision. Hence, the Meso level intersects and overlaps with both the Macro and Micro levels and is the enabling level for effective economic development.

Micro




The Micro level refers to bottom-up actions, processes and practices that take place within the context of organisations and businesses. They choose the ways they engage their employees and work with education and training providers as well as how they recruit apprentices and trainees. The links and relationships that they draw on to achieve their goals originate in the Meso level but must make sense at an organisational level.









Strategies to grow Skills and Jobs in the West





Twelve distinct strategies have been identified to grow skills and jobs in the West of Melbourne. These strategies have been conceived to build momentum in each of the Enablers, and are at either the Macro, Meso or Micro level. It is intended that these strategies will only be required for a few years when they can be wound back after the Enablers, in conjunction with the skills, jobs and industry in the west, have their own momentum.

Responsibility for implementing these actions has not been identified in this document. This very important activity will need to be carefully progressed in the coming months, in the form of an implementation plan. It is envisaged that responsibility for carrying forward strategies will be spread between governments (Australian, Victorian and local), education and training providers, industry and employer organisations, individual businesses, and individuals.

Table 1: Strategies to grow skills and jobs in the West

Strategy	Enabler	Details	Actions
Demystifying the nature of work for hard to fill roles		Many hard to fill roles are misunderstood. Balanced communication and education on these roles could alleviate some of these challenges.	Specific examples include governmental, professional and industry organisations collaborating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Communicate what 'a day in the life of is like' for aged care supervisors within the social services and care sector. ◆ Raise the profile of land surveyors by communicating what the nature of work is like for apprentice, graduate and experienced employees.
Upscaling career practice through online services		The pandemic has created the need for online delivery of career services to young people. This has enhanced delivery, benefiting young people navigating career pathways. It is appropriate to ensure this extended reach is continued.	Financial support to be continued to maintain online career services, and then broaden their reach.
Policy signals around diverse skills		Communicating the value of diverse jobs and pathways is important to help young people re-imagine their futures. A balanced focus on vocational and higher education pathways will help ensure a healthy mix of future skills.	Campaigns be undertaken publicising the value in all skills. This could draw on pandemic notions of 'essential workers' and the vital role of vocational and higher education pathways.

Strategy	Enabler	Details	Actions
Funding and incentives for upskilling individuals		Changing careers or upskilling requires an investment of time and money. Individuals, employers and government share the responsibility of investing in development, but financial support can be an important factor in decisions to upskill.	<p>Governments could support the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Incentives for employers to facilitate upskilling. ◆ Discounts for students returning to further study.
Bridging networks		Broadening communication channels and bringing together diverse stakeholders across industry sectors can bridge fragmented networks between education and training institutions and employers. Instead of working in isolation, bridging networks can assist in working through challenges and opportunities, as well as build professional relationships and partnerships.	<p>Groups of employers and organisations could identify key people with experience or established networks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ engage with institutions. ◆ allow time for them to develop and maintain networks and relations.
Diversifying partnerships	 	Diversifying partnerships between education and training providers and employers and having them work together on continuous shared activities is key to delivering good outcomes. Motivation, time and resources is key to building diverse partnerships.	<p>Groups of education and training providers could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Collaborate on shared endeavours, workshops and focus sessions on joint issues. ◆ Be part of an independent education services brokerage and advisory group. ◆ Provide mutual support pathways developed between providers to engage with industry (e.g. reciprocal invitations to events and programs).
Common language framework		Employees in specific industries can often be working towards similar goals but use different terms to describe their work. Developing a common language framework can foster more efficient and meaningful communication between different institutions, employers and organisations. Explaining key ideas or concepts within the context of an industry will help to bridge divides across fragile networks.	<p>Employers and professional groupings can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Share understandings of specific terms; always ensuring a glossary is developed within each project or program. ◆ Ensure that language is not domain specific and there are co-designed easy to read versions of key documents.
Data sharing between stakeholders		Data can be collected by institutions and organisations that can illuminate various aspects of individual employment pathways. Utilising this data in ways that can identify when skill detours occur can be beneficial to skill development.	<p>Institutions and organisations can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure key labour market information is produced and disseminated at a useful and useable level to assist decision making by industry and education and training providers. ◆ Request or suggest key strategic items that can be discussed.
Stocktake and broadcast successful outreach activities	 	Education and training institutions have many programs that work with external organisations and businesses, playing a major role in student enrolment, training, education support and linking graduates to employers. Undertaking a stocktake of these activities and programs can ensure that successful programs are supported and continued. Publicising successful practice, or examples of such activities, can promote and inspire future interest.	<p>Education and training providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Speak to delivery departments to stocktake and collate outreach activities. ◆ Ascertain a sense of successful activities by speaking to students, partner organisations and staff. ◆ Publicise examples of successful activities through media channels to reach broader audiences.

Strategy	Enabler	Details	Actions
Upskill current staff		Upskilling existing staff has costs and benefits for any business. Employers' view upskilling staff as an investment. Utilising online and flexible delivery of courses where appropriate and available can help to bridge the barriers to upskilling employees.	Employers and industry organisations can assign an apprentice manager to help communication between students and education and training organisations.
Quality work placements and rethinking forms of workplace experience and assessment	 	Supporting workplaces to become good places for learning. Making assessments appropriate and relevant to learning outcomes ensuring that students get the most from their education and training.	Education and training providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Obtain feedback from students and workplaces for a sense of relevance of current course content. ◆ Provide short term embedded trainers in organisations.
Co-designed curricula		Up-to-date learning content is important to ensure students and apprentices receive the best information as they head into the workforce, as well as graduates looking to upskill. Broadening opportunities for industry to work with education and training staff to co-design curricula can ensure that this is achieved.	Education and training providers can have formal 'open door' discussions with employers where insights from industry are drawn into course content. Organisations can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assign a liaison to work with educators to facilitate dialogue on course content. ◆ Be part of an advisory board at education and training institutions.

06 CASE STUDY – SUNSHINE PRECINCT

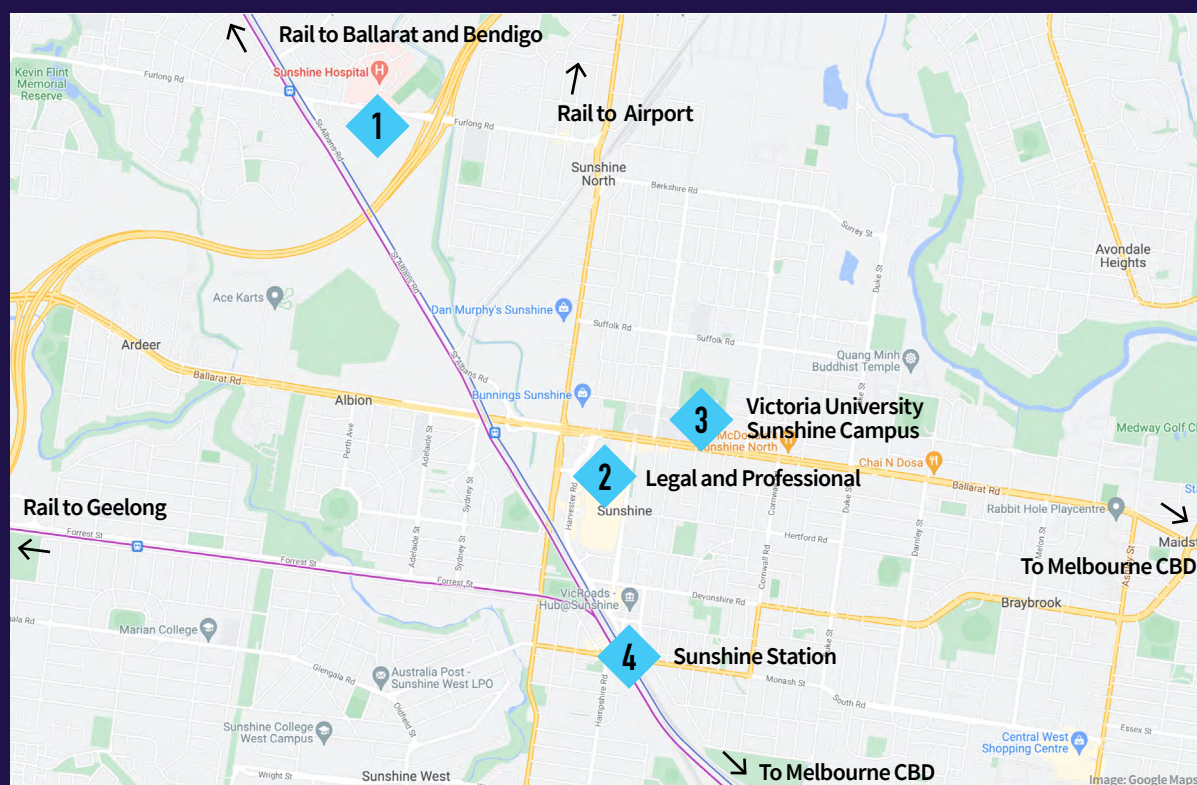
Increasing jobs in the West

A wide-ranging strategy is required to achieve the vision of a sustained increase in the number of jobs in the West of Melbourne. The enablers and strategies identified above are not enough. There also needs to be a stimulus of new jobs in the West by transferring jobs growth from other parts of Melbourne.

To explore this issue, the project undertook a hypothetical exercise. What if by 2031 there was an increase of jobs sufficient to maintain the proportion of employed West of Melbourne residents working locally at the 2021 level of 52 per cent? Analysis by CoPS shows that this would equate to a need for around 19,500 additional jobs in the West in 2031.

Figure 7: The Key Sunshine Triangle – Up Close

Sunshine Triangle will provide the heart of the precinct with denser population, taller buildings and the main transport hub.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>1 Health and Social Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Linking up Sunshine Hospital precinct to allied health providers and paramedical services and transport. | <p>2 Legal and Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Redevelop Sunshine Magistrates Court and attract professional services. | <p>3 Victoria University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ University and Polytechnic redeveloped and greater industry presence. | <p>4 Transport Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Connections to rail and on to the Airport, regional centres and Melbourne CBD. |
|---|--|---|--|

A roundtable with economic policy experts was held to identify industries most appropriate for increasing employment in the West of Melbourne, and the actions required to realise this increased employment.

To focus the discussion, it was proposed that this employment growth be concentrated in Sunshine. Other major centres in the West such as Footscray or Werribee could also be suitable. Sunshine was chosen due to the city-shaping Melbourne Airport rail link currently in construction, that will run from Melbourne Airport through to Sunshine, and then to the CBD connecting to Melbourne’s East.

The evolution of Sunshine as a location for new, different and better jobs was foreseen in the 2019 report *Sunshine: Daring to be Great by the West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance (WoMEDA)*. The Brimbank City Council elaborated on the potential in its report *Sunshine Priority Precinct Vision 2050*.

The area has five major infrastructure anchors around which job growth can be focussed:

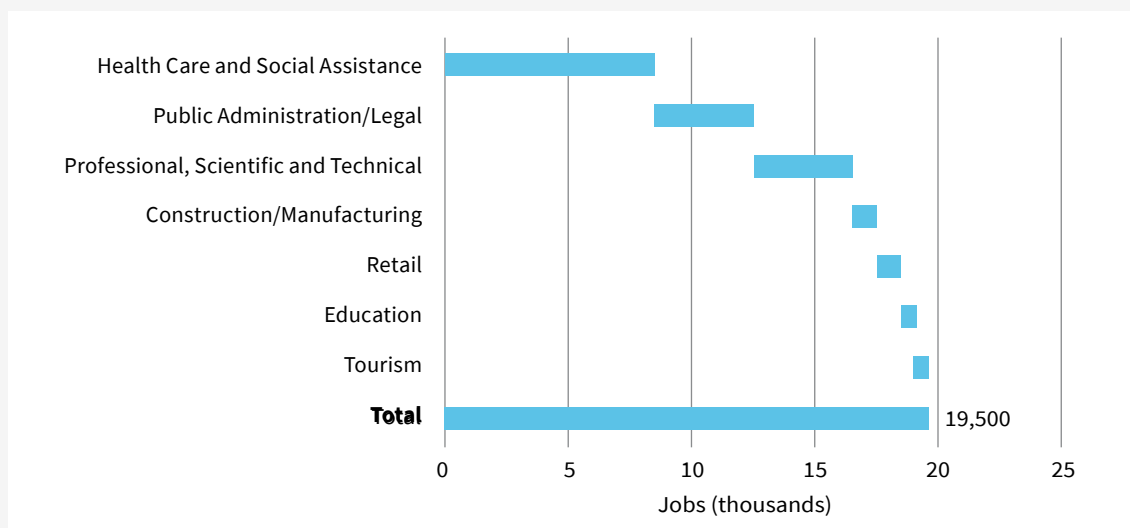
- ◆ Sunshine Hospital
- ◆ Victoria University
- ◆ Magistrates Court
- ◆ Sunshine Transport Hub
- ◆ Western State Significant Industrial Precinct (WSSIP).

Further afield, Melbourne Airport at Tullamarine is also a major anchor.

The Victorian Government has recognised the opportunities presented in Sunshine to maximise its economic potential, with the Victorian Department of Transport leading the development of a Sunshine Economic Strategy. This is concentrated upon the Sunshine National Employment and Innovation Cluster (NEIC) and Precinct.

The roundtable identified that the additional 19,500 jobs should be focussed in Health Care and Social Assistance, Legal Services and Public Administration. There were also jobs identified in *Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Construction, Manufacturing, Retail, Education and Tourism* (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Potential jobs increase in Sunshine by 2031



These additional jobs will be stimulated by a combination of already established economic activity underway in Sunshine, the opening of the new Airport Rail Link, and new targeted initiatives. Potential actions to realise these additional jobs are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 Characteristics of the potential jobs increase in Sunshine by 2031

Sector	FTEs	Actions
Health Care and Social Assistance	8500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Sunshine as a para-medical location (comprising ambulance, nursing, aged care, specialised logistics, medical security). Presenting Sunshine as a desirable location for medical device enterprises and research. Improving road and public transport links between the Sunshine health precinct and rail links.
Public Administration/Legal	4000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructing a public administration campus at Sunshine, supporting post-COVID work modes. Redeveloping the Magistrates Court as a major new legal precinct for the west of Melbourne. Headquarter public entities in Sunshine that do not need to be in the Central Business District.
Professional, Scientific and Technical	4000	Expansion in professional services in and around Sunshine, attracted by Sunshine being between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the airport and the city Melbourne and Asia.
Construction/Manufacturing	1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Western State Significant Industrial Precinct (WSSIP) manufacturing community. Encourage co-location of construction and manufacturing businesses onto the Victoria University campus. Co-locate a government-business development hub.
Retail	1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design rail/bus/car transport hub to encourage foot traffic supporting retail. Develop Hampshire Rd as a key pedestrian mall linking Ballarat Road with Sunshine station. Improve paths linking the health precinct with the commercial complex.
Education	500	Additional jobs in tertiary education in response to local demand, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of Victoria University in both VET and higher education. Growth in private registered training organisation enrolments.
Tourism	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permit hotel construction. Protect and strengthen the ethnic feel of Sunshine. Develop new tourist facilities especially as part of the Energy Park redevelopment.

Each of these opportunities requires further concentrated development. Realising this level of jobs growth will require various arms of State government to work together with local government and the private sector.

07 THE WAY FORWARD

The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, a large impact on the West of Melbourne. Job losses, COVID-19 infections and premature deaths, alongside large reductions in community wellbeing. Despite the recovery being underway there are ongoing skills and jobs challenges. The hope is that the final phases of the pandemic provide an opportunity to design and implement a new future for the West and impetus for permanent beneficial change.

This report provides part of the blueprint required to create this new future. The fifteen other VU RISE projects funded by the Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund (VHESIF) also have an important role to play. For, example, the Resilient Enterprises and Sustainable Employment in Tourism (RESET) project is focussing upon the visitor economy, and the Social Value Creation for Transport and Infrastructure project is seeking to ensure local communities benefit from the large-scale transport and infrastructure projects currently underway in the West. All of these initiatives are part of an overall plan to boost the West.

Harnessing the West's growing population

The significant population increase forecast in the West of Melbourne brings great opportunity. However, positive outcomes will require community and industry collaboration and public support. A focus should be on schemes and programs that embed systemic change and improve long-term outcomes. With the forecast rate of increased commuting, there needs to be infrastructure support as part of the skills and jobs solution. Overall, an explicit commitment to ensuring people can live and work well locally in the West is necessary.

At the same time, it is important to make all efforts place-based, focussed upon local communities. Talking and listening to communities provides far greater insight than analysis of data collected in the Census, or some other mechanism, can generate.

Progressing Enablers and Strategies

The Enabling factors and strategies identified in this report are wide-ranging. Their implementation and success will require governments – local, state and federal – to work together with industry. There will need to be collaboration between training providers and industry of all sizes. And finally, it relies upon the residents of the West playing their part and taking advantage of the opportunities that this new future presents.

Stakeholders working together

An implementation plan needs to be developed to make progress. This plan will be underpinned by extensive consultation and identify responsibility for implementing individual strategies. Responsibility for Enablers is more problematic. The Enablers can't, and should not be, assigned responsibility to a single entity. Rather, the Enablers are instead a direction that needs to be moved towards by all relevant governments, education and training providers, and industry, collaborating.

Governments working together

Making progress on each of the four Enablers, alongside the 12 strategies, will require governments of all levels to work together. Many of the strategies focus upon education and training, requiring the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to collaborate and across their areas of responsibility to achieve meaningful change. For example, the provision of funding and incentives for the upskilling of individuals cuts across Victorian and Commonwealth Government responsibilities. Meaningful change, which will benefit not just the West, but Victoria and Australia, can be achieved.

Networks across the West of Melbourne

The establishment of strong networks and relationships between training providers and employers across the West is another vital activity. The ultimate goal of training is to ensure individuals enhance and develop their skills and capabilities. Strong relationships will ensure that education training providers focus their activity on training locals in fields aligning with local skill needs. If local skill needs can be met, new businesses will be drawn in, creating new opportunities for employers, entrepreneurs and local people. At the same time, such economic regeneration will increase the appeal of the West.

This report has focused very much on the teaching and learning side of education and training providers such as Victoria University. The importance of the research activities of universities cannot be understated. This project is testament to that, showing that deep research can guide where future education and training efforts should be focussed, what is working, and what should be done differently.

(There is) High demand for infrastructure projects and the urgent need to generate partnerships between industry and academics, particularly in Melbourne's west. – Infrastructure participant

Building capacity

Implementation of the Strategies should bring about a capacity building and legacy blueprint. This will ensure the efforts make sustained, systemic change, and continue in the absence of direct active implementation action.

The West of Melbourne has been historically beset in schemes for improvement. These have been well founded, helpful programs but often have not left a sustained change. Often this is caused by contingent funding and has led to boom and bust cycles that entrench disadvantage and disincentivise business innovation and investment in the region.

The West though can grow, develop on its strengths and provide prosperity through coordinated systemic change that brings industry, government and education and training in closer authentic collaboration. This ambitious plan is the path forward to achieve the greatest social value for the people of the West.

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Lead Researcher	Project Title
Peter Hurley, Melinda Hilde-brandt	Proof of Concept: Cadetships with employers in the West
Fiona MacDonald	Proof of Concept: Apprenticeship / Traineeship completion support
Alison Whan	Infrastructure skills met for Melbourne’s West
Owen Smith	Supporting the lived experienced community into employment
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David Goodwin	Offshore shipping podcast series
Elmira Jamei	Promoting active transportation in Melbourne’s West
Irene Sazdov	Relations between VU/VUP and the Aboriginal community in the West
Mark Thomson	Supporting social procurement in the Footscray Hospital project

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Windsor, K., & Alcorso, C. (2008). *Skills in context: A guide to the skill ecosystem approach to workforce development*. NSW Department of Education and Training and Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Sydney.

