



Equipping Victoria's Workforce in Transition Case Studies



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An inclusive, productive Victoria

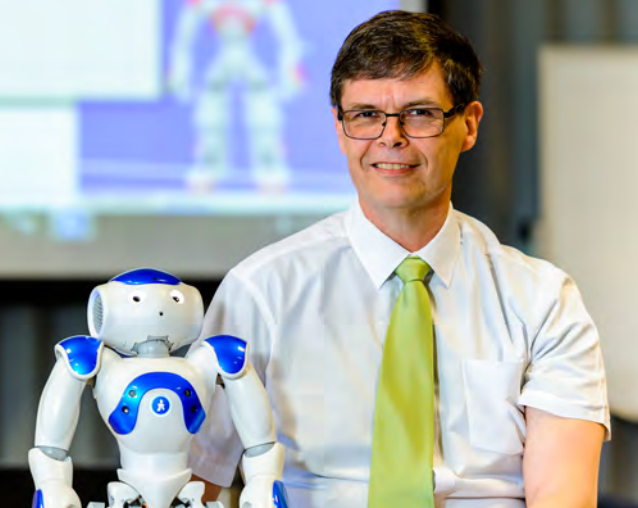
An inclusive, productive economy fundamentally relies on constantly renewing the stock of contemporary skills across the workforce. Ongoing renewal entails a relentless focus on access to locally relevant training, innovative skills acquisition opportunities, and high quality vocational education closely attuned to current and emerging industry expectations.

These case studies demonstrate the focus of Victoria's TAFE providers on those attributes of best practice training provision – access, innovation, quality and industry alignment.

Partnering for outcomes

Each case study foregrounds partnering as a marker of TAFE's expertise in responding to Victoria's rapidly evolving workplaces. The Gordon in Geelong is building and managing partnerships with communities, schools, social support agencies, higher education, research groups, and employers in all sectors and of all sizes. The Gordon is the driving force behind Skilling the Bay – an integrated response to industry restructuring in the region. It is an optimistic and practically oriented plan that is shaping Geelong's future workforce.

Victoria's TAFE providers understand that partnerships are pathways to successful training outcomes. Strategic partnerships with the Victorian government ensure policy objectives are realised in complex reforms contexts, such as implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS case study explains how TAFE providers are using a network model to maximise training outcomes that ready Victoria's disability workforce for once in a generation change.



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All change is local

The effects of change are most keenly felt by individuals, their families and their communities. The history of every Victorian TAFE provider is bound up with the history of the communities they serve. TAFE providers draw on a reservoir of local knowledge to design and deliver training opportunities that are locally fit-for-purpose.

GOTAFE is working in Central Victorian secondary schools to ensure careers advice is shaped by evidence. What are the post-school trajectories of Wangaratta's students? Do they differ from the trajectories of those in Shepparton? How can we best assist disengaged students to invest in their futures through learning? The GOTAFE case study demonstrates the power of answering questions like these. The design of GOTAFE's careers advice services for young people has emerged from detailed quizzing of statistical evidence, and attentively gathering qualitative data about what works from school leaders, teachers and young people.

Like Geelong, the Latrobe Valley is dealing with the sharp realities of industry restructuring, notably in the energy and forest products sectors. Like The Gordon, Federation Training is responding strategically and locally. Federation Training is partnering with the Latrobe Valley Authority to shape and implement strategies that upskill and reskill the local workforce. The Federation Training case study conveys the importance of approaching each displaced worker on their own terms and assisting each of them to navigate their way into a new skillset and new life directions.

The inclusion dividend

AMES Australia's Skilled Professional Migrants Program (SPMP) has an enviable record of linking new immigrants to Victorian employers, and introducing them to Australia's workplace culture. The SPMP shows we have to work at inclusiveness, and when we do we reap benefits to Victoria's economic and social wellbeing.

Embedded in their communities and geographical regions, Victoria's TAFE providers have a deep awareness of what's needed and how to respond. Each case study reflects their commitment to strong, diverse regional economic development.

Workforce development is never finished

A successful economy is always in transition. That means skills acquisition and skills deepening are lifelong endeavours for individual Victorians and for the whole state. Victoria's TAFE providers concentrate on long term workforce development, and on responding to immediate workforce development demands, at state-wide and local levels. These case studies showcase Victoria's TAFE providers delivering on that breadth of scope as part of their enduring commitment to driving the social and economic prosperity of Victoria and Victorians.



Skilling the Bay

The Gordon and Geelong's future workforce

Skilling the Bay is the Geelong region's strategic response to transforming its workforce. The steady management hand behind Skilling the Bay is The Gordon, which since 1887 has matched skill depth and breadth with emerging needs of the regional economy.

A compelling need for transformation

The compelling need for transformation is captured in a World Economic Forum case study on Skilling the Bay:

In 2013, soon after Alcoa announced its local metals plant would close with the loss of 800 jobs in 2014, the region was again hit with the news that all of Australia's remaining automotive manufacturers (Ford, General Motors-Holden and Toyota) would close in Victoria by Q4/2016, affecting 8,000 workers... In Geelong, Ford's assembly plant closure will cause over 500 direct job losses, with significant secondary impacts on supply chain companies.

- *Manufacturing Our Future: Skilling the Bay Workforce Training Strategy, World Economic Forum, 2016.*

Valuing local knowledge, empowering local action

For Victoria's largest regional city of 250,000 people, and traditional home of automotive manufacturing, economic transition is an urgent priority.

The Victorian Government recognised regional networks, businesses, services and institutions held the detailed knowledge and capabilities to shape effective responses. The Gordon was recognised as a pivotal local agency. Like other TAFE Institutes, The Gordon has a thorough understanding of the regional workforce and industries, enduring community connections, and the capability to harness education and training to economic opportunities.

The Gordon was tasked with facilitating a strategic response that engaged and empowered the community, and Skilling the Bay was born. Its Strategic Plan is a considered, optimistic, ambitious agenda for Geelong's economic prosperity. The strategy entails 11 initiatives implemented through partnerships developed and maintained by The Gordon on a day-to-day basis. Supported by an \$11m Victorian Government investment, the initiatives contribute directly to Skilling the Bay's goals, all grounded in a TAFE sector strength – workforce development.

Skilling the Bay's goals:

- **Education** – Informing and raising educational attainment levels focused on pathways to employment
- **Employment** – Increasing workforce participation through training and reskilling
- **Skills** – Growing existing and emerging industries through targeted skills development.

- Skilling the Bay Strategic Plan 2016-17: Preparing Geelong for the jobs of the future through education, employment and innovation

the
Gordon



VICTORIA
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Skilling
THE BAY

Practical gains, strategic impact

An outline of three Skilling the Bay initiatives demonstrates the power and purpose in the partnerships The Gordon has nurtured. Their success is founded in collaborative planning, trust, innovation that depends on shared willingness to take risks, delivering on undertakings, and readiness to learn from structured and open evaluation of progress.

Careers in Community Services & Health (CS&H) Program

Geelong's CS&H sectors have the largest share of regional employment growth. The Program provides entry level training for the future workforce. From 2015-2017, over 600 students from 25 secondary schools enrolled in training, including Certificate III in Laboratory Skills, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, and Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance. The Program values inclusiveness – students with a disability can access Careers in Health Tasters, and 60% of Program participants are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network coordinates the CS&H Program. Supported by a steering committee, including representatives from The Gordon, the Program has considerable industry involvement, including over 40 employers engaged in accredited and non-accredited training activities.

Skilling for Advanced Manufacturing – Composite Materials

Sturdy and lightweight, carbon fibre is a material with many applications including civil engineering, wind turbines for power generation, and air and ground transport. Deakin University, the CSIRO and Geelong-based enterprises are world leaders in carbon fibre research, development and production. Skilling the Bay is shaping the manufacturing workforce to underpin this emerging industry.

The Gordon collaborated with industry partners to design Australia's first VET course in carbon fibre composite manufacturing. The course was delivered twice in 2016, with seven former Ford employees securing employment after completing the newly accredited qualification.



Northern Futures – Supporting education-to-employment outcomes

Long-term unemployment is high in Geelong’s northern suburbs where Northern Futures is providing place-based education and training that assists long-term unemployed into employment. As training provider of choice, The Gordon delivers training that meets local industry demand, supported by over 40 local organisations providing work placements and direct employment opportunities.

In 2016, 66% of Northern Futures graduates secured employment – well above the national benchmark for achieving employment outcomes.

Managing economic transition

For regions in economic transition, job seekers and displaced workers need advice that links regional demand for skills with education and training options. The Gordon’s Skills and Jobs Centre opened in 2016, building on foundations laid by the Geelong Region Workforce Development Centre – a 2014 Skilling the Bay initiative. The Centre offers careers advice for retrenched workers and their families, including job-ready workshops, retraining options and Recognition of Prior Learning.

Job losses have profound impacts on individuals, families and local economies. Skilling the Bay is Geelong's proactive response – a strategic intervention with an eye to the future. Skilling the Bay recognises STEM capability as the region's highest priority and STEM education initiatives are raising awareness of STEM and Digital Technologies as vital skills in jobs of the future. These initiatives engage teachers and their students in advancing regional STEM education and enabling young people to prepare for a new world of work.

Skilling the Bay initiatives are grounded in partnerships. It is forging a unified approach to overcoming education, employment and skills challenges through the concerted efforts of delivery partners and oversight of the Advisory Group, chaired by Deakin University's Vice-Chancellor. Led by The Gordon, Skilling the Bay demonstrates the leadership role TAFE Institutes play in preparing for jobs now, and in the future, through local initiatives that respect individual hopes, community voices and industry needs.



Mapping tertiary education options

GOTAFE careers advice engages young people and schools

There is often a disconnect between secondary and tertiary education, but GOTAFE is determined to connect. A dedicated GOTAFE team offers young people in the Goulburn-Ovens region career and study planning tailored to individual interests, options and circumstances.

A compelling need for responsive career and tertiary study planning

Transition from school to tertiary study and work is complex. In *Preparing young people for the future of work*, Melbourne's Mitchell Institute pinpointed 'navigating employment' as one of four policy priorities:

Navigating employment: Improving career exploration and career guidance options for school students to expand young people's understanding of the variety of pathways available, the core skills and attributes needed within various job clusters, and a focus on developing young people's ability to identify their strengths and interests. This will equip them to more effectively match their strengths with study and employment opportunities and successfully navigate career opportunities.

- *Preparing young people for the future of work, Mitchell Institute, March, 2017.*

Maximising the impact of GOTAFE's expertise

GOTAFE is helping young people navigate tertiary education and employment. It's providing careers advice conversant with quickly evolving career opportunities, and with education and training pathways that put those opportunities within grasp.

GOTAFE's school engagement strategy lifts secondary students' awareness of career and study options, and offers individualised career planning. GOTAFE's services draw on deep understanding about the aspirations of the region's young people – almost half GOTAFE students are under 25, and more than 2000 secondary students study with GOTAFE through VET in Schools and VCAL.

GOTAFE brings two other strands of expertise to its career advice services – intimate knowledge of industry's changing skill needs, and detailed knowledge of the tertiary education sector.



GOTAFE works with Year 10-12 students in 27 secondary schools across north-east Victoria. They include Seymour Secondary College, Wangaratta High School, P-12 Colleges in Yarrawonga and Myrtleford, and Shepparton's four public secondary colleges – McGuire College, Mooropna Secondary College, Shepparton High School and Wanganui Park Secondary College.

Ensuring local knowledge guides service design

GOTAFE designed responsive career and tertiary study planning by listening. Three themes emerged from consulting with secondary school leaders and teachers:

- Planning must respect every young person's unique mix of interests, options and circumstances. There is little gain from standardised, 'one size fits all' planning.
- An empowering career and tertiary study plan must be realistic and achievable. Students can commit to an individual plan if they can see themselves reflected in it.
- Individual conversations matter. That means holding conversations at school, and fitting them in with school timetables.

Regional participation in tertiary education and training

GOTAFE supplemented consultation with data analysis on the Goulburn-Ovens regional context for career and study planning. Across Victoria, an average of 54 per cent of school leavers enrol in university-based degrees. But the picture is starkly different for the two biggest cities in GOTAFE's region. In Shepparton, only 31 per cent of VCE students enrol in degrees. In Wangaratta, it's 25 per cent.

VET is underrepresented – only 17 per cent of Shepparton school leavers, and 13 per cent of Wangaratta school leavers, enrol in Certificates and Diplomas.

Of great concern is that 33 per cent of the region's young people are not engaged in education or training after leaving school. The hard problem of disengagement became a centrepiece of GOTAFE's response. For this group, VET offers the best opportunity to gain a foothold in a workforce where tertiary qualifications are now baseline entry points.

Knowing about career and study options

Insights from schools became design principles for GOTAFE partnerships with schools in delivering valued career and study planning. Data analysis offered guidance about priorities.

Awareness raising is a central plank in GOTAFE's platform for working with secondary students. Good planning means knowing the alternatives. GOTAFE is familiarising students with available options through classroom talks, VET Taster programs and GOTAFE tours.

This VET emphasis counters the low profile of VET encountered in discussions with teachers and young people. In a region with low tertiary education participation rates, it's important to build recognition of VET's value as a viable and rewarding tertiary option.

Empowering young people to set their career agendas

GOTAFE's Back to Work Youth team devised a distinctive model for career and tertiary study planning that empowers young people. Schools refer disengaged students to team members, and during initial one-to-one conversations they pin down their focus for the next 6-12 months, identifying a career preference and actions they can take to achieve it. This starting point may change through later conversations with the team, at school or at home.

Initial conversations also assist students identify who is in their corner: who in their network they can approach for career information and advice, work placements, or traineeship or apprenticeship positions.

GOTAFE first concentrated on disengaged young people. Schools soon recognised GOTAFE's expertise could assist others. GOTAFE now helps many students shape preferred career and study plans through one-to-one conversations. In addition to a preferred plan, GOTAFE's team assists each student prepare a contingency plan. If VCE or VCAL doesn't pan out as envisaged, students have a fall back – an alternative pathway to their preferred career space.

GOTAFE first offered its career and tertiary study advisory services in 2016, when 129 students participated. It's anticipated 300 will participate in 2017. A year after opening in 2016, GOTAFE's Skills and Jobs Centre – now with bases in Wangaratta, Shepparton, Benalla and Seymour – had served 1600 clients, with 75 per cent aged under 25.

GOTAFE's adaptable, place-based service capability is stimulating trust and engagement among the region's young people.



Victoria's TAFE Network and the NDIS

Collaborating on workforce development priorities

Victoria's public training providers are pivotal to workforce development in all the communities and regions they serve. Yet some workforce development initiatives, like the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), require strategically integrated training provision on the much larger canvas of Victoria as a whole.

A compelling need for strategic, statewide workforce development

Victoria's NDIS rollout commenced in mid-2016 and will be completed in 2019. Successful implementation relies on workforce development:

The disability workforce is on the frontline of the changes needed to deliver this ambitious scheme... the Victorian disability workforce will need to grow by approximately 76 per cent to meet the projected growth in demand.

- *Keeping our sector strong: Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS, Victorian Government, 2016, page 5.*

Victoria's TAFE network responds to the challenge

The NDIS marks a quantum change in service provision for Australians with a disability. Delivering the NDIS to more than 105,000 Victorians by 2019 will require an additional 18,000 skilled workers.

Victoria's TAFE providers have adopted a networked response to successfully expanding the state's disability workforce. Collectively, TAFE providers are deploying their strategic and operational workforce development capabilities to ensure consistency and quality characterise training delivery and skills outcomes.

Collaboration is paramount

As a collaborative network, Victoria's TAFE providers can deliver at scale. In 2016 the TAFE network increased disability sector training delivery by 8 per cent. In 2017, training provision further accelerated.

The network's capacity to scale up quality delivery in tight timeframes is harnessed through a strategic, statewide framework governing NDIS workforce development. Collaboration with Victorian government agencies is as essential as collaboration with local disability services providers. Integrating the macro and the micro is a familiar operating context for Victoria's TAFE providers, as evidenced by the other case studies in this booklet.

Regionally aware workforce development

Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS includes a Victorian government commitment to deliver resources, including training resources, in ways that enable 'local communities to drive their own responses to the workforce challenges and opportunities they may see on the ground.' There is a premium on regionally aware workforce development.

Regional areas, like the Mallee, face distinctive challenges in managing and supervising the workforce and services across small populations in large geographic areas. Among north-east Melbourne's challenges is population growth. An increase of around 40 per cent is forecast by 2031, requiring substantial and ongoing disability workforce expansion.

With more than 100 campuses, Victoria's TAFE network holds the local knowledge and professional capability to design and deliver fit-for-purpose, regionally relevant training programs.

Among the advantages of a networked approach is network learning. TAFE providers are cooperatively trialling training delivery models, sharing the outcomes, and sharing training resources developed. Network learning matters in a context where the disability service provider landscape is evolving rapidly. In January 2016 there were 650 service providers registered in Victoria with the NDIS, and a further 280 providers were seeking registration.

For all providers, recruitment to an expanding, highly skilled workforce is mission critical. The TAFE network is active here too. The network's end-to-end workforce development expertise is promoting disability services careers through Victorian government funded Skills and Jobs Centres co-located with each TAFE provider.

Box Hill Institute partnering with local organisations

Box Hill Institute (BHI) has set in train a strategic approach to NDIS workforce development featuring partnerships with longstanding disability services providers in its region. Three examples offer practical insights into the benefits collaboration brings to meeting the needs of NDIS clients.

BHI shares its Lilydale Lakeside campus with Melba Support Services which has a 45 year history as a disability services provider. Their partnership maximises the value of proximity. As part of their training, students enrolled in the Certificate IV in Disability Services at the Lilydale campus complete placements at Melba Support Services.

Among the aims of the NDIS is to increase workforce participation of people with disability. To that end, BHI is partnering with NADRASCA, a disability services provider of 50 years standing. NADRASCA staff who completed their trainer qualifications at BHI now deliver BHI's Certificate I in Work Education to NADRASCA clients.

In 2018, Yooralla marks the centenary of its founding. Its continuing commitment to innovation in disability services sees it partnering with BHI, through the CAE, in the Equal@Work project. Equal@Work is delivering pre-accredited training and workplace mentoring support to people with disabilities across Victoria.

Embedding quality, inspiring confidence

In August 2016, the Victorian government launched Skills First. This landmark redesign of Victoria's VET system allocates fundamental responsibilities to TAFE providers:

The Government recognises the distinct role TAFEs have, as public providers who partner with industry and Government on key economic priorities, lead the training system in excellence and innovation, provide essential life skills and support services, and help disadvantaged students and communities.

- *Skills First: A vision for TAFE, Victorian Government, 2016, page 2.*

Skills First also charges Victoria's TAFE providers with a vital high performance responsibility – to be the VET system's benchmark for quality.

The TAFE network's sustained commitment to best practice offers clear benefits for major workforce development initiatives like the NDIS, and there are strategic dividends in leveraging the breadth and depth of the network's aggregated capacity and professional capability.

Victoria's TAFE network has adopted a strategic, systematic, carefully planned approach to the challenges of NDIS workforce development. The concerted focus of Victoria's TAFE providers reflects their joint determination to meet and exceed government and community expectations.



Latrobe Valley – a workforce in transition

The Valley's future is Federation Training's future

Victoria's Latrobe Valley is reinvigorating its skills profile to satisfy capability requirements of the region's emerging and existing industry strengths. There's urgency in the Valley's task with about 900 workers displaced following closure of Hazelwood Power Station and Carter Holt Harvey's Morwell sawmill. Those closures have knock-on effects on jobs across supply chains and sectors like retail that rely on discretionary spending by locals.



A compelling personal need to rebuild skills

Workforce transition is personal. Individual workers must identify new opportunities and refashion their skillsets to match labour market expectations. One worker reflected on the end of a decade long career at Hazelwood:

The first thing I felt I needed to do was a career change... get proactive and talk to people, do a bit of networking, some connections and training, and get some direction in which way I was going to head.

- Brian, former Hazelwood employee

Federation Training – the regional TAFE with local knowledge

It is easy to see how a regional TAFE Institute like Federation Training is pivotal in managing the transition of a regional workforce to a differently skilled future.

Federation Training has long experience in developing and deepening the region's stock of skills. It's an active provider of qualifications for the Valley's industries, from hospitality and tourism, to engineering, construction, agriculture, horticulture, aged care and business services. Year on year, Federation Training serves diverse student cohorts – secondary students through VET in Schools and VCAL, foundation studies for adult learners, trainees and apprentices of all ages, bachelor degree students, and those looking to upskill.

Accompanying these offerings and this mix of students are Federation Training's student-centred support services, and its deep-rooted knowledge of how to design pathways from one qualification level to the next.

Federation Training's understanding of distinctive industry skill needs is the product of extensive networks and longstanding relationships with large and small employers across the Valley. It knows how to work with industry, and how to shape training and education to match local circumstances.

A regional stakeholder with a local vision

Federation Training blends local knowledge of learners and industry with vision. In a competitive training and education market, Federation Training knows adaptability is its best guarantee of longevity. Discerning trends in skills demand, and rejuvenating training design and delivery in response, are recurring elements of Federation Training's business planning.

More than that, Federation Training is integral to the Valley – its workforce is part of the local workforce, its purpose is to serve the Valley's communities and industries, its interests and connections are local and lasting. Like other regional TAFE Institutes, the region's future is Federation Training's future.

It's broad training and education capability, twinned with a sustained local perspective, situates Federation Training to maximise the Valley's advantages from industry development. Among many emerging opportunities are relocation in 2019 of Defence Force pilot training to RAAF's Sale base, the Gippsland Logistics Precinct, growth in the health sector, new jobs flowing from the National Disability Insurance Scheme, rail projects worth \$530m, renewable energy, and continuing growth in Valley mainstay sectors like tourism, food and fibre.

Effective partnerships are vital for workforce transition

Sound responses to far-reaching change require collaboration. Federation Training brings industry, training and education partners and networks to the economic transition imperative. The Institute has welcomed opportunities to craft new partnerships with those responsible for workforce transition.

A crucial partnership has developed between Federation Training and the Latrobe Valley Authority which coordinates activity across a sweep of initiatives. Federation Training values the Authority's lead in advocating for Valley communities, and in ensuring decisions and support services are integrated to respond to local needs and emerging options.

In addition to shaping a broad strategic response to evolving economic opportunities, the Authority coordinates services assisting the Valley's businesses to manage transition challenges. It made sense to align the Authority's strategic and business support roles with the reskilling needs of displaced workers. To that end, Federation Training integrated its Skills and Jobs Centre with the Worker Transition Service which is jointly managed by the Authority and Gippsland Trades and Labour Council. In six months to June 2017, more than 400 workers used Skills and Jobs Centre advice and services.

For displaced Valley RPL workers in transition

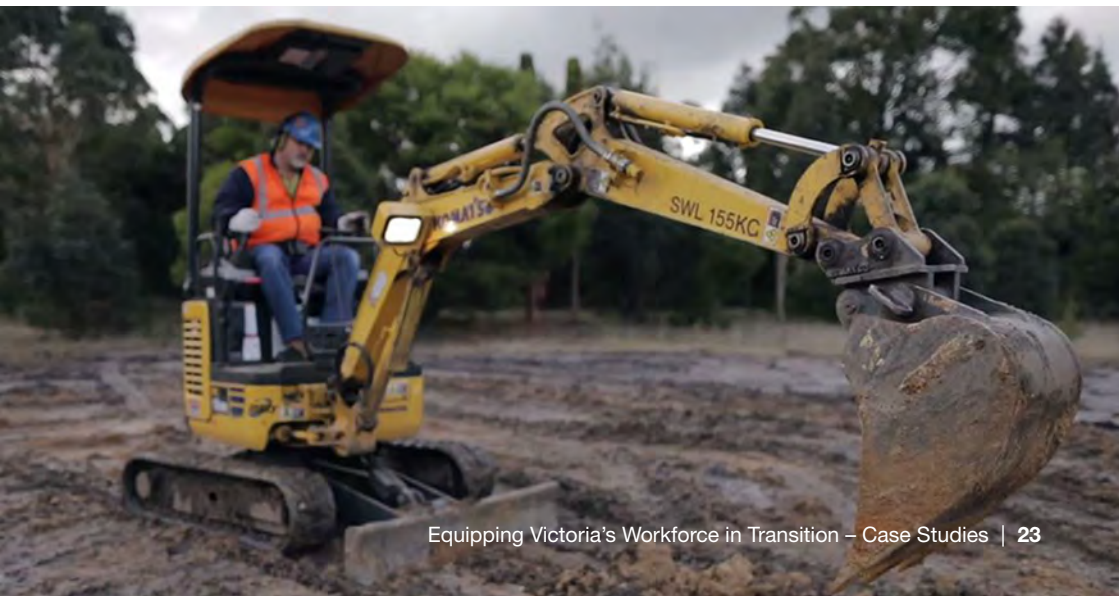
Federation Training offers accessible, scaffolded support to workers in transition, including individual careers and resume writing advice, and industry specific pre-employment programs.

Critical for Valley workers in transition is Federation Training's structured approach to Recognition of Prior Learning. At the beginning of this case study we met Brian – here he is again, reflecting on RPL:

The process with Federation Training was a little bit scary because at 50... to come back to the TAFE and go through all the rigmarole, the paperwork, to get a course started. But with a lot of assistance from a lot of people they made it easy.

It's understandable workers in transition feel overwhelmed. Federation Training's RPL assessors understand the stress and uncertainty. They respond with opportunities and plans. Certifying current competencies establishes the training gaps to take on a qualification pathway to new careers. The rigmarole is essential to credible, valid and trusted RPL assessments.

RPL is vital to personal transition plans. It carefully maps what retrenched Valley workers know and can do. RPL puts in their hands a compass for charting the way ahead.





Deciphering Australia's workplace culture

AMES Australia is maximising Victoria's migration dividend

For 60 years, AMES Australia has assisted migrants to settle into Victoria's communities, neighbourhoods and workplaces. With recent policy emphasising skilled migration, AMES Australia designed the Skilled Professional Migrants Program (SPMP) – a distinctive response to new settlement challenges.

A compelling economic need to match skills and jobs

SPMP assists skilled professional migrants to successfully transition into work that benefits them and advances their employer's business objectives. SPMP's evaluation report observed:

Many skilled migrants arriving in Australia are in the early stages of their working lives. Their contribution to Australia's productivity will be a long term one. The employment of professionally skilled migrants increases diversity in Australia's workforce and builds the much needed cultural competence to connect with other countries and markets.

- Securing futures: Making the most of migrants' skills, AMES Australia, 2013.

Making sense of Australian recruitment practices and workplaces

SPMP is remarkably effective in equipping professionally qualified migrants to secure work in their fields. An independent evaluation conducted in 2013 found 72% of participants were employed six months after completing SPMP, with the majority using skills and experience gained overseas to the advantage of their new employers.

SPMP is a 16 day program delivered over 4 weeks. Participants engage in workshops that draw on AMES Australia's six decades of settlement program experience. Through the workshops, SPMP participants examine aspects of recruitment and workplace culture that are frequently perplexing.

Workshops cover a diverse array of topics, such as the Australian way with resumes, how to read job advertisements and research a workplace, and how to structure job applications and respond to key selection criteria. Workshops also explain occupational health and safety requirements, and the purpose of equal employment opportunity policies and programs.

Networking skilled professional migrants

An SPMP organising principle is ensuring participants establish networks. Networks offer personal support and link them to people in similar circumstances or who work in industries relying on similar skillsets.

Importantly, appointments to private sector jobs, professional or otherwise, are often made when trusted contacts make reliable referrals. Professional job seekers with limited or non-existent professional networks can be at a disadvantage, not least SPMP participants.

Through a linked program, AMES Australia introduces SPMP participants to mentors who help kick-start local networks. Mentors from large employers willingly share their time and industry experience. Employers are key SPMP backers beyond mentoring – they provide SPMP guest speakers, take the employer role in mock interviews, and provide feedback about interview skills and strategies.



AMES Australia also initiated SPMP's Alumni Network. Operating through a closed LinkedIn group, Network membership is open to corporate mentors, new SPMP participants, and former participants now in professional jobs aligned with their skills. As SPMP runs 8-10 times each year, the Alumni Network has considerable breadth and depth of local experience.

Corporate engagement in SPMP

So that SPMP participants can access deep and varied employer perspectives on the professional job market, AMES Australia activates its own corporate sector networks. This includes engaging private employers in two-day 'Working the Australian Way' workshops. Large businesses host the free workshops for approximately 40 SPMP participants, offering structured networking and job search presentations.

High levels of engagement demonstrate that businesses are willing to contribute to settlement programs when platforms like SPMP facilitate their involvement. SPMP is a win-win – it offers the private sector direct access to skilled professional migrants who may become their next employees.



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