

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Delivering a place-based approach to promote and strengthen career pathways for young people in the Barwon region.

Acknowledgment of Country

Skilling the Bay would like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners throughout Victoria and their ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging who have taught their children and adults on this land. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of the land where we live, learn, teach and work.



Title: *Bunjil Creator of Life* Artist: Gerard Black

He is a proud Worimi Gathang man who has a deep connection to Wadawurrung Country. His work, *Bunjil Creator of Life*, finds its roots in his upbringing in Torquay. This connection to the land and his heritage is vividly expressed through his art.

Located at the entrance to The Gordon's City Campus, adjacent the Kitjarra wurrung ngeen Centre and the Culinary precinct, this beautiful digitally designed and physically layered, large-scale mural honours and embeds Bunjil and Wadawurrung creation stories within the fabric of our campus life.

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Term
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CRT	Casual Relief Teacher
FHS	Future Health Skills
GFLOI	Geelong Future Leaders of Industry
GLAM	Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing
GMC	Geelong Manufacturing Council
GRLEN	Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network
GTFP	Geelong Tertiary Futures Program
GTS	Geelong Tech School
H&CS	Health & Community Services
IISRI	Institute for Intelligent Systems Research and Innovation
PMO	Program Management Office
SBAT	School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships
STB	Skilling the Bay
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
SWL	Structured Workplace Learning
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
The Gordon	The Gordon Institute of TAFE
USI	Unique Student Number
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETDSS	Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary School Students
VSA	Victorian Skills Authority

Executive Summary

Skilling the Bay delivers education and school-based programs that connect students to Geelong's evolving economy and growth industries. Skilling the Bay is delivered by The Gordon and is supported by the Victorian Department of Education. The suite of programs offered by Skilling the Bay encourages secondary students to engage in learning and the world of work, highlights the value of Vocational Education and Training (VET), and aligns with reforms outlined in the 2020 Firth Review into Vocational and Applied Learning Pathways.

Highlights for 2025 include:

- 2,355 students participated in a Skilling the Bay program
- 36 secondary schools engaged with Skilling the Bay
- 265 secondary school teachers engaged with Skilling the Bay
- 1,891 students participated in the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program
- 108 employers contributed to the delivery of programs.

The Geelong Tertiary Futures Program (GTFP) was delivered to 13 schools across the Geelong region, giving nearly 1,900 Year 9 students hands-on vocational experiences and career insights. Career Previews received excellent feedback and are recognised as best practice in VET pathways engagement.

Skilling the Bay is committed to providing pathway guidance to Geelong's students through World of Work Programs delivered by the Skilling the Bay Office and our delivery partners, the Geelong Manufacturing Council (GMC) and the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network (GRLEN).

The Skilling the Bay Office delivered four World of Work (WOW) Programs based on areas of regional growth and demand to engage students in the future of work.

- WOW Digital Technology
- WOW Government and Business Careers
- WOW Creative Industries
- WOW Hospitality and Tourism.

STEM Manufacturing Futures delivered with the GMC engaged 51 students from 12 schools in three streams:

- Geelong Future Leaders of Industry (GFLOI),
- Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing (GLAM), and
- WOW Clean Economy.

These programs provided immersive experiences in advanced technology, design, engineering, and innovative manufacturing, raising awareness of high-demand careers and showcasing Geelong's leadership in advanced manufacturing.

The Health and Community Services program, delivered by GRLEN, offered students industry immersion through site visits, panel discussions, and The Gordon's Future Health Skills digital modules. Ninety-four Year 10 students from 13 schools participated, gaining insights into diverse roles, career pathways, and real-world job requirements. A dedicated day at Barwon Health's McKellar Centre for students from four low socioeconomic status schools provided additional hands-on exposure to careers in health and community care.

The Building Careers program, delivered by GRLEN on two independent days, was an opportunity for 112 students interested in a trades pathway to see construction sites in action, learn about the trade training facilities at The Gordon and participate in hands-on activities.

Skilling the Bay continues to connect people, organisations, and resources to deliver evidence-based programs that prepare students for emerging careers. Initiatives such as the Apprenticeship & Traineeship Support Forum and Hospitality & Tourism Jobs Expo further strengthen pathways for students and job seekers in a changing economy.

About Skilling the Bay

Skilling the Bay drives targeted, place-based initiatives that connect schools, tertiary education providers, community organisations, and industry across the Geelong and Barwon region. Our mission is to prepare young people for the future of work by building awareness of career pathways and equipping them with the skills needed for emerging opportunities.

Skilling the Bay focuses on raising educational attainment and retention, increasing workforce participation through training and re-skilling, and supporting the growth of existing and emerging industries. Programs are designed to provide students with hands-on exposure to vocational careers, industry immersions, and work-ready skills and is aligned to sectors of regional significance and employer needs.

Led by The Gordon Institute of TAFE and delivered in partnership with Deakin University and supported by the Victorian Department of Education, Skilling the Bay received a \$2.4 million Victorian Government investment (2024–2026) to continue delivering education and school-based programs that connect students to Geelong’s changing economic landscape.

Our objectives guide program delivery and the operational focus of the Skilling the Bay Program Management Office, linking strategic priorities to short and long-term outcomes. Each program is developed and adapted in collaboration with local stakeholders and industry partners to ensure relevance and impact.

Skilling the Bay’s success is built on strong partnerships. By bringing together schools, employers, training providers, and community organisations, Skilling the Bay creates a shared platform for collaboration and innovation. These partnerships amplify program reach, ensure alignment with workforce needs, and foster a culture of lifelong learning. Industry involvement provides students with authentic experiences and insights, while schools and educators benefit from professional development and resources that strengthen vocational pathways. This collective approach positions Skilling the Bay as a catalyst for regional growth and workforce readiness.

As the table below shows, Skilling the Bay’s programs help students to progress from awareness to aspiration to action, mapping the journey from mid-secondary school through to further study or employment.

Career Pathway Programs

Year 9	Year 10	Year 11/12	After
Geelong Tertiary Futures Program	World of Work Programs	VPC/ VCE/ VM/ SBAT	Post Secondary School
Participate in Career Previews from a selection of 24 pathways.	Participate in Industry Immersion experiences in key regional industries.	Get a head start through hands-on experience and gain competencies in your chosen industry.	Continue with Vocational study in your career of choice through an apprenticeship, certificate or a diploma.

Governance

Skilling the Bay is guided by an Advisory Board and Executive Committee Pathways Programs, consisting of key stakeholders from Geelong’s industry, education and community sectors. The Gordon TAFE is the contractual partner for the delivery of the Skilling the Bay program and is responsible for operational management and financial accountability. The Gordon has also undertaken a significant leadership role in the delivery of the program, further demonstrating the distinct role TAFE plays in leading the skilling of industries and communities.

The Advisory Board convenes three times per year and provides strategic direction for the Skilling the Bay program and includes representation from key stakeholders at the senior strategic level.

An Executive Committee Pathways Programs convenes quarterly to oversee the delivery of the Pathways Programs (under the Department of Education funding agreement). Appointees to both the Advisory Board and Executive Committee are made in consultation with the Department of Education.

Advisory Board Members	Organisation	Role
Carley Brennan	The Gordon	Director Engagement and Partnerships
Jamie Mustard	Deakin University	Pro-Vice Chancellor Graduate Employment
Janet Lui	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	State Manager
Jennifer Conley	Geelong Manufacturing Council	CEO
Joe Ormeno	The Gordon (Chair)	CEO
Megan Kerr	Department of Education	A/D Policy and Design and Coordination, Senior Secondary Pathways Reform Taskforce
Scott Hucker	Department of Education	Jobs, Skills and Pathways Manager
Scott McLeod	Newcomb Secondary College	Principal
Shaun Cumming	Barwon Water	Managing Director
Yvonne Hewitt	Barwon Health	Director of Education and Training

Education and Pathways Programs

2025 Program delivery

Skilling the Bay liaised with the Department of Education and local stakeholders to develop the core program suite for 2025. It is aligned with State Government objectives, including the Firth Review Recommendations, the Victorian Government's commitment to 10,000 Work Experience Opportunities in priority industries and the Clean Economy and the Barwon Region Skills Demand Profile (Victorian Skills Authority). Programs are designed to inspire and engage students in learning and the 'world of work' and are focused on mid to senior secondary students from years 9 to 11.

In 2025, Skilling the Bay delivered the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program (GTFP) and the following World of Work (WOW) programs:

- WOW Digital Technology
- WOW Government and Business Careers
- WOW Creative Industries
- WOW Hospitality and Tourism
- STEM Manufacturing Futures Program
 - Geelong Future Leaders of Industry (GFLOI)
 - Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing (GLAM)
 - WOW Clean Economy
- WOW Building Careers.

In addition, two forums were held to promote career opportunities to students and job seekers:

- Apprenticeship and Traineeship Support Forum
- Hospitality and Tourism Jobs Expo.

Geelong Tertiary Futures Program

The Geelong Tertiary Futures Program (GTFP) is an in-depth tertiary taster program for Year 9 students delivered in partnership with Geelong region government schools. It forms a critical component of Skilling the Bay's Careers Pathway Program offering to Geelong's secondary schools.

Program Objectives

- Better equip Year 9 students for education and employment opportunities beyond school.
- Improve students' awareness of a broad range of industry pathways through preview experiences.
- Improve students' appreciation that continuing education is essential for their future economic, and employment prospects and personal wellbeing.
- Increase the pool of entry-level work-ready participants for a range of career pathways to future employment.
- Support employment pathways for young people and reduce youth unemployment.
- Improve student retention and attainment in partner schools.

2025 Delivery

The program combines theoretical and practical learning to assist students to understand vocational education and build skills for work. The WorkSkills component is undertaken by students via a blended model of online and face-to-face delivery in their home school classroom. This component prepares the students to come onto campus in a safe manner. Students are able to achieve two non-accredited units which reflect Units of Competency, as part of the program, 'Contribute to the Health and Safety of Self and Others' and 'Communicate in the Workplace'. The students prepare their resumes in preparation for making job applications in real life as part of WorkSkills. The Health and Safety unit contains a range of e-modules developed by WorkSafe Victoria that helps young people to understand their rights and obligations in the workplaces and offers practical advice to deal with unsafe situations.

For the practical learning component, students attend The Gordon TAFE for a half-day induction and then undertake five different Career Previews (choosing from approximately 24 options) either at the City or East Campus of The Gordon TAFE over three days.

The GTFP team had a focus to improve participation and completion of the WorkSkills component of GTFP. In response to persistent challenges in delivery and low student completion rates, the WorkSkills component this year transitioned to non-accredited units. Partner schools provided feedback indicating that the accreditation did not justify the additional workload and that a less rigorous format would better support inclusivity and student engagement. The change also enabled GTFP teachers to spend more time in schools, enhancing support and improving delivery outcomes.

Teachers received mandatory training in the WorkSkills program to ensure consistent and effective delivery. Analysis indicated that schools with prior experience in the program achieved significantly higher completion rates. This success can be attributed not only to their familiarity with the content but also to their understanding of the program's benefits for participating students. To further support implementation, the GTFP team was present during the delivery of the WorkSkills component in schools. Through this program, students were introduced to essential workplace concepts, including health and safety practices and effective communication skills, areas employers, in consultation with Skilling the Bay, identified as lacking among young people entering the workforce.

Warehousing and Logistics Career Preview (new addition to GTFP)

The Warehousing and Logistics Career Preview which was a new addition to the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program this year, was designed to introduce students to the dynamic world of logistics and warehousing operations and proved to be successful in providing students with a clear vision of potential career paths in this industry.

The Warehousing Career Preview was run 21 times with 223 students from 10 schools.

“ The GTFP was really good, I enjoyed it, and I got to learn new things, and the teachers were amazing.

”

The students had exposure to practical activities including:

- Skills Development: essential skills in logistics planning and warehousing operations.
- Practical Experience: including checking stock levels, filling orders and organising incoming stock.
- Interactive Learning: Participation in the 'Stockroom Challenge' game to apply their learning in a fun and engaging way.
- Industry Insights: Teachers discussed market trends and strategies to meet business demands in the warehouse industry.

Outcomes

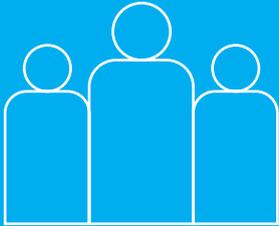
In 2025, the highlights from GTFP include:

- 1506 students participated
- 13 Geelong secondary schools
- 228 school teachers
- 96 teachers from The Gordon
- 599 Career Previews hosted by The Gordon.

WorkSkills was delivered in schools with the support of the GTFP staff. All schools were provided training for program delivery.

As a result of the modification to the WorkSkills component, there has been overall improvement in completion rates in comparison to 2024 with 10/13 schools improving on their percentage of completions. Completion of the component increased significantly, going from 27% in 2023 to 31% in 2024 and 41% in 2025. The increase in WorkSkills completions rate can be attributed to the module content being improved and the extra face-to-face facilitation provided by the GTFP teachers in schools.

The Career Previews were extremely successful with high engagement. Positive feedback was received both verbally and through surveys completed by school staff and students. Students enjoyed the hands-on nature of the activities and talked about how it was fun and that they learned a lot in a short time.



Geelong Tertiary Futures Program

1506 students



87%

report more motivated to continue education



87%

report increased skills to transition to work



95%

have increased knowledge and understanding of potential pathway opportunities



This year, the GTFP partnered with students enrolled in The Gordon's Certificate II in Mumgudhal tyama-tiyt: Community, Connection, and Pathways to deliver an innovative career preview initiative. Eight First Nations students were timetabled alongside peers from other schools and participated in 43 different career previews across a range of industries, providing them with hands-on experiences and valuable insights into future pathways. Feedback from teachers was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the students' engagement and professionalism. For example, during a landscaping preview, two students impressed staff by collaborating effectively with peers from Oberon, completing

tasks diligently, and even staying back to assist with pack-up. This initiative not only strengthened community connections but also showcased the students' commitment to learning and their readiness for future opportunities.



It was a one-of-a-kind experience! It's great that the program is aimed at teenagers, it gave me a better insight at the different backgrounds and qualifications people in such industries do, which was great and fun.



Table 1: GTFP Participation 2025

School	No. of students*	Career Preview attendance	Teachers	WorkSkills 2025 Completion/ Participation	WorkSkills 2024 Completion
Bannockburn P-12 College	80	54 (75%)	9	17/73 (23%)	N/A
Bellarine Secondary College	195	158 (81%)	22	66/195 (31%)	7%
Belmont High School	191	157 (87%)	23	95/191 (49%)	27%
Geelong High School	150	124 (83%)	22	76/161 (47%)	23%
Grovedale College	115	100 (87%)	9	62/116 (53%)	42%
Lara Secondary College	102	82 (80%)	19	17/102 (17%)	24%
Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College	108	91 (92%)	17	92/106 (87%)	51%
Newcomb Secondary College	85	70 (82%)	7	58/87 (67%)	64%
North Geelong Secondary College	182	135 (78%)	24	74/186 (40%)	25%
Northern Bay College	117	83 (75%)	14	60/117 (48%)	23%
Oberon High School	192	172 (90%)	23	42/192 (21%)	50%
Surf Coast Secondary College	191	125 (65%)	17	29/148 (20%)	32%
Western Heights College	183	155 (89%)	39	67/183 (36%)	0%
Totals	1891	1506 (80%)	228	755/1857 (41%)	31%

*Student numbers shared by schools in February 2025.

Students complete an online survey on their final day of career previews, and this information is collated using The Gordon's survey software (Bluera) for reporting.

Surveys were completed by 1061 out of 1506 (70%) students who attended the Career Previews this year.

Feedback was excellent with students reporting:

- 95% of students report increased knowledge and understanding of potential VET pathway opportunities.
- 87% report increased engagement with future study and/or work opportunities.
- 87% feel more motivated to continue with their education.
- 86% think it's important to complete a qualification after school such as a certificate, diploma or degree.
- 84% report increased skills to transition to work.
- 91% would recommend GTFP to their friends.

Students rated the following high or very high:

- 88% - The quality of facilities at The Gordon
- 86% - The variety of different classes you could do and see.

The feedback on the WorkSkills sessions improved significantly with the percentage of students rating the sense of achievement from the WorkSkills component as medium or higher was 90%, compared to 77% in 2024. The percentage of students who rated the level of difficulty of the units as high or very high also dropped from 35% in 2024 to 31% in 2025.

The most favoured Career Previews were Cookery & Hospitality, Hairdressing & Barbering and Early Childhood Education at City Campus and Automotive, Carpentry and Electrical at East Campus. The students reported that what they enjoyed most about the Career Previews was that they were fun, hands-on and creative.

“ I love going to the Gordon and enjoy meeting the team and learning cool and amazing new things. ”



World of Work Programs

The World of Work (WOW) program provides meaningful immersion experiences for senior secondary students in trending and growing industries in our region.

Program Objectives:

- To inspire and engage Year 10 and 11 students in the world of work and to raise awareness of post-school pathways opportunities.
- To raise awareness of the extensive roles and careers available within the region's industries of regional significance.

World of Work Government and Business Careers

With the significant presence of government and professional services industries in Geelong, Skilling the Bay, along with industry stakeholders, identified the need to promote the varied and extensive career opportunities available within this sector.

In 2025, Skilling the Bay continued to work on a program model for the World of Work Government and Business Careers and to make connections with local organisations to provide industry immersion opportunities for young people, highlighting the entry-level positions and career pathways available in this sector.

2025 Delivery

Day 1 occurred on Tuesday 3 June at Geelong Tech School with 14 students in attendance. Students engaged in 3D design using Twinmotion to recreate a "Green Spine" space in Geelong.

After Day 1, seven students from one school withdrew due to mid-year exams and four other students withdrew due to various other reasons. This brought the final figure down to five students. As a result, a decision was made to cancel the remainder of the program which included visits to TAC, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Barwon Water, COGG Youth Council, Deakin University and KPMG.

All of the industry partners were promptly advised that the program was cancelled due to last minute student withdrawals. While partners were disappointed, they were very understanding and expressed interest in participating in the program again in the future.

WOW Digital Technology

The Digital Technology program was designed to showcase the diverse and abundant career opportunities within the digital technology skill set to young people in the Barwon region. The field of digital technology encompasses a wide range of careers across multiple industry sectors providing various entry points for individuals.

2025 Delivery

Day 1: Geelong Tech School. Game Design.

Day 2: Deakin University Day.

Day 3: Cotton On, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (CSIRO ACDP) and panel session at The Gordon.

Students had a fantastic day at the Geelong Tech School creating a game using Unreal Engine. Geelong High School provided their Digital Technology teacher for the day to support supervision.

The second program day was spent at Deakin University exploring some of their amazing high-tech institutes and spin out companies. At the Institute for Intelligent Systems Research and Innovation the students experienced the haptic enabled medical equipment, simulators for tanks and cars, VR and autonomous drones. Manufutures showed off their fantastic spaces occupied by start-up companies. The students were immersed in the VR fire-fighting equipment at Flaim Systems and were excited to hear how a Geelong grown company is working across the world. Universal Motion Systems offered the students the opportunity to sit in their tank simulator and the Solar Car Challenge team showed off their vehicle. At CADET the students visited the high voltage and 3D printing labs and finished the day with a VR tour of the micro-grid at Deakin University.

The final day commenced with a tour of Cotton On's head office, where the digital leadership team shared insights into their career pathways and their perspectives on the future of digital technology within the organisation. Students then visited the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (CSIRO ACDP), hearing from a panel of experts in IT support, bioinformatics and research, and gaining an appreciation of the facility's unique role and operations. The program concluded with a lunch at The Gordon, featuring presentations from digital technology specialists representing Barwon Water, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Arthur St Digital, Enterprise Monkey, and Steve Gale from The Gordon, who discussed VET pathways into the industry.

“ I love how informative this program is. I have learned so much stuff that I badly needed for my future! ”

Outcomes

Eighteen students from five schools enrolled in the program, with four female students. Unfortunately, there were late withdrawals from two students who were the only representatives from their schools. In all, 14 students completed the program. Four students were withdrawn by Geelong High School after the first day due to poor behaviour.

The average attendance across the 3 days was 87% (Day 1, 89%, Day 2, 71%, Day 3, 86%).

Survey results:

- 100% agreed to improved knowledge of pathways to a career in digital technology.
- 100% agreed to improved understanding of the careers available in this industry.
- 100% agreed to interest in a job in digital technology in the future.
- 100% agreed they would recommend the WOW Digital Technology Program to friends.

Some of the comments to the following questions included:

What are the benefits of working in Digital Technology?

“Local opportunities.”

“Job security.”

“Creative thinking.”

“Flexibility.”

How has the program influenced your career goals?

“It has shown me different jobs in the industry.”

“I'm more interested in IT now.”

“It has helped me gain further understanding into what areas I like and what I might want to pursue as a career.”

WOW Creative Industries

The Creative Industries Program was designed to highlight the breadth of careers available in Geelong's thriving Creative Industries businesses. Geelong's excellence as an innovative, smart, clever and creative city is exemplified by its membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Geelong is a place where creativity and design drive an exceptional quality of life for our community and a wonderful array of events are captured each year through exhibitions, webinars and virtual reality demonstrations.

2025 Delivery

Day 1: Hands-on activity at Geelong Tech School – Laser Make a Leather Wearable object.

Day 2: Industry visits to Geelong Gallery, City of Greater Geelong at Platform Arts and Geelong Arts Centre.

Day 3: A full day at The Gordon with hands on activities in the morning in the Design Centre of Excellence followed by guest speakers from The Gordon and Storyfolk in the afternoon.

On the first day of the program, students experienced a hands-on workshop at the Geelong Tech School. They worked in pairs tackling a real design brief to create a custom leather wearable accessory. They sketched ideas,

and brought them to life using computer-aided design (CAD) software, and then laser cut and constructed a final product. It was a full design journey, from concept to creation and showed how tech and creativity go hand in hand and why digital skills are essential in every creative career.

Day 2 was a busy schedule that included visits to Platform Arts, Geelong Gallery and Geelong Arts Centre. The visit to Platform Arts was organised by the City of Greater Geelong's Creative City team. Students explored the dynamic spaces where art, performance and innovation collide and met creatives who are shaping Geelong's creative scene. From visual arts and digital media to music, theatre and event production, they discovered the many pathways into creative careers.

At Geelong Gallery, students were given a guided tour of the gallery's current exhibitions and collections, followed by an interactive exploration of career pathways and roles in a gallery. The students also participated in an artmaking activity that related to one of the current exhibitions.

At Geelong Arts Centre, the students firstly had a presentation about careers from the Arts Centre's Senior Producer of Creative Learning, Families and Community and the Associate Artist and Playwright. They then participated in a drama and playmaking workshop with the playwright. The day ended with a venue tour by one of the production managers who talked about the technical elements of theatre, such as lighting, sound, AV and staging.

On the final day of the program, the talented secondary students showcased their creativity at The Gordon's Design Centre of Excellence. The morning was filled with hands-on activities, including making 'Zines', crafting personalised badges and screen-printing on tote bags.

The day culminated in a casual lunch at The Gordon, where the students heard from inspiring guest speakers including a graphic designer who has worked in television production and animation, a hairdresser who is also a special effects makeup artist and the owner of Storyfolk, an award-winning strategy, branding and digital solution agency.

Outcomes

Twenty-three students registered with 15 from four government schools. The program was delivered in July and August.

While 23 students were registered, four students never attended. On days 1 and 2, 19 students attended and 16 students completed the three days.

Survey results: (14 responses)

- 100% agreed that their knowledge of careers available in Creative Industries had improved.
- 100% agreed that knowledge of pathways to careers in Creative Industries had improved.
- 93% agreed they would be interested in a job in Creative Industries in the future.

Some of the comments to the following questions included:

What are the benefits of working in Creative Industries?

"You can let your quirks shine."

"Expanding skills and displaying passion."

"Brings you together with people who are like-minded."

How has this program influenced your career goals?

"It makes me want to get out there and start."

"It's made me see that there's a lot of options."

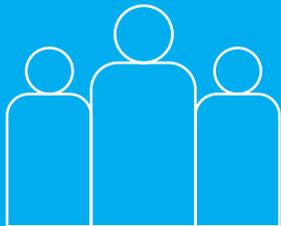
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I know that there is work for me out there and local courses for me to take after high school.

”

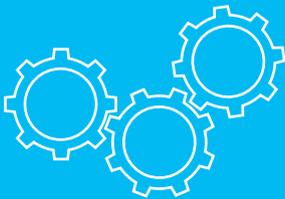


LIVE MUSIC



WOW Hospitality and Tourism

20 students



100%

agreed to improved knowledge of careers available in this industry



100%

agreed to improved understanding of the pathways to a career in this industry



100%

agreed they would recommend the program to their friends

WOW Hospitality and Tourism

The Hospitality and Tourism industry has a significant impact on Geelong's prosperity. Skilling the Bay and Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine are working together to promote the varied and extensive career opportunities available within this sector.

2025 Delivery

Day 1: Geelong Tech School. Cine Haiku.

Day 2: Bellarine Peninsula tour.

Day 3: Quest Central Geelong Apartments, Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine and the Culinary Academy at The Gordon.

The WOW Hospitality and Tourism Program began in August with visits to the Geelong Tech School. The activity at the Geelong Tech School called Cine Haiku, had students produce social media posts for the Little Malop Precinct in Geelong. Students took photos and videos and turned them into entertaining posts to attract visitors to the region.

On the second day, the students had a tour down the Bellarine Peninsula, beginning at the Range @ Curlewis where staff shared fantastic tips for the students about applying and interviewing for jobs and the variety of roles offered by the Sharp Group. Students then visited Leura Park Estate and Flying Brick Cider House. Adventure Park shared the opportunities that they offer to young people and the day concluded with a tour of Searoad Ferries.

The third day of the program began with a visit to Quest Central Geelong Apartments, where the Business Manager, shared her inspiring career journey from humble beginnings to being headhunted for prestigious roles. Following this, the students visited Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine to learn about its operations and information about visitors to the Geelong region. The day concluded at the Culinary Academy at The Gordon where students learned about the training opportunities at The Gordon and had fun in the Bakery making brownies and pasta.

Outcomes

Attendance at the event was very good with an average of 83% (day 1, 85%, day 2, 75%, day 3, 90%). Two students from the same school didn't attend any of the program days and three students were absent on the second day due to a school camp.

Student survey results:

- 100% agreed to improved knowledge of careers available in this industry.
- 100% agreed to improved understanding of the pathways to a career in this industry.
- 81% agreed to interest in a job in the industry in the future.
- 100% agreed they would recommend the WOW Hospitality and Tourism program to friends.
- 87.5% of students said they would be interested in studying at The Gordon after their visit to the Culinary Academy.

Some of the comments to the following questions included:

What are the benefits of working in Hospitality and Tourism?

"Gaining experience while still at school."

"Working with people."

"Growing to be in higher roles."

"Cool workplaces."

How has this program influenced your career goals?

"Given me new perspectives and jobs that I didn't really know about or think could be full time career."

"It has me thinking about other job pathways I could pursue."

“

This has made me want to do more things with my life and be open to more opportunities

”

STEM Manufacturing Futures Program

The Geelong Manufacturing Council (GMC) are the delivery partner for the STEM Manufacturing Futures Program which includes both the Geelong Future Leaders of Industry (GFLOI), Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing (GLAM) and WOW Clean Economy programs. GMC coordinates the programs and provides a six-month long STEM industry immersion experience, raising awareness and aspiration for a professional or trade pathway into advanced technology, design, engineering and innovative manufacturing.

STEM Manufacturing Futures focuses on building teacher capability through industry exposure and professional development to help them engage students and support their decision-making regarding senior secondary pathways. Each program stream aims to attract twenty participants.

GLAM aims to encourage girls into STEM pathways. In 2024–25, women represented only 27% of the manufacturing workforce (Workplace Gender Equality Agency). Key barriers include perceptions that STEM fields suit men which is often reinforced by parents, educators, and career counsellors, and the lack of diverse female role models. To address this, the Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing stream showcases women's success stories and offers a girls-only intake to create a supportive, empowering environment.

The Clean Economy sector encompasses a wide array of industries, including renewable energy, circular economy, waste management and eco-conscious manufacturing. To meet the ambitious targets set by the Victorian Government many new workers are going to be needed. The Clean Economy Program is designed to offer students a deep understanding of the careers available and the critical role these industries play in delivering a sustainable future. Students learn about the pathways into these exciting new jobs that will contribute to a healthier planet.

2025 Delivery

The STEM Manufacturing Futures program had fifty-three participants in 2025:

- GFLOI 20 students
- GLAM 17 students
- WOW Clean Economy 14 students.

The program includes workplace tours, hands-on workshops, and opportunities to meet and talk with role models. The GLAM and GFLOI groups participated in six days of events and tours and experienced a launch and graduation event. The Clean Economy students experienced four event days and were included in the launch and graduation events. On most program days students visited three workplaces to learn about the opportunities within the industry. The program held a welcome launch and a graduation event where guest speakers spoke about their careers in STEM. The industry partners that hosted students for 2025 were:

- Deakin University
- Institute of Intelligent Systems Research and AKD Softwoods
- Institute of Frontier Materials
- Manufutures
- Flaim
- Universal Motion Systems
- CADET
- The Confidence Company
- Hanlon Industries
- Godfrey Hirst
- Viva Energy
- Air Radiators
- Melbourne Roads Project Victoria
- Incitec Pivot
- Innovation
- Steel360
- Ford
- LoomTex
- Geelong Tech School
- Think Fencing
- Foundry in a Box
- Vestas
- MPC Kinetic
- Bugbox
- Thornton Engineering
- SNF
- The Gordon.

Outcomes

The Geelong Manufacturing Council commenced its 2025 programs earlier than in previous years, with registrations closing at the end of February. This early timeline created challenges for schools attempting to identify and approve student participants, particularly government schools, which face significant competing priorities at the beginning of the academic year.

Recruitment for the GLAM program was again difficult, consistent with challenges experienced in previous years. The GFLOI program, however, achieved a pleasing balance of participation from both government and non government school students. In contrast, the GLAM program and the WOW Clean Economy program attracted a higher proportion of non government school students (4 of 13 and 4 of 14 respectively), reflecting the recruitment complexities faced by government schools. GLAM recruitment remains particularly challenging due to the limited pool of eligible female students. Unfortunately, the local government girls' school was unable to commit to participation in 2025.

Securing teacher attendance for workshops and tours was also difficult. Despite the offer of CRT reimbursement, schools faced restrictions around releasing staff from normal duties, and all accompanying teachers were required to hold VIT registration. As a result, GMC was required to source CRTs through employment agencies to meet supervision requirements for all but four tour dates.

The STEM Manufacturing Futures Steering Committee met three times throughout the year. Membership included the Skilling the Bay Program Lead, the Jobs Skills and Pathways Manager, representatives from Deakin University, and a careers teacher.

Eleven students applied for and received a scholarship at the conclusion of the programs. The GMC supported one student to access work experience this year and another to complete their experience in 2026 due to their age.

The survey results from the GFLOI, GLAM and WOW Clean Economy Program were aggregated. From the survey completed at the graduation event it was clear that the students had gained insight from the program with students reporting:

- 100% respondents feel better prepared for a future career in a STEM related field.
- 100% respondents have a better understanding of the variety of STEM pathways to employment.
- 78% respondents were motivated to set a goal of entering into tertiary study (TAFE or university) in advanced manufacturing or a STEM related course.
- 89% respondents were motivated to take STEM subjects in Year 10, 11, 12.
- 73% respondents motivated to set a goal of entering into an apprenticeship or traineeship in advanced manufacturing or a STEM related sector once I leave school.
- 100% of respondents rated the program good or better.

“ Being able to experience different work environments and fields opened my mind to a wide range of new ideas ”

Parents were also surveyed and reported:

- 100% rated the program as good or better for their student.
- 100% agreed that the program had increased the student's knowledge of STEM and engineering/advanced manufacturing.
- 96% agreed that the program had increased their and their student's knowledge of the variety of potential STEM career pathways available.
- 94% agreed that the program had assisted their student to link their schooling to potential career pathways and supported their continued study of maths and science.

“ The knowledge gained throughout the program and sites visited were insightful and confirmed the career pathway!” ”

A highlight from the program was the experience of one GLAM participant who, inspired by her involvement, solidified her ambition to pursue a career in engineering. She has since been accepted into the University of Melbourne’s Girl Power in Engineering and IT Program. Her achievement was also recognised publicly through an article in the Geelong Advertiser.

Geelong Advertiser article



Geelong students taking part in Geelong Manufacturing Council school-based programs Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing (GLAM), Geelong Future Leaders of Industry (GFLOI) and World of Work (WoW) clean economy.

Hands-on learning for leaders of tomorrow

Students given a unique opportunity from Geelong Manufacturing Council

Magdalene Porra and Evan Wuite

Geelong Manufacturing Council, supported by The Gordon and Skilling the Bay, runs three school-based programs for students in years 9 to 11 across Greater Geelong and surrounding areas.

This year, 50 students from 15 Geelong region schools participated in the programs: Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing (GLAM), Geelong Future Leaders of Industry (GFLOI) and World of Work (WoW) Clean Economy.

The programs feature behind-the-scenes tours of local manufacturers to see first-hand how cutting-edge products are designed, manufactured and used globally – right from their own region.

Tours and experiences provide students with hands-on activities and meaningful con-

versations with industry professionals, giving them valuable insights and inspiration into manufacturing and STEM careers.

For many students, these experiences spark genuine interest in pursuing a rewarding career in manufacturing.

GMC is currently taking applications from Geelong-region students for 2026 programs, which start in March.

Know someone in years 9 to 11 next year? Don't miss out, email admin@geelongmanufacturingcouncil.com.au to register your interest.

MAGDALENE PORRA
Year 9,
Geelong Lutheran College – GLAM (Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing)



Over the past year, I've had the amazing opportunity to participate in the Geelong Manufacturing Council's Girls Leading and Advanced Manufacturing (GLAM) program.

It's been an experience that completely opened my eyes to the world of manufacturing. Unlike learning in the classroom, this program gave me the chance to see and experience how real manufacturing works across many different companies around Geelong.

We explored local manufacturing businesses, met with owners and learned about the machinery and processes behind each company.

What I enjoyed most was that learning wasn't from textbooks – every day offered new hands-on and interactive activities that encouraged us to think creatively, solve problems and work alongside other students.

We didn't just visit what

most people imagine when they hear the word “manufacturing”. We explored everything from civil engineering to textiles for aerospace and car manufacturing – there wasn't much we didn't cover!

This program also gave us a chance to discover career opportunities we'd never considered before. Manufacturing isn't just about machines and factories; it's about innovation, teamwork and creating things that make a real difference in everyday life.

Looking back, not only did we get to see how things are made, but we also met so many like-minded people.

If you're a student interested in STEM or just want to explore what it's all about, I'd highly recommend applying next year. It's a chance to step outside the classroom, learn about future job pathways and meet inspiring people who love what they do.

EVAN WUITE
Year 9,
Belmont High – GFLOI (Geelong Future Leaders of Industry)



This year, I was one of the lucky participants who took part in GMC's GFLOI program. After hearing about the program at school, I eagerly applied because of my interest in science and the idea of going on excursions around the Geelong manufacturing scene.

Over the course of the year, we went out of school to visit many different sites and took part in several industry tours.

The manufacturing leaders treated us well, with trained professionals coming to talk to us about their companies.

One of the companies was the Steel 360 team, who took the time to give us a factory tour, teach us about growth in their field and, my favourite,

host a classic Aussie barbecue.

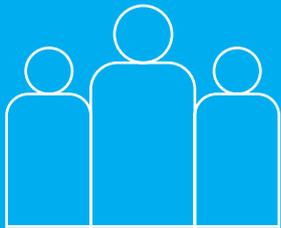
Some highlights included the Deakin Engineering campus tour, where we got to see the impressive high-voltage lab and other amazing technology.

Our group also worked with Kate from The Confidence Company, which really got us thinking about our futures.

My favourite tour was at the AKD Softwoods, which was truly phenomenal. Seeing the mill in action, taking in all the information and facts we learned, and walking through the facility gave me a real appreciation for Geelong's manufacturing capabilities.

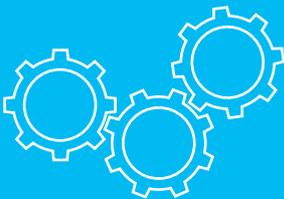
I couldn't be more thankful for the experience, which has inspired me to seriously consider a future in science.

Thanks to Nicole, all the volunteers, the companies and the friends and people I met along the way. I would highly recommend the next cohort should seize this opportunity.



STEM Manufacturing Futures Program

61 students



100%

better prepared for careers in STEM



100%

better understanding of STEM pathways



89%

were motivated to take STEM subjects in Year 10, 11, 12

World of Work - Health and Community Services

The Health & Community Services (H&CS) program was delivered in partnership with the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network (GRLLEN) and comprised two separate programs in 2025. The first was a one-day Careers in Health Workshop delivered to government school students only. The second was the traditional five modules program delivered between April and August. This program offers a unique opportunity for students interested in pursuing a career in health as many workplaces are unable to accommodate work experience students due to requirements for vaccination certification and police checks.

2025 Delivery

Barwon Health – Careers in Health Workshop

The one-day workshop held on Wednesday, 2 April 2025, at the McKellar Education and Training Centre, served as a significant milestone in the WOW: Health & Community Services Program's ongoing efforts to offer immersive, equity-focused career exploration experiences. The workshop targeted students from four priority government schools, Bellarine Secondary College, Newcomb Secondary College, Northern Bay College and North Geelong Secondary College at the request of Barwon Health.

Activities included an overview of clinical and non-clinical careers in the health sector.

Interactive sessions included:

- Wheelchair obstacle course
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy.

Barwon Health – Health and Community Services full program

The full program consisted of five modules.

The Health and Community Services program had 66 participants in 2025:

- Government School students - 31
- Non-government students - 35.

Module 1:

Site-based learning at The Gordon and VFA Learning, with simulated activities in nursing, allied health, and community services.

Module 2:

Future Health Skills micro credentials online.

- FHS005 Unit One – Health Literacy for starters.
- FHS007 Unit Two – Customer Service for starters.

Module 3:

Hospital immersion tours at Barwon Health, St John of God Hospital and Epworth Hospital, featuring real-world demonstrations and professional engagement.

Module 4:

Geelong Tech School and Health and Community Services Workshop Activity related to the chosen hospital site tour.

Module 5:

Tour of Nursing & Midwifery facilities at Deakin University, Waterfront, industry panel, certificate presentation and celebration lunch.

Outcomes

The Barwon Health - Careers in Health Workshop had 28 government school students.

Feedback from the Barwon Health Careers in Health Workshop showed:

- 87% of students reported satisfaction with the hands-on activities and content delivered.
- 83% of participants indicated the session contributed positively to their knowledge, skills, and career awareness.

Students valued the opportunity to engage directly with health professionals and experience a hospital-like environment through interactive tasks.

WOW Health & Community Services

Interest in the program was high with 66 students enrolled from nine schools. There was a higher proportion of government school students in 2025, 47% compared to 21% in 2024. There were 9 male students enrolled. When the two programs are combined the proportion of government school students rose to 63%.

The program continues to foster inclusivity and career exploration, with 97% of students reporting improved understanding of health careers through hands-on activities. Student feedback highlighted increased confidence and awareness of diverse roles beyond traditional pathways.

Attendance was excellent across each module day with an average attendance of 93%.

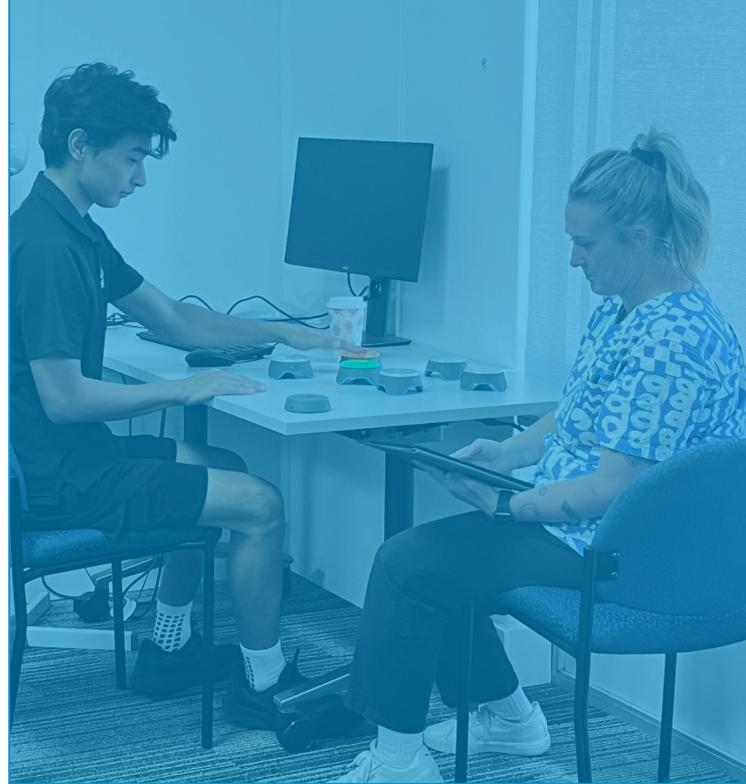
- Module 1: 93%
- Module 2: 94%
- Module 3: 98%
- Module 4: 88%
- Module 5: 92%.

The online component of the program, Future Health Skills Microcredentials had two units for the students to complete. Students were introduced to the Microcredentials and enrolled in the unit at an online session.

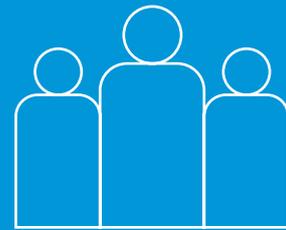
- FHS005 Unit One - Health Literacy for starters - 80% completion.
- FHS007 Unit Two - Customer Service for starters - 75% completion.

The completion rates were comparable to those in 2024.

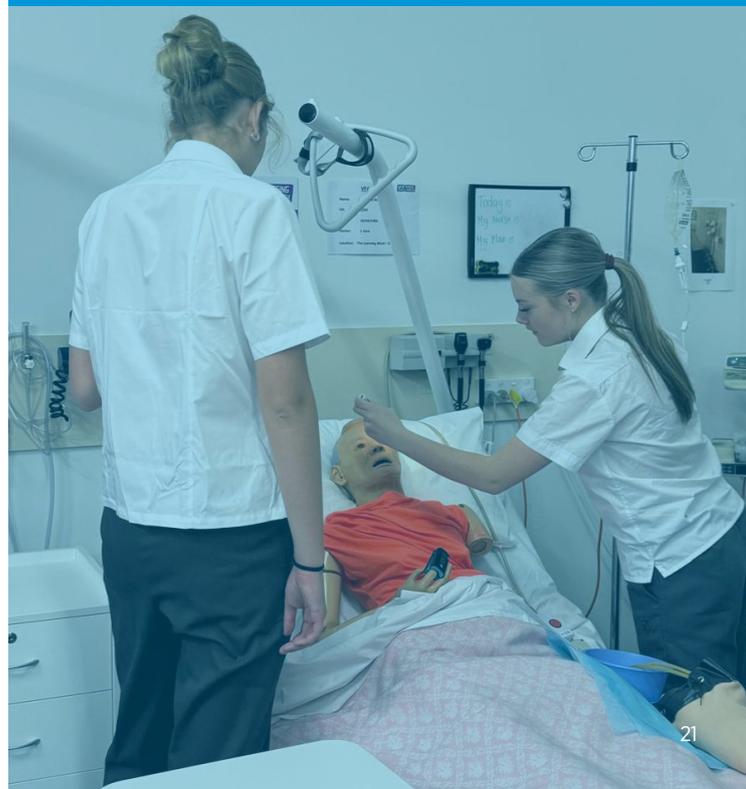
“ This helped me realise that there’s more to health than just being a doctor or nurse—I didn’t know about allied health or cardiac diagnostics before today. ”



WOW Health and Community Services



94 students



World of Work - Building Careers

The Building Careers Geelong Program delivered by the GRILEN included two independent days which offered students a comprehensive look into the construction industry. The tours included visits to residential and commercial construction sites along with a tour of The Gordon's trade training facilities. Students participated in 'Try-a-Trade' activities, such as plastering and bricklaying with instructors and apprentices. They were introduced to various building projects and heard career stories from professionals like carpenters, site managers, plumbers, electricians, project managers, and more. The program was delivered over two separate full days in May and September.

The Building Careers Geelong immersion gave students a comprehensive look into the construction industry. Students had a tour of an active residential construction site. This provided students with insight into framing, fit-out stages, and trades involved such as carpentry and electrical. Students toured a commercial project undertaken by Lyons showcasing larger-scale construction processes, roles, and safety procedures. At The Gordon TAFE Trade Training Facilities the students took part in a guided tour, where they had the opportunity to explore a range of hands-on training areas including carpentry, plumbing, and electrical. The tour provided insight into industry-standard tools, equipment, and learning environments, helping students gain a realistic understanding of what it's like to train in a trade setting. Following the tour, students attended a presentation outlining the various entry pathways into TAFE, including apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs.

The tour in September included visits to a Hamlan Homes' residential site. There students were introduced to various building projects and heard career stories from professionals such as carpenters, site managers, plumbers, electricians, project managers, and more. The Try-a-Trade activities included bricklaying (run by Caruso apprentices and Gordon staff) and carpentry activities facilitated by The Gordon in the trade centre. An industry Q&A was held with a current apprentice, female apprentice mentor, to teachers from The Gordon and Ben Caruso (Caruso Bricklaying) and Steve and Norm Lyons (Lyons Construction).

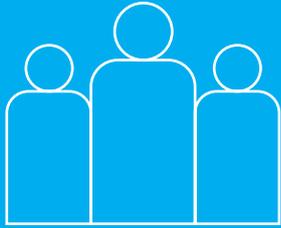
Outcomes

In all, 112 students were registered from 15 schools including nine government schools and six non-government schools including one specialist school and The Gordon VCE.

The attendance was high in May with 56 of the 62 registered students that had a supervising teacher present. On the second day in September, 36 out of 46 students attended.

The program was a great success with a high degree of satisfaction reported by the participants. Feedback from the two programs was consistently positive. The percentage of students who reported that their knowledge of the career pathways available in the building industry had improved was 93% and 97% for day 1 and day 2, respectively.

WOW Building Careers



112 students
15 schools





2025 Apprenticeship and Traineeship Support Forum



98%

agreed they would recommend the event to a friends



2025 Apprenticeship and Traineeship Support Forum

An Apprenticeship and Traineeship Forum hosted by Skilling the Bay in collaboration with Workforce Australia Local Jobs (Barwon) and The Gordon was held in the Library at The Gordon East Campus on Wednesday, 30 July. The forum was open to job seekers and students.

The evening included a panel session with guest speakers:

- Matt Luttrell Priority Apprenticeships Manager, Barwon and Central Highlands - Apprenticeships Victoria.
- Kristen Grasso Director of Education Excellence, Health, Business and Community - The Gordon.
- Louise Goodwin Manager, Apprenticeship Services - gforce employment & recruitment.
- Ashley Belteky Apprentice Mentor - Apprenticeship Support Australia.
- Emma Magill Trainee - Barwon Water.
- Andrew Jones - Weaving Manager - LoomTex.

Guests then had the opportunity to speak to 19 exhibitors that represented Apprenticeship Connect Australia Providers, Group Training Organisations, employers and support organisations such as Head Start and the Skills and Jobs Centre. The Gordon had great representation of staff from all industry areas offered by the TAFE.

Outcomes

Attendees:

- 180 people (270 registered)
- 74 students
- 23 mature people
- 24 schools (30 registered).

Survey results showed (44 respondents):

- 88% were satisfied with the event
- 98% would recommend the event to a friend
- 93% were likely to consider following an apprenticeship or traineeship pathway after attending the event.

2025 Hospitality and Tourism Expo

The 2025 Hospitality and Tourism Jobs Expo was held on Monday, October 13, from 11 am to 2 pm at The Gordon TAFE's City Campus in the Gallery, courtyard and demonstration kitchen. The event was hosted by Workforce Australia Local Jobs (Barwon) in collaboration with Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine, Skilling the Bay and The Gordon. In all, 178 people attended the Jobs Expo along with 17 fantastic exhibitors. Of those surveyed, 95% of the respondents at the event indicated that it either exceeded or met their expectations. Employers shared that the participants at this year's event were of high calibre and a number were able to employ people as a result of the event.

Celebrity chef Adrian Richardson provided an engaging demonstration in the Culinary Collective. Attendees at the Expo were provided with a taste of curry or paella by The Gordon's Culinary Collective, and were entertained in the courtyard by local musician, Levi Anderson.

The event was designed to connect job seekers and students with leading employers and training organisations in the Hospitality and Tourism industry, catering to both seasonal employment and long-term careers. Attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with employers, participate in brief interviews, and explore various training pathways within the industry.

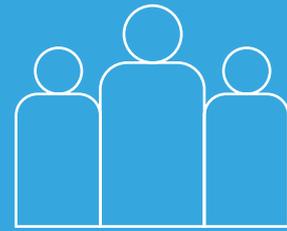
Outcomes

Attendees:

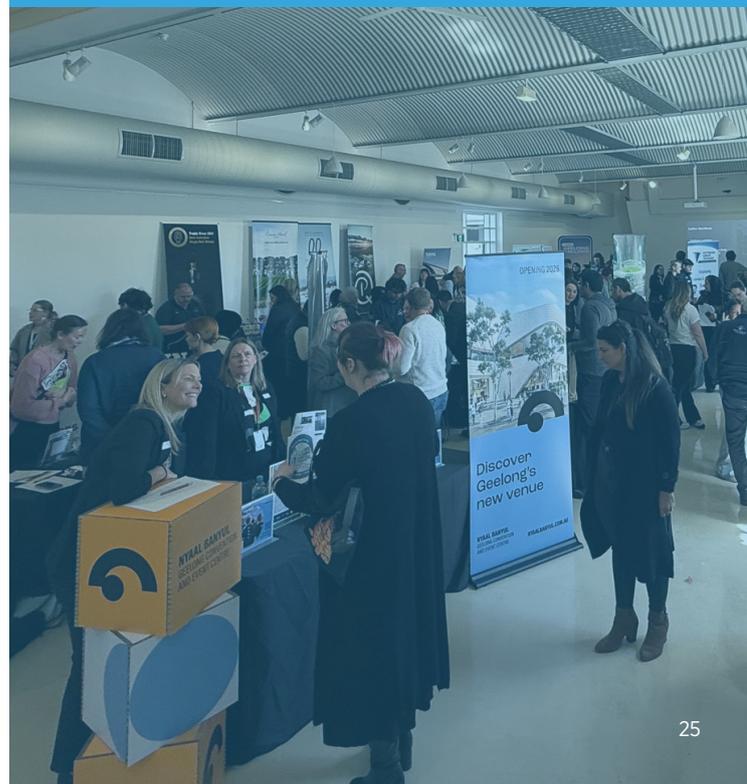
- 178 people (270 registered)
- 64 students
- 7 schools.
- 17 exhibitors.



2025 Hospitality and Tourism Expo



178 attendees



Geelong Tertiary Futures Program Student Returns to The Gordon

The Skilling the Bay Program Management Office analysed data from The Gordon to determine the number of students who participated in the Geelong Tertiary Futures Program (GTFP) who subsequently returned to The Gordon for further study. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of students returning to The Gordon after participating in GTFP. In this chart:

- The year represents the year the student attended GTFP.
- Total Returns refers to the distinct number of students who returned to The Gordon for any study reason, including VET Delivered to Secondary Schools (VETDSS), General Profile courses, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, or Fee-for-Service programs. VETDSS students are included in this total.

Key Observations

- Year-on-year growth in the conversion of GTFP students to VETDSS enrolments has been observed, except in 2021.
- The decline in 2021 is attributed to COVID-19 lockdowns, which disrupted program delivery.
- In 2015, 9.7% of GTFP students returned to complete a VETDSS course at The Gordon. By 2022, this figure had increased to 23.4%.
- Encouragingly, in 2023, 24.5% of students returned. As these students are now in Year 11, there is still potential for this number to rise if they choose a VETDSS pathway in Year 12.
- It is important to note that many VETDSS courses are delivered by schools or other providers (e.g., Geelong Industry Trade Training Centre and VFA Learning).

Participation in GTFP has steadily grown over time, as illustrated in Figure 2. Between 2015 and 2020, four schools were involved in the program. In 2021, participation dropped to three schools due to challenges associated with COVID-19 lockdowns. Numbers returned to four schools in 2022. In 2023, the program was extended to all Geelong schools, resulting in 10 schools participating. This increased to 12 schools in 2024, and currently, all 13 schools complete the GTFP.

For completeness, data excluding fee-for-service courses (such as First Aid or White Card) is also presented. As expected, total return numbers decrease for more recent cohorts, as there has been less time for students to return.

To enable fair comparison across cohorts, Figure 3 shows student return data for up to four years after GTFP participation. This comparison is possible only for cohorts up to 2021.

The percentage of students participating in VETDSS remains consistent between the two datasets, as GTFP participants are in Year 9 and typically complete VETDSS within three years of attending GTFP.

Additional Insights

- On average, 43.7% of GTFP participants return to The Gordon within four years.
- The 2015 figure was notably high due to a large number of students enrolling in First Aid courses.
- When fee-for-service courses are excluded, the average return rate is 37.7%.

Figure 1.
Student Returns to
The Gordon Post GTFP

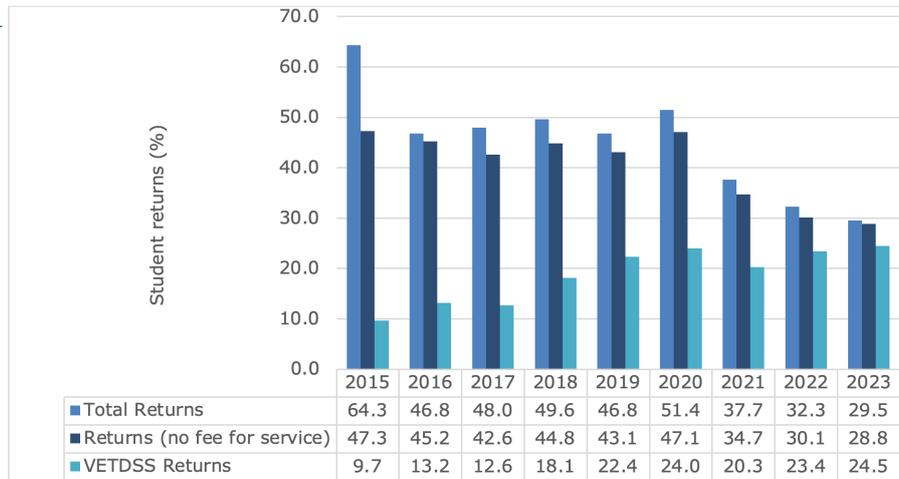


Figure 2.
GTFP student and
school numbers
2015-2025

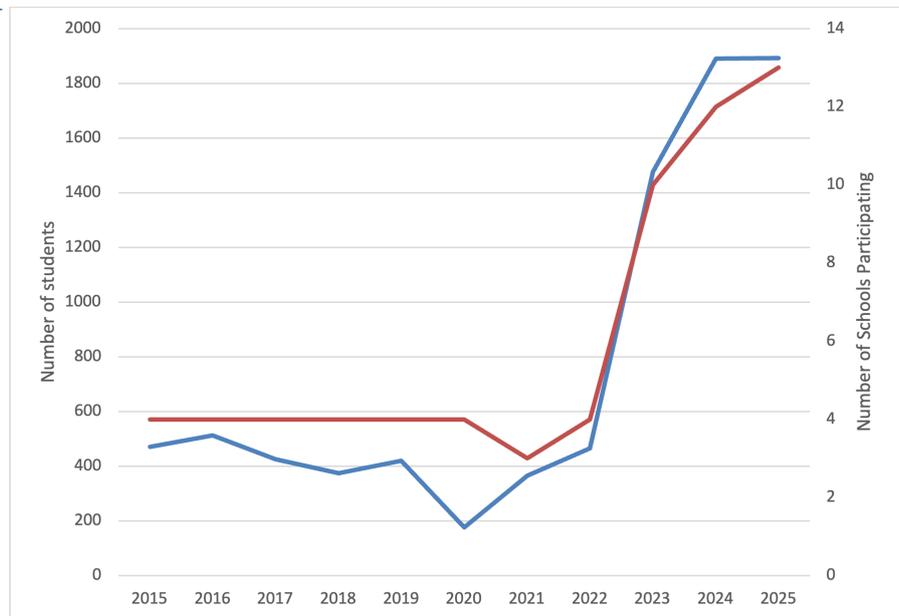
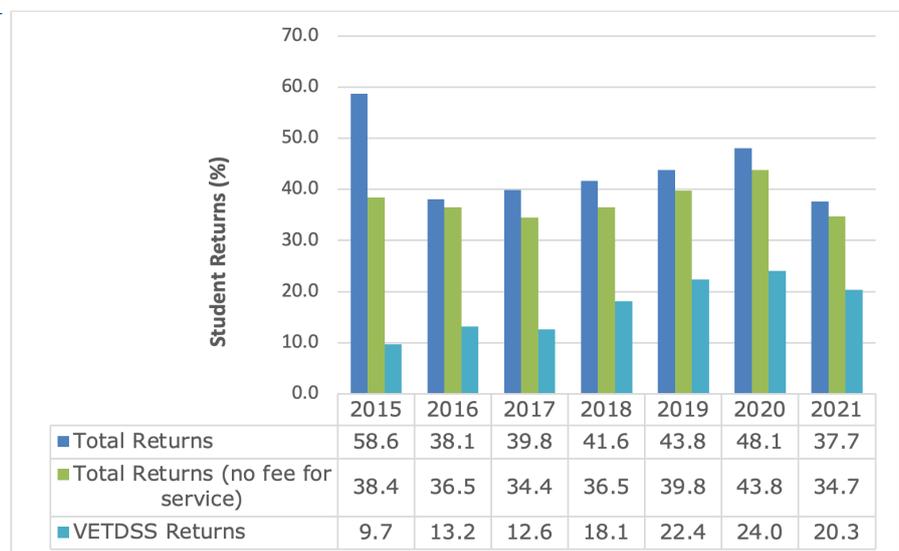


Figure 3.
Student Returns to
The Gordon Four Years
Post GTFP



2026 Delivery Plan

The Geelong Tertiary Futures Program will again deliver to all 13 Government schools in the Geelong region. Schools have provided the GTFP team with preferred program dates for 2026. The WorkSkills component will be delivered as non-accredited units as in 2025. Certificates will be provided for participation and completion and high achieving students from each school will be recognised. Timetabling Solutions will be used to allocate students to the Career Previews. GTFP teaching staff will introduce students to the program and support students in selecting their Career Previews at the beginning of the year at the home schools. The Gordon will continue the bulk enrolment of students as students of The Gordon rather than students enrolling themselves. The team took this proactive approach to ease the administrative burden for schools and to improve the first impression of the students.

The team will again focus on increasing the participation of girls in non-traditional trades. The video used last year of Western Heights students speaking about their experience will be used to promote the trade areas for girls. The team is also planning a 'Women in Trades' day for Matthew Flinders Girls School students. On this day students will all attend The Gordon East Campus and choose Career Previews from there. The Gordon will provide a BBQ lunch and invite Women in Trades to attend and act as mentors on the day.

Numbers of year 9 students are likely to increase in 2026. Western Heights has indicated that their cohort will increase from 180 in 2025 to 250 in 2026. This increase will provide logistical challenges not only for the school to provide adequate supervisors but to spread the students across the Career Previews maintaining maximum class number restrictions.

The Skilling the Bay World of Work Programs to be delivered in 2026 (see 2026 Delivery Calendar on page 30):

- WOW Government and Business Careers
- WOW Digital Technology
- WOW Creative Industries
- WOW Hospitality and Tourism
- STEM Manufacturing Futures Program - GMC
 - Geelong Future Leaders of Industry
 - Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing
 - WOW Clean Economy
- WOW Health and Community Services - GRLLLEN
- WOW Building Careers - GRLLLEN
- WOW Warehouse and Logistics - GRLLLEN.

Skilling the Bay is working closely with the Geelong Tech School to enhance the delivery of WOW Programs in 2026. As part of this collaboration:

- The Geelong Tech School will host the application forms for all Skilling the Bay programs.
- A dedicated teacher from the Tech School will supervise each WOW Program and accompany students across all event days, ensuring continuity and support.

This consistent presence will help strengthen the connection between the Tech School activities and the broader WOW Program experience, giving students a clearer understanding of how each component aligns with their learning journey.

The WOW Programs delivered by the Skilling the Bay office will be three days, over three weeks, on Mondays and Tuesdays. Wednesdays are being avoided as this is the main VETDSS day. GTFP is scheduled for Thursdays and Fridays. Program days will begin at 9am and conclude at 3pm. A whole day will be spent at the Geelong Tech School to meet the needs of students for hands-on activities and provide a networking opportunity.

The Skilling the Bay office has been working with the Department of Education and school principals to adjust to the changing requirements for program supervision outlined by the Department. Skilling the Bay has committed to maintaining the high levels of supervision outlined in the Excursion Policy without the requirement for a VIT-Registered teacher but including an experienced educator from the Geelong Tech School. This plan has been communicated to the school principals in the region at the VASSP meeting and they have confirmed their approval of the approach. The risk assessment has been updated to ensure it meets all aspects that schools are required to cover to assist schools to complete their internal assessments prior to student attendance. This will be provided to schools as students begin enrolling in programs.

The STEM Manufacturing Futures Program will have three streams in 2026:

GFLOI - Up to 20 Year 9, 10 and 11 students will undertake a series of advanced manufacturing or STEM education site visits and can undertake an optional 3 days of Work Experience.

GLAM - 20–25 female Year 9, 10 and 11 students per year undertake a tailored program designed to encourage girls' consideration of a pathway with a focus on advanced technology, design, engineering or innovative manufacturing. Students can undertake 3 days of Work Experience.

WOW Clean Economy - The program will deliver 4 days of activities incorporating industry immersion, hands-on workshop and clean economy awareness session.

The program of events for each stream includes industry tours, presentations from experts and role models, and team project-oriented workshops where possible, with an emphasis on creativity and problem solving. Diversity of careers, pathways and role models is presented within each stream to support the students as they learn about the variety of career opportunities within STEM related, advanced manufacturing and clean economy fields.

The GMC commenced recruitment for the 2026 program in 2025, resulting in increased applications for the 2026 intake.

The program lead participated in careers days, attended VET coordinators meetings, organised a Teachers Tour Day, spoke to students at lunch on the final days of GTFP days and spoke directly to careers teachers at key government schools. They have received 24 applications across the programs including 10 for GLAM.

In October, the **Health and Community Services** Community of Practice met to reflect on the 2025 program delivery and plan for 2026. The Community of Practice includes members from Skilling the Bay, The Gordon, VFA, Epworth Geelong, Barwon Health and St John of God Geelong Hospital.

The key objectives included:

- Partner commitment for 2026.
- Review of student feedback and outcomes across all five program modules.
- Cross-sector knowledge sharing.
- Identifying improvements for student engagement and digital learning.

Recommendations for program innovations included:

- Retaining the five-module structure for 2026 with refinements.
- Focus on smoother transitions between modules, enhanced micro-credential support, and sustained industry collaboration.
- Introducing structured reflection time within each module to consolidate learning.
- Enhance digital learning support through check-ins and progress tracking.
- Optimise group rotation and timing between sites.
- Expand industry panels in Module 5 to cover allied health and social care roles.

The **WOW Building Careers Program** intends to run the program over two separated days in 2026 as they have done in 2025. The Community of Practice met to reflect on the 2025 program delivery and plan for 2026. The Community of Practice includes members from Skilling the Bay, The Gordon, the GRLEN, and building industry partners.

2026 Skilling the Bay Program Delivery Calendar

JANUARY

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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APRIL

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MAY

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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27	28	29	30	31		

- Public Holidays
- Term Breaks
- Advisory Board Meeting
- Executive Committee Pathways Programs
- GTFP
- WOW Hospitality & Tourism
- WOW Creative Industries
- WOW Digital Technology
- WOW Government & Business Careers
- WOW Health and Community Services
- STEM Manufacturing Futures
- WOW Clean Economy
- WOW Building Careers
- Apprenticeship & Traineeship Forum
- Hospitality & Tourism Jobs Expo

Where the days overlap, STB led programs are the fill colour and GMC or GRLLLEN programs border colour.

The key objectives included:

- Review of partners and students' feedback on each of the program days
- Cross-sector knowledge sharing.
- Identifying improvements to site visits for student exposure to industry trades
- Strengthening partnerships across education and industry
- Continued collaboration with The Gordon, Master Building Victoria (MBV) and local construction business.
- Leveraging apprentices and mentors to support student learning and engagement.

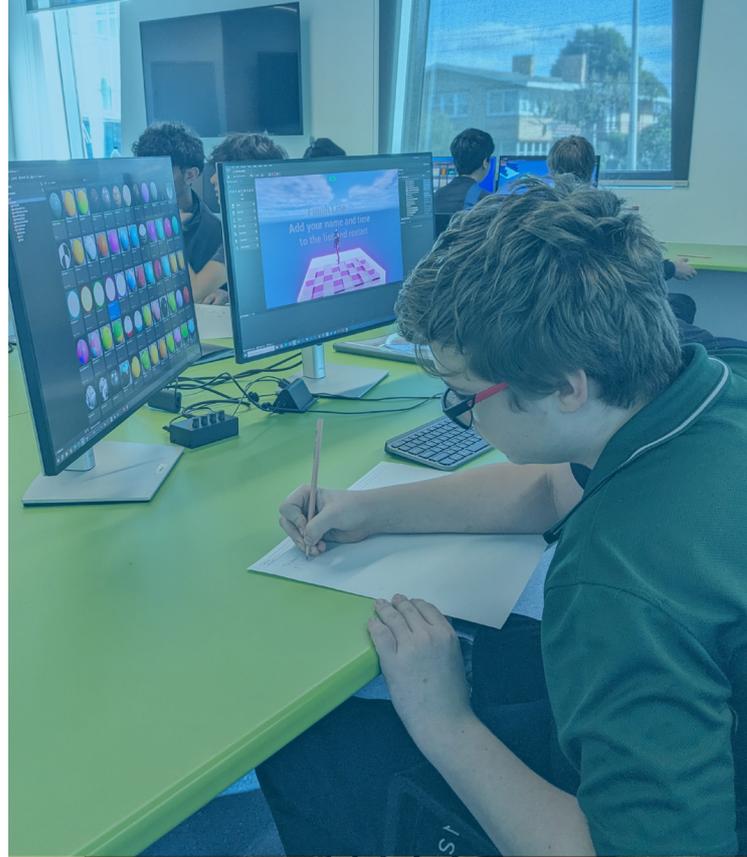
Recommendations for program innovations included:

- Streamlining site visit logistics – consider multiple builds in close proximity to maximise student exposure and reduce travel time.
- Supporting Women in Trades initiatives and inclusive mentoring opportunities.
- Collaborate with MBV to develop learning resources outlining various roles in construction to support career awareness

Skilling the Bay will work with our partners to again deliver the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Forum (June 17) and the Hospitality and Tourism Jobs Expo (October 13). The Executive Committee Pathways Program and Advisory Board meetings have been scheduled and invitations have been sent to the members.

Communication

A postcard/flyer was developed to communicate the 2026 WOW offering in time for the Geelong Careers Teachers Association AGM in December and individual program flyers will be delivered early in 2026. To support planning within schools, students will be able to enrol in the programs at the beginning of the year. A presentation will be made at the first Geelong Career Teachers Association meeting in March to excite the teachers about the possibilities for their students in 2026. Skilling the Bay will continue to promote the programs through the VET coordinator's meetings, direct contact with schools and via social media. The Geelong Tech School website has updated details of the programs and students can enrol through online forms.





Skilling
THE BAY