



Workforce Development and Training Needs

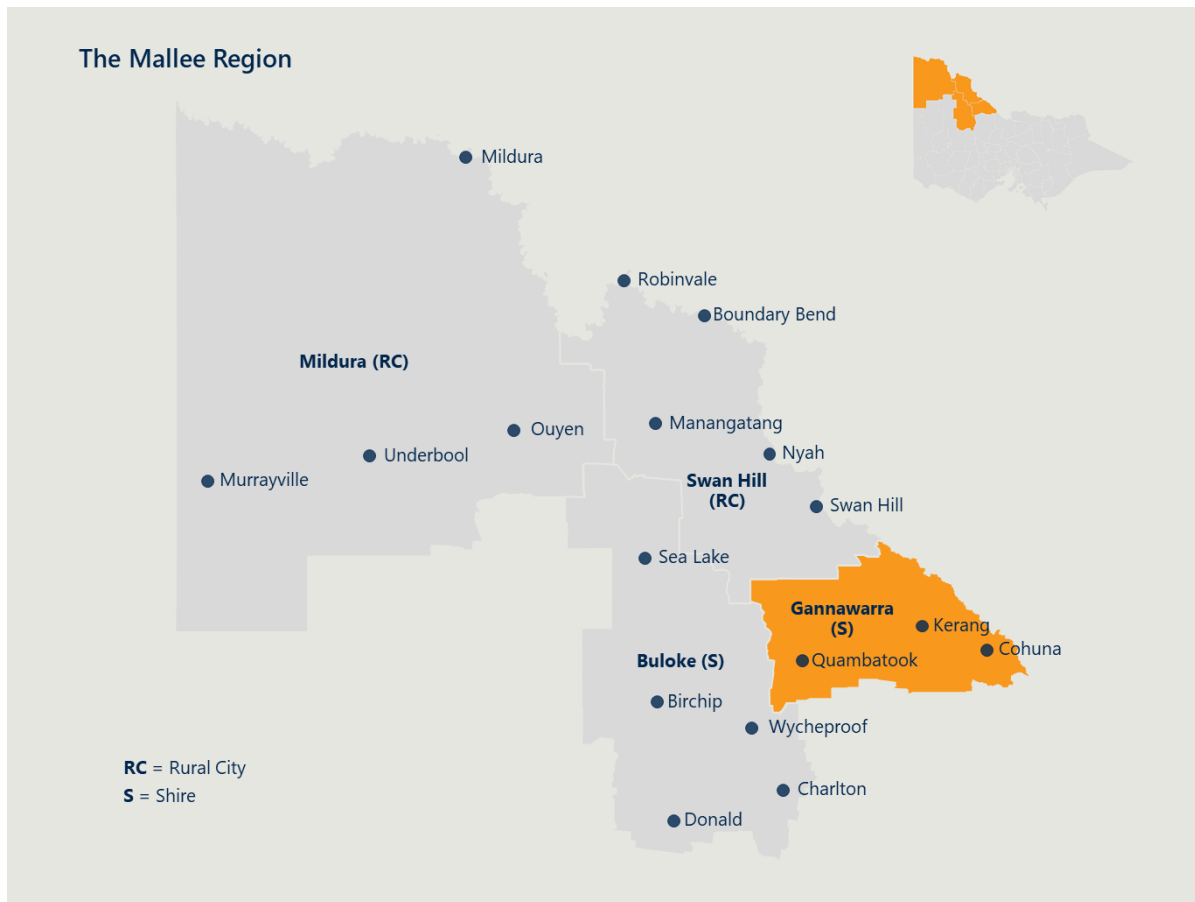
Gannawarra Shire

21 June 2019

Executive summary

Nous Group (Nous) was engaged by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and the Gannawarra Shire to support a collaborative effort to generate sustainable and systemic solutions that address training access and workforce challenges in the shire. Previous work with the Victorian Skills Commissioner to develop the Mallee Regional Skills Demand Profile to understand the nature of challenges faced by employers in the region had a strong focus on Mildura, Robinvale and Swan Hill. This project presents an opportunity to develop a richer understanding of the specific needs of the Gannawarra Shire.

Figure 1 | Gannawarra Shire within the broader Mallee region



Labour shortages hold the Shire back from reaching its full potential

There is established demand for workers in the Gannawarra Shire that cannot be met locally. Consequently, skills are a secondary priority to finding individuals that can turn up and do the work. This is most evident in community services and agricultural roles and some manufacturers. Selected businesses in other industries faced similar constraints. Addressing labour shortages is beyond the scope of this project although critical issues exist around childcare which limits the ability for workers, particularly women, to work in the region and the scarcity of rental accommodation creates barriers for people to move to the region.

The Shire is at risk of becoming disconnected from the tertiary education system

The Shire is at significant risk of becoming disconnected from the tertiary education system (Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education). Employers are unsure of who to contact and engage with for to meet their requirements. TAFEs who were previously active in the Gannawarra Shire have largely exited. Some private RTOs (located within and outside the broader Mallee region) have filled part of this gap but there are many needs that are not being met. Workers travel more than an hour away to undertake training which incurs additional costs to businesses.

These are thin markets which presents challenges, but communities are prepared to travel and to work together to ensure local responses. However, they struggle to navigate the funding and provider landscape and rightly are not prepared to invest the significant time and resources to try and find an appropriate solution. The default is to train staff themselves or to look to recruit skilled workers elsewhere, in many cases from other local businesses. Further all acknowledged more can be done with schools to encourage and support local young people to pursue a career in the region.

Industries share some common opportunities for workforce development and training

Common challenges were identified across several of the key industries in the Gannawarra Shire. Opportunities exist to address these challenges and can be achieved in collaboration with the Shire, industry and training providers. Addressing these challenges is critical for unlocking the shire's potential. Key opportunities for the shire are outlined below, and further opportunities are discussed in detail in later sections.

Themes include:

- Strengthen collaboration between schools and industry to improve career pathways for young people and highlight local employment opportunities
- Provide employers with information on training providers and available funding to increase access and participation of workers in the training system
- Explore options to better utilise existing training facilities including the Kerang Learning Centre and Kerang Technical High School.
- Utilise and coordinate the delivery of the Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF) to deliver training for regional areas and subsidise additional expenses due to travel for training
- Develop new training models which incorporate online learning with applied on-the-job experiences to overcome geographic factors affecting access and participation in training
- Develop modular training programs to upskill managers and supervisors to effectively manage their teams and participate in training alongside work.

Each industry in the Gannawarra Shire has unique education and training needs

The consultation process identified several challenges and opportunities for local industry groups in the shire. The skills and training system, in collaboration with industry, will play an important role to address these challenges to ensure the local workforce development and training needs are met. Table 1 below summarises the key challenges and opportunities by industry for education and training in the Gannawarra Shire.

Table 1 | Challenges and opportunities in education and training by industry

Industry	Challenge	Opportunity
Agriculture and horticulture	Employers require workers with broader knowledge and awareness of agribusiness operations	Update entry-level training to foster understanding of agribusiness operations
	Farms have an increased dependence on technology enabled machinery for farm profitability	Provide additional training hours around expensive equipment and plant machinery to increase proficiency levels of workers
Healthcare and social assistance	University qualified workers are difficult to attract and retain	Collaborate with local universities to engage with and attract recent graduates to the region
	Entry-level roles lack the skills and training to provide required support	Create a skillset for workers to upskill in personal care, footcare health and in-home support
	High numbers of unqualified workers in social work, catering and maintenance roles	Employers and training providers should work together to recognise and complete training for workers
	Workforce quality and safety standards are being scrutinised by the Royal Commission	Work with local employers to respond to any recommendations arising from the Royal Commissions
Construction and trades	Young workers can benefit from greater exposure to broader trades	Embed a pre-apprenticeship program which gives young people a feel for the work they would be doing in an apprenticeship and eventually a career
	New businesses in the region require locally skilled and qualified workers for their workforce	Work with new businesses to ensure their workforce skills and training needs are met
Retail trade	Retail trade businesses are largely disengaged from the training system	Partner with high performing businesses to pilot modular training that delivers clear and immediate returns to small businesses
	Employers lack retail training and business skills to take their small businesses to the next level	Develop short in-location courses for small businesses to upskill in retail trade and business skills. This could include customer service, digital marketing and visual merchandising
	Young people have limited career progression in the sector	Explore potential for school-based traineeships to enable students to get experience in retail and provide an increased pool of workers for local traders
Hospitality and tourism	Skilled workers in holiday parks are in demand and critical to the visitor economy	Work with holiday parks to explore opportunities to collectively upskill workers
	Locals starting their own businesses in hospitality and tourism require skills and training to be successful	Develop short in-location courses for small business to upskill in hospitality and tourism. These could be non-accredited and run

Industry	Challenge	Opportunity
		through Learn Locals or community resource centres
	Workers with broader knowledge and awareness of manufacturing operations are in demand	Update entry-level training to foster understanding of manufacturing operations (e.g. lean operations)
Manufacturing	Workers with good potential lack formal qualifications	Develop skill sets for workers transitioning from other industries which can subsequently contribute to an apprenticeship
	Young workers can benefit from greater exposure to broader trades	Embed a pre-apprenticeship program which gives young people a feel for the work they would be doing in an apprenticeship and eventually a career

Action is required to engage and support employers to address their workforce needs

Education is a critical enabler to economic growth and community resilience within the Gannawarra Shire. Understanding local needs is the first step in working with employers to ensure they have the skilled workforce they need to unlock the potential of the shire. While some of these needs are common with the Mallee and regional Victoria, others are unique.

This report outlines the critical needs, challenges and opportunities that must be addressed for local employers to realise the benefits experienced by employers in regions better served by tertiary education providers. It also outlines opportunities to better connect and make use of education providers currently active in the region.

While some opportunities can be addressed immediately others will take time. In each case they cannot be done in isolation and will require collaboration by employers, the shire, TAFEs, Universities, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regional Development and Department of Education and Training and various industry groups and stakeholders.

Implementation of the initiatives identified in this report represents the next step in developing relevant relationships, education, pathways that can underpin the Shire's future prosperity.

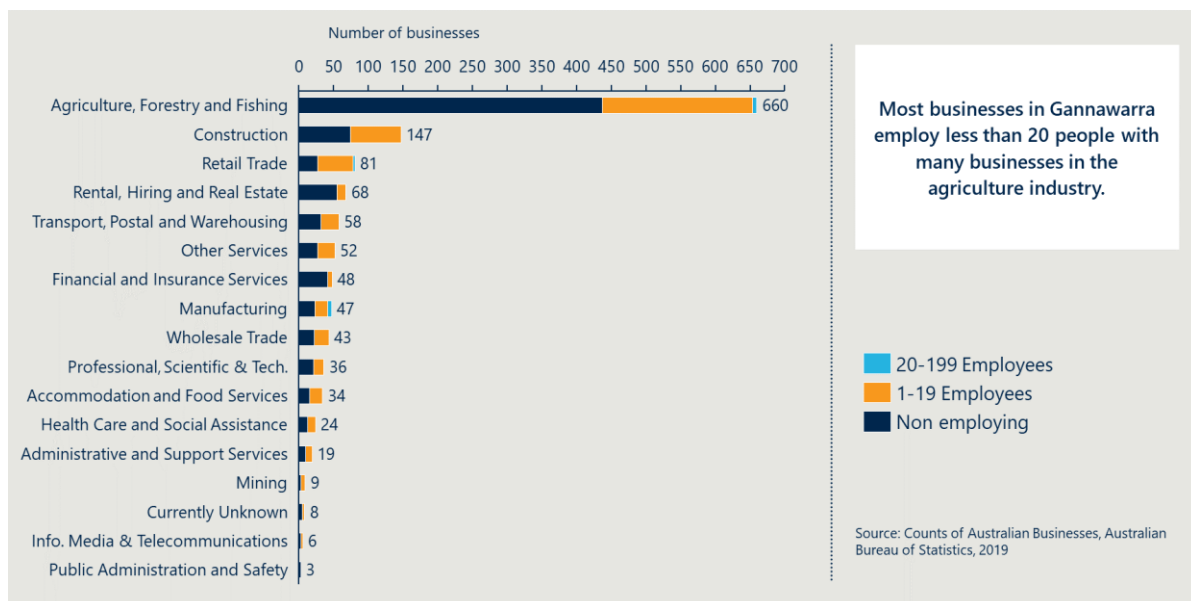
1 Labour shortages hold the Shire back from reaching its full potential

The Gannawarra Shire is in north-west Victoria bordering the Murray River to the north-east and the Mallee landscape to the south-west. About 250 kilometres north-west of the Melbourne CBD, the Shire covers 3,700 square kilometres and includes the main towns of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook. The Shire is bordered by Swan Hill, Shires of Loddon, Buloke and Campaspe.¹

A strong and diverse agricultural base dominates the local economy and is complemented by manufacturing, strong retail precincts in Kerang and Cohuna, health services, education and professional services. The blend of productive dryland and irrigation provides security and diversity for the agriculture and horticulture industries which includes dairy, livestock, cropping, viticulture and horticulture. There is an emergent manufacturing industry which has grown from supporting the agriculture industry and is now diversifying to meet national and international markets. Large scale renewable energy production is also an emerging industry for the Gannawarra Shire.²

There are approximately 1,350 businesses in the shire with 60 per cent of businesses who are non-employing and a further 38 per cent of businesses employing less than 20 people. There are about a dozen large employers across the agriculture, manufacturing and retail trade industries. The distribution of businesses across industries and the number of people they employ is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 | Count of businesses in the Gannawarra Shire



The unemployment rate in the Gannawarra Shire was 3.4 per cent in the December 2018 quarter and is consistently less than the broader Mallee region and state unemployment rates.³ These are shown in Figure 3 below. Employers in the Gannawarra Shire struggle to fill job vacancies with workers from the local community. This is compounded by the lack of young people choosing to stay in the shire after completing their secondary schooling. Young people are moving to urban centres to pursue further

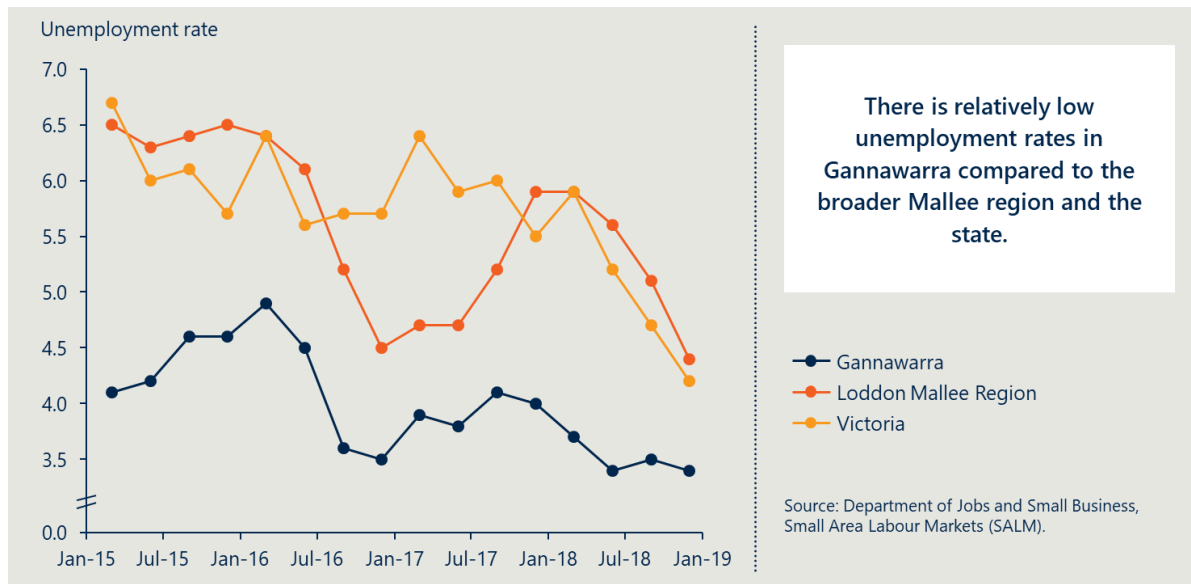
¹ Gannawarra Shire Council, Strategic Tourism Plan, 2015-2020

² Gannawarra Shire Council, Council Plan, 2017-2021

³ Department of Jobs and Small Business Australia, Small Area Labour Markets Australia, December quarter 2018

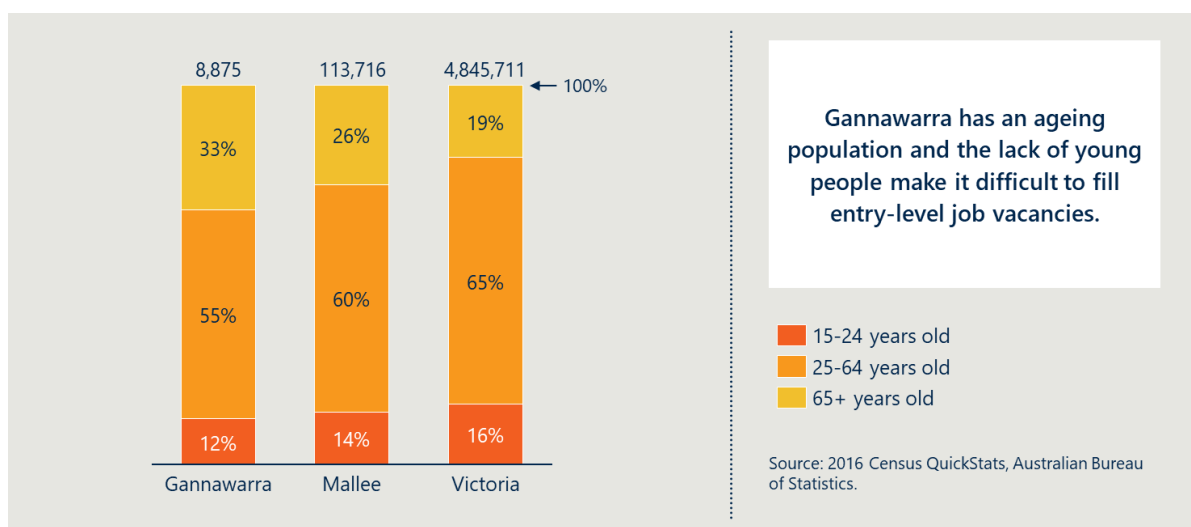
education, training and other employment opportunities with a few people returning to the region later in life. The lack of childcare services and unavailability of rental properties in the shire prevent businesses from attracting new workers and their families to the region.

Figure 3 | Unemployment rate for the Gannawarra Shire



Approximately 10,500 people live in the Gannawarra Shire.⁴ The Shire has experienced a steady increase in population between 2011 and 2016 of approximately 1.8 per cent. Population decline is common to the shires of the Central Murray region, where only three out of ten shires have experienced a growth over the past ten years. However, the Gannawarra Shire Council’s Strategic Community Plan has identified a long-term program which aims to reverse this trend and plans to increase the population of the Shire by building on the locational strengths of the area. Like most regional areas, the Gannawarra Shire has a significantly large ageing population which will present significant challenges for the region’s workforce. A third of the population is over the age of 65 years and over half of the population are between the ages of 25 and 64 years. Figure 4 shows the age distribution of the Gannawarra Shire.

Figure 4 | Age distribution of the Gannawarra Shire



⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census QuickStats

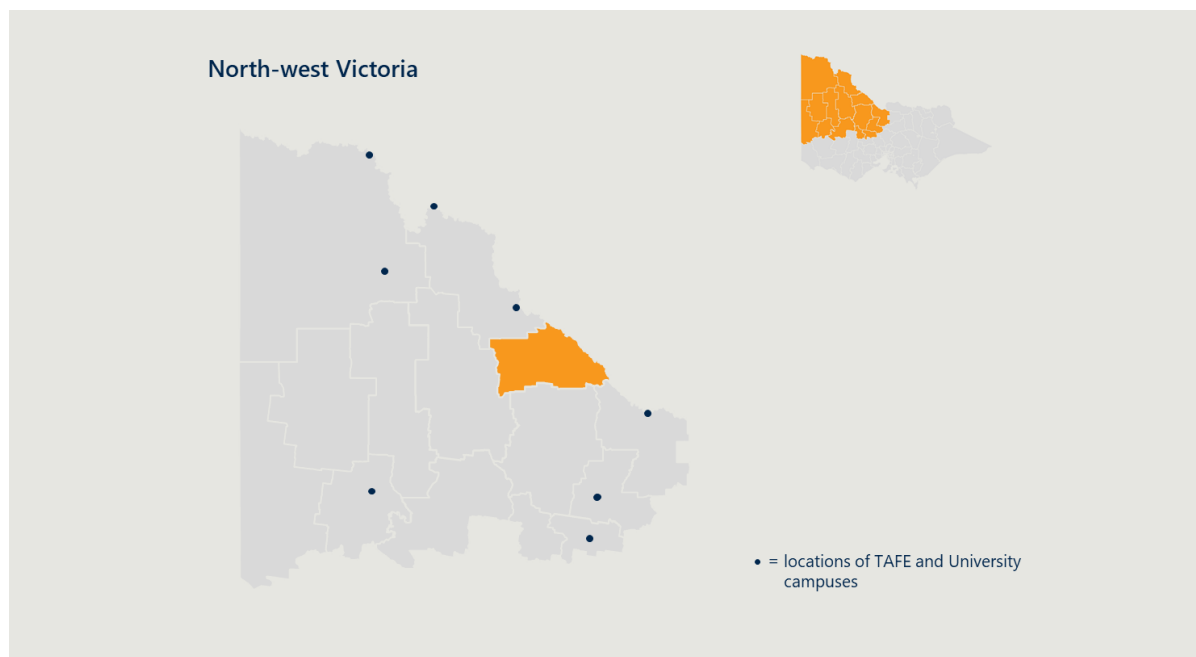
2 The Shire is at risk of becoming disconnected from the tertiary education system

The Gannawarra Shire is one of several shires or councils in Victoria that does not have a TAFE or University campus located in their borders. Consequently, residents must travel to TAFE and University campuses located in Swan Hill, Echuca and Bendigo. Depending on locations, residents in Gannawarra must travel between 60 and 130 kilometres each way, which equates to between one and one and a half hours each way and potentially need to stay overnight. This imposes significant costs on employers and staff through costs of travel and indirectly through lost productivity from having an employee away from the business for lengths at a time.

TAFEs who were previously active in the shire have withdrawn while engagement by universities is limited primarily to student recruitment. Some private RTOs (located within and outside the broader Mallee region) have filled part of this gap. However, they do not provide the breadth of offers available through TAFE or access to key government programs such as Free TAFE and other interventions designed to support access to quality education for all.

Consequently, many needs are not being met as confused or disenfranchised employers disengage from the education system. Employers report in most cases they are unsure of who to contact and engage with for training requirements.

Figure 5 | Locations of TAFE and University campuses in North-west Victoria



Businesses and communities are prepared to work together to ensure local responses. However, they struggle to navigate the funding and provider landscape and are not able to invest the significant time and resources to try and find an appropriate solution. Employers are unaware of the incentives, processes or availability to take on workers in traineeships and work placements. The default is to train staff themselves or to look to recruit skilled workers elsewhere, in many cases from other local businesses. Businesses are willing to pool demand for training so that the aggregate demand in the community will be attractive enough for training providers to run training in the Gannawarra Shire.

3 Industries share some common opportunities for workforce development and training

Industries in the Gannawarra Shire face common challenges and opportunities for workforce development and training. This includes strengthening collaboration between schools and industry, providing employers with information on training providers, utilising the Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF), developing new training models and developing modular training for managers and supervisors.

These challenges and opportunities are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 | Common challenges and opportunities for Gannawarra Shire industries

Challenge	Opportunity
Varying levels of engagement between schools and employers in the region limits visibility and understanding of local careers	<p>Strengthen collaboration between schools and industry</p> <p>Improve connections between secondary schools and employers to showcase local career pathways and employment opportunities. Increased exposure of industries and local careers will better equip students to make informed decisions about their future education and training to better meet the needs of their community. This can also provide a channel for employers to fill traineeships, apprenticeships and work experience placements with local young people.</p>
Employers are confused about who and where to go for training and the support that could be made available to them	<p>Provide employers with information on training providers</p> <p>Employers currently rely on word-of-mouth recommendations and information on available training for their workers. They require information (e.g. cost, duration, mode of delivery) on relevant training for their workforce and the available funding to increase access and participation in training for their workers. Information needs to be centrally provided, easy to access, current and applicable to employers and industries in the region.</p>
Existing resources and partnerships are not being fully utilised to deliver improved training access	<p>Explore options to better utilise existing training facilities</p> <p>In the absence of TAFEs in the region, the shire has facilities that are well suited to support vocational training in the region, specifically the Kerang Learning Centre and Kerang Technical High School. There are opportunities to utilise these facilities more for adult education. Facilities in other regions are similarly underutilised and a policy shift is required to better utilise them for adult education.</p>
Absence of TAFEs in the shire contributes to higher costs of training compared to similar organisations in other regions	<p>Utilise and coordinate the delivery of the Regional and Specialist Training Fund (RSTF)</p> <p>The RSTF is available to meet the needs of localised employers in regional Victoria and is available to training providers who hold a current Skills First VET funding contract. However, with the absence of TAFEs in the shire, the fund is not currently being utilised to deliver training for Gannawarra’s industry needs. A coordination of resources is required to ensure this fund is being utilised and is working to deliver training for regional areas. This fund can be used to coordinate the delivery of training in-place, leveraging the facilities and resources already available in the shire. It can also be used to subsidise the additional out of pocket expenses employers incur due to the need for employees to travel for study.</p>
Geography is a barrier to access and participation in standard vocational training and higher education models	<p>Develop new training models</p> <p>Adopt models that incorporate online theory with applied local on-the-job experiences to better overcome the geographic factors that prevent workers from access and participation to training. This should also explore options to take training to individual employers where</p>

Challenge	Opportunity
	<p>possible. Further, learn locals with an existing presence in the shire could be better utilised to deliver high value short courses for employers and for individuals disengaged from work.</p>
<p>Employers require workers with skills and training in people management and leadership</p>	<p>Develop a modular training program to upskill managers and supervisors</p> <p>Team leaders, managers and supervisors require training in people management and leadership to effectively manage their respective teams. A modular program delivered in the shire will allow these workers to engage in training alongside their work and encourage lifelong learning. It could also be an important catalyst to support the shires leaders of tomorrow form connections with providers able to help develop their future workforce.</p>

4 Each industry in the Gannawarra Shire has unique education and training needs

Consultations with representatives across key industry groups in the Gannawarra Shire has identified opportunities to strengthen the education system to address the challenges and skills and workforce requirements of the local industries. This section of the report provides a snapshot of each industry's profile, outlook, job requirements and current challenges and opportunities for the education system.

Profile summaries on each of the key industries in Figure 6 are provided overleaf.

Figure 6 | Key industry groups in the Gannawarra Shire





Agriculture and horticulture

Agriculture growth is dependent on the supply of water and availability of workers

Profile	<p>The Gannawarra Shire has a strong and diverse agricultural base which dominates the local economy and is complemented by related industries such as manufacturing and construction. The blend of productive dryland and irrigation provides security and diversity for the agriculture and horticulture industries which includes dairying, livestock, cropping, viticulture and horticulture. Intensive animal husbandry has become a large subsector with many piggeries in the region. The industries have seen a lot of consolidation of small farms into large family farms and corporate farms.</p>
Outlook	<p>Many aspects of the agriculture and horticulture industries are geared for growth but are heavily dependent on the supply and price of water in the region. Dairy farming has declined in the region and prospects will depend on exports to national and international markets. Intensive animal husbandry will become more prevalent in the region and is intended to see continued growth over the next few years. Significant prospects for future growth in cropping and irrigation are limited by the availability of skilled labour and workers in the workforce. Farm consolidation and automation will continue to disrupt these industries resulting in the loss of experienced farmers to other industries and the need for more technical skills.</p>

Skilled staff are required but workforce shortages is a challenge

Skills and training	<p>There is a growing requirement for skilled staff as the industry becomes more automated and computerised and the need for manual labour decreases. The skills which make the most difference in this industry are animal husbandry, agriculture, machine handling and operations and business and labour management. The prevalence of more corporate farms creates opportunities for middle-level management roles responsible for the business aspects of operating a farm and people in teams. Workers require a diverse skill set as no two farms are the same and learning needs to be contextualised. Employers look to hire hardworking and highly motivated workers for entry-level positions who they can upskill on the farm. These entry-level workers have the potential to develop new skills through a mixture of training opportunities and on-the-job experience. Some employers take on school-based apprentices undertaking Certificates III or IV for one day a week for a few years, but these apprentices often require lots of hands-on work and supervision. Some farmers look to upskill through short courses to build knowledge and improve operations. There is a preference for online material, with industry bodies at the forefront of provision. Many farmers did not see value in qualifications beyond meeting safety and compliance needs. Farm workers are in demand for their knowledge and diverse skill set they gain across many industries.</p>
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Current challenges to vocational training and skills	Opportunities for the training system
Employers require workers with broader knowledge and awareness of agribusiness operations	Update entry-level training to foster understanding of agribusiness operations
Farms have an increased dependence on technology enabled machinery for farm profitability	Provide additional training hours around expensive equipment and plant machinery to increase proficiency levels of workers



Healthcare and social assistance

Qualified workers required to meet growing demand in healthcare and social assistance

Profile	Healthcare and social assistance in the Gannawarra Shire include hospitals, community care, residential aged care and disability care. Employers in these industries split their workforce into qualified care and respite workers and domestic carers who do unqualified home care tasks. There is a heavy dependence on publicly provided services that are under strain.
Outlook	The ageing population of the Gannawarra Shire is an indication that the healthcare and social assistance industries will continue to grow over the next 10 years. There will be growth in the support services required in keeping people in their homes as the age. Demand for allied health services is also growing but demand for specialists is often shared across multiple providers. There is an undersupply of allied health specialists and General Practitioners and it is difficult to attract these highly qualified workers to the region. There are also shortages in some areas of the aged and disability care workforces which are intertwined with the health workforce. There will continue to be challenges in maintaining the workforce to ensure there are no gaps in future service provision. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will also cause disruption in the industries and put a greater focus on quality and safety standards and ensuring workers are adequately qualified.

Rounding out training for staff and upskilling entry-level roles is required

Skills and training	Employers require a mix of low and high-skilled workers. Employers particularly value training which allow entry-level roles to upskill and take more proactive steps in preventative treatments which reduces demand from highly skilled and specialist roles. For example, personal care workers with training in footcare health can prevent the onset of common foot conditions and refer people to podiatrists when necessary for chronic conditions. Employers are looking to upskill their domestic carers in home catering and round out training for cooking and catering staff. For qualified roles, employers highlighted the need for Enrolled and Registered Nurses in the region and for workers with Certificates IV in Disability and Aged Care and the Diploma of Community Services. Employers require more highly-skilled workers with relevant qualifications to do more of the work that is required to ensure the community is healthy and cared for. Employers also identified the potential significant implications if new minimum standards emerge from either the Royal Commissions into aged care or disability.
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Current challenges to vocational training and skills	Opportunities for the training system
University qualified workers are difficult to attract and retain	Collaborate with local universities to engage with and attract recent graduates to the region
Entry-level roles lack the skills and training to provide required support	Create a skillset for workers to upskill in personal care, footcare health and in-home support
High numbers of unqualified workers in social work, catering and maintenance roles	Employers and training providers should work together to recognise and complete training for workers
Workforce quality and safety standards are being scrutinised by the Royal Commission	Work with local employers to respond to any recommendations arising from the Royal Commissions



Construction and trades

Agriculture and horticulture drive the demand for construction and trades

Profile	Construction and trades support the strong agriculture and horticulture industries in the Gannawarra Shire. These industries consist of sole traders, small businesses and subcontractors. The workforce in this industry is quite diverse; occupations include electricians, carpenters, plumbers, engineers, building designers and drafters.
Outlook	<p>The demand for services in these industries are heavily reliant on the agriculture and horticulture industries in the region and growth is often linked to farms' propensity to purchase goods and services. Industries are expecting some slowing down of activity compared to other years given farmers' selling off water instead of expanding and increasing production. The construction industry splits its work between constructing new buildings and maintenance and the outlook for maintenance is better. The industry is being disrupted by the growing demand for prefabricated buildings rather than stand-alone ones. The pull of employment opportunities in Melbourne from the construction boom makes it difficult for employers to attract and retain workers in the region.</p> <p>There are some new developments in the region including a rare earth metal mining operation and renewable energy plants. A proposal for a large mining operation is currently under consideration. If approved, this mining operation would lead to significant employment and career opportunities in the region. The Cohuna solar farm has started construction and will provide local investment opportunities.</p>

Specialist trades are equally important as workplace management and business skills

Skills and training	Skills which make the greatest difference in these industries include occupational health and safety, communication skills, proficiency with Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software and people management. Employers find it difficult to fill management and supervisor roles with workers that have skills in people management, conflict management and know how to manage business activities effectively. Employers also require qualified workers; including diesel mechanics, plumbers, electricians and bricklayers. There are opportunities for apprenticeships and work experience to upskill local young people with specialist trades in the region.
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Current challenges to vocational training and skills	Opportunities for the training system
Young workers can benefit from greater exposure to broader trades	Embed a pre-apprenticeship program which gives young people a feel for the work they would be doing in an apprenticeship and eventually a career
New businesses in the region require locally skilled and qualified workers for their workforce	Work with new businesses to ensure their workforce skills and training needs are met



Retail trade

Online shopping and farm consolidations have impacted the growth of retail trade

Profile	The majority of retail businesses in the Gannawarra Shire are sole-owners with a few franchises and supermarkets. Businesses mostly employ low numbers of employees and have been operating for many years. There are minimal new entrants to the region.
Outlook	The outlook for retail trade is closely tied with the performance of farms and the agriculture industry; when farmers are doing well, related industries and towns also do well. Online shopping has been a major disruptor for retail traders and shops aren't getting the foot traffic they used to. The aggregation and consolidation of farms means there is less spending in the area and some families have moved away which has impacted on the number of people they see in town shopping. The future growth of retail is heavily dependent on farmers' propensity to purchase goods and the number of families in the region.

Upskilling of business owners would provide the most benefit for retail in the region

Skills and training	Training for workers is not a key priority for retail trade but there were some skills which would be of benefit to the industry. Customer service skills are very important for small businesses in the region with many business owners highlighting these skills as being crucial. Visual merchandising training has also been useful for businesses in the region in attracting more people into their shops and converting foot traffic into sales. With the disruption of online shopping, digital marketing skills has become an emerging skill necessary for promoting businesses on social media and attracting customers to shop at their stores. Training for business owners on how to manage and run a business would be beneficial as most owners don't have formal qualifications in business and management and would benefit from upskilling their retail and business acumen. Most employers are disengaged from the training system and don't see the benefits associated with training and upskilling. The industry could better utilise traineeships and work experience students in small businesses.
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Current challenges to vocational training and skills	Opportunities for the training system
Retail trade businesses are largely disengaged from the training system	Partner with high performing businesses to pilot modular training that delivers clear and immediate returns to small businesses
Employers lack retail training and business skills to take their small businesses to the next level	Develop short in-location courses for small businesses to upskill in retail trade and business skills. This could include customer service, digital marketing and visual merchandising
Young people have limited career progression in the sector	Explore potential for school-based traineeships to enable students to get experience in retail and provide an increased pool of workers for local traders



Hospitality and tourism

Environmental assets and recreation are driving growth in hospitality and tourism

Profile	The hospitality and tourism industries in the Gannawarra Shire are diverse with businesses ranging from holiday parks, hotels, motels, cafes, bakeries and restaurants. The region's environmental assets such as lakes and rivers, cultural heritage, recreational activities and major regional events contribute to the region's growing visitor economy.
Outlook	Hospitality and tourism in the Gannawarra Shire have experienced significant growth and are expected to see continued growth. Holiday parks are expanding and investing in increasing their capacity during peak season to meet growing demand. The abundance of nature-based tourism, eco-tourism, and aboriginal ring trees attract people looking to escape the city and have a nature-based holiday in the region. Developments in the shire to improve access and infrastructure for recreational activities will improve the experience and outlook for these industries. The use of seasonal workers is becoming more common to meet demand during peak seasons and to not be over staffed during low seasons.

Customer service, digital marketing and training for licencing requirements are crucial

Skills and training	Employers are open to take on people with qualifications but are happy with a capable worker that is willing to learn on the job. There are opportunities for training and upskilling of the current workforce. Employers need training for workers which help them to meet licencing requirements such as Responsible Service of Alcohol and Responsible Service of Gambling. The shire's proximity to NSW presents challenges and discrepancies in licencing requirements for some employers. Customer service skills was seen to be a very important skill for all businesses in the industry as workers predominately interact with customers daily. Digital marketing skills are also highly sought after to assist with webpage development, social media, photos and reviews.
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Current challenges to vocational training and skills	Opportunities for the training system
Skilled workers in holiday parks are in demand and critical to the visitor economy	Work with holiday parks to explore opportunities to collectively upskill workers
Locals starting their own businesses in hospitality and tourism require skills and training to be successful	Develop short in-location courses for small business to upskill in hospitality and tourism. These could be non-accredited and run through Learn Locals or community resource centres



Manufacturing

Strong export demand and linkages with agriculture will see growth in manufacturing

Profile	<p>The Gannawarra Shire has an emergent manufacturing industry which has grown from supporting the agriculture industry and is now diversifying to meet national and international markets. The industry consists of fabricators of custom machinery modifications and attachments, metal fabricators, specialised irrigation and manufacturers meeting agricultural needs. Workers in this industry are predominately tradespeople including welders and spray painters with some tertiary qualified workers such as designers and engineers. The major centre for manufacturing is Kerang which includes a business park with over 400 workers.</p>
Outlook	<p>The growing demand for manufacturing exports from the shire will see continued growth in manufacturing including its scale and reach to national and international markets. Local demand for manufacturing is dependent on the growth in the agriculture and horticulture industries in the region. Growth in the manufacturing industry is dependent on the growth in the agriculture and horticulture industries in the region. Skilled tradespeople are in high demand to meet the continued growth in manufacturing and important in seizing growth opportunities and prospects. One large manufacturer has established a base in another regional city, partially due to concerns around access to the required workforce</p>

Compliance and regulatory based training are most needed in manufacturing

Skills and training	<p>Employers prefer to employ workers who are already skilled and qualified but are willing to take on anyone who is hard working and train them up. They also provide lots of opportunities for workers to undertake apprenticeships, including adult apprenticeships. The consolidation of farming has seen farmers with diverse skills coming to work in manufacturing. Employers are providing opportunities for these workers to get recognition of prior learning and putting them through adult apprenticeships to get them qualifications. Workers are required to complete specific training before they can carry out work; for example, forklift licences, elevated work platform training, working at heights training and occasionally confined space training. Specific skills which make a difference in this industry includes metal fabrication, proficiency with Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software such as Solidworks and communication skills. Employers also highlighted the need for workers to be skilled in leading and managing teams as workers progress to team leadership and supervisor roles. Awareness and understanding of lean manufacturing processes is also valued.</p>
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Current challenges to vocational training and skills	Opportunities for the training system
Workers with broader knowledge and awareness of manufacturing operations are in demand	Update entry-level training to foster understanding of manufacturing operations (e.g. lean operations)
Workers with good potential lack formal qualifications	Develop skill sets for workers transitioning from other industries which can subsequently contribute to an apprenticeship
Young workers can benefit from greater exposure to broader trades	Embed a pre-apprenticeship program which gives young people a feel for the work they would be doing in an apprenticeship and eventually a career

5 Action is required to engage and support employers to address their workforce needs

Education is a critical enabler to economic growth and community resilience within the Gannawarra Shire. Understanding local needs is the first step in working with employers to ensure they have the skilled workforce they need to unlock the potential of the shire. While some of these needs are common with the Mallee and regional Victoria, others are unique.

This report outlines the critical needs, challenges and opportunities that must be addressed for local employers to realise the benefits experienced by employers in regions better served by tertiary education providers. It also outlines opportunities to better connect and make use of education providers currently active in the region.

While some opportunities can be addressed immediately others will take time. In each case they cannot be done in isolation and will require collaboration by employers, the shire, TAFEs, Universities, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regional Development and Department of Education and Training and various industry groups and stakeholders.

Changes in policy (e.g. towards trade training centres), grant programs (e.g. regional and specialist training fund) and partnerships between employers and training providers will all be important components of a sustainable solution.

Implementation of the initiatives identified in this report represents the next step in developing relevant relationships, education, pathways that can underpin the Shire's future prosperity.

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