



EDUCATION & SKILLS LIVE AND LEARN FEASIBILITY IN SWIFTS CREEK DISTRICT

Stage 1 and 2 of the Feasibility Report Project

Skills 4 the Future, Pty. Ltd.

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education & Skills Innovation Working Group (IWG) is an integral part of the Swifts Creek Future Project, aiming to foster sustainable economic and social development in Swifts Creek and surrounding districts. This group has focused on exploring the potential for creating an educational facility that offers both residential and learning opportunities. The brief was broad and provided scope to explore providing exploration into the varying cohort's that could use their facilities. The opportunity to identify a stage approach to expanding Swifts Creek identified in the region to being a provider of services, specifically for education and skills was explored.

The ultimate aspiration for the IWG was to build a resilient and sustainable community that could retain its existing population and ultimately expand. This would only be achieved through the growth of multiple sectors in the region. These sectors will require support to:

- Create new businesses
- Expand existing businesses
- Skills the current and future population to meet current and emerging needs
- Build unique or bespoke products and services that could attract both government and philanthropic funds to support the staged growth of the Learn and live facility.

The community is very aware of what is determined to be critical assets and the potential to re-purpose or re-use these to their ultimate usage. The facilities assessment has shown there is significant existing infrastructure that could be refurbished or expanded in the interim to pilot the two options provided through community consultation. The community is passionate but divided over to the next best steps but are united in their ambition to capitalise on their resources which includes people, skills and the location.

This report has sought to address the critical aspects of the first two stages of the project and provide enough data for the final costings to be completed ready to apply for a range of tenders, grants and opportunities that will emerge during and after this election cycle.

<Any clarification – additions or omissions >

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3 INTRODUCTION

Projects Key Objectives

The following project overview have been articulated a guiding set of objectives. However, the original Expression of Interest provided a broader remit and as a result has been followed with the following included.

Objective	Description	
Establish a Residential Learning Facility:	Investigate the feasibility of creating a facility that supports on-site, experiential learning in key sectors such as agriculture and forestry, with a focus on sustainability. This could be residential or not.	Consideration Included in the current project
Collaboration and Research Integration	Identify existing stakeholders, researchers, and intellectual property in the region, and explore how these assets can be leveraged to support and enhance the educational facility.	Included in the current project
Long-Term Economic and Social Impact	Ensure the project contributes to the long-term prosperity of the Swifts Creek district by fostering innovation and developing a skilled workforce.	Stage 2 of this project and will costed with the conclusion of the Feasibility Report

Table 1: Projects Key Objectives

Other innovation committee opportunities identified

There are two other committee's currently working towards completing feasibility studies to clarify potential options for the area. There is also another option that is currently in development; The Oram Estate Independent Living Facility. The four pillars of the project include:

- Nature-based recreation and tourism
- Education & Skills Centre
- Value-add primary industry
- Oram Estate Independent Living

Project Description

The Swifts Creek Future Project has been initiated as part of the Victorian Government's Forestry Transition Program, which aims to support workers, businesses, and communities transitioning away from native timber harvesting toward more diversified and sustainable industries.

Swifts Creek is one of eleven towns selected to receive funding for a Local Development Strategy (LDS). This strategy focuses on identifying regional strengths and fostering innovation to ensure long-term economic and social growth.

Led by the Swifts Creek and District Community Reference Group (SCCRG), the project is managed by Alyce Richards, Local Development Strategy Project Manager, with administrative support from Abbie Richardson.

Skills 4 the Future has been commissioned to design and develop a Feasibility Report for the Education and Innovation committee project outcomes. This project plan documents the key deliverables and timelines required to meet the project outcomes.

Geographic Area

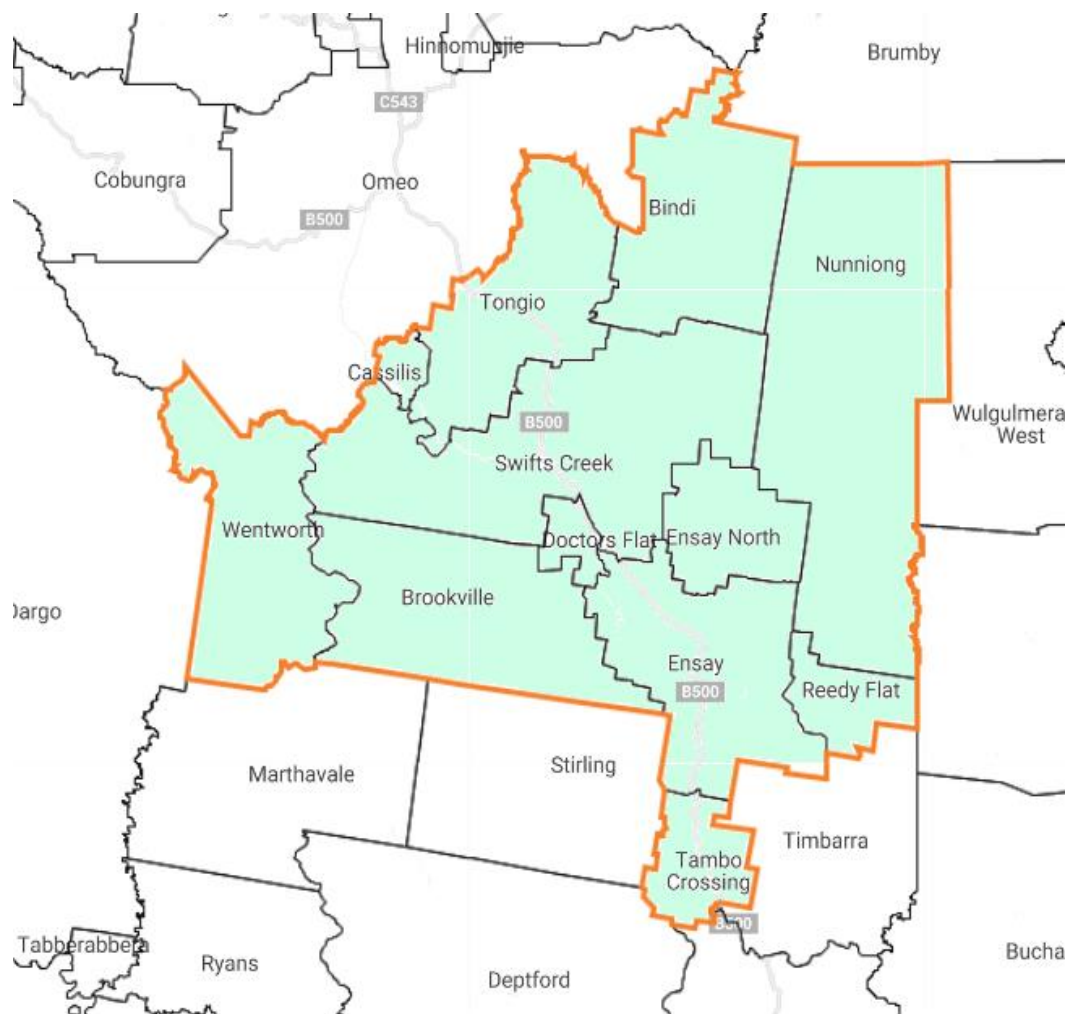


Figure 1: Geographic Area

Expression of Interest remit and tendered outcomes

Strategies and approaches we need to consider and include

The Swifts Creek Future Project uses the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), an evidence-based, collaborative process for identifying local strengths, assets, and innovation opportunities. This approach commenced with a Regional Context Analysis, which closely examines the economic, social, and environmental characteristics of the Swifts Creek district. Through this analysis, the available assets and resources to support economic innovation will be identified, as well as key policy initiatives relevant to the district. The goal is to develop a series of projects that are ready for investment, ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of the region.

Education & Skills Innovation Working Group (IWG)

The Education & Skills Innovation Working Group (IWG) is an integral part of the Swifts Creek Future Project, aiming to foster sustainable economic and social development in Swifts Creek and surrounding districts. This group focuses on exploring the potential for creating an educational facility that offers both residential and learning opportunities. The initiative will help position Swifts Creek as a hub for innovation, resilience, and growth by providing the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an economy that emphasizes regenerative practices, sustainability, and innovation.

As a result, we will consider the following lens to conduct analysis across the project.



Type of education and training	Description
Skill	<p>Skilling Primary students how can we leverage and expand existing program? What other programs are being implementation globally in similar communities</p> <p>Skilling Secondary Students – what career exploration programs are available? How could programs be designed to reflect building the skills required for the community against skills gaps and growth opportunities? How are schools using school-based apprenticeships and traineeships? How is vocational specialisations being used within the community? How are older members of the community being leveraged? How are skills and jobs of the future being considered and implemented in the community? How is the work experience program structured?</p> <p>Skilling Post-Secondary Students – where can TAFE and universities enable students to either build skills when living away from the community or build the required skills in the local community through program that leverage off TAFE and University programs</p>
Reskill	<p>Post-secondary community members that need to re-skill from their initial profession into a field that has identified opportunities and growth potential and aligns to the Nature-Based Recreation & Tourism and Value-Added Primary Industry working groups.</p> <p>This could be done through new C2 to Diploma courses</p> <p>Microcredentials that are have progressions and align to the skill gaps identified</p> <p>Program to upskill multiple people</p> <p>Identifying business ideas around new or expanded products and services</p>
Upskill	<p>Providing opportunities for community members to upskill as leaders or becoming specialists in their current field i.e Management courses or becoming a 3D printer specialist in pulp products</p>

Table 2: Type of education and training

Project Governance

Projects Process

The project process (S3 process), which is being used for the Victorian Forestry Transition Program, guides the project through three key stages. However, after discussion with Alyce we have divided the project into four stages to reflect the work requirements identified and skills available.

Phases	Status
Phase 1: Regional Context Analysis	Completed
Phase 2: Entrepreneurial Discovery	Completed
Phase 3A: Concept. Needs assessment and gaps and opportunity analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: Policy review and gap analysis Stage 2: Stakeholder engagement and collaboration plan Stage 3: A detailed Feasibility report with analysis and recommendations 	Included in this proposal
Phase 3B: Implementation of strategy and operational plan – could include bricks and mortar, technologies fit out of an existing facility and conceptual pilot projects	To be costed once the draft of the Pre-Feasibility Report has been submitted

Table 3: Projects Process



Structure of the project committee's

Swifts Creek Future Committee		
	Project Manager	Project officer
Swifts Creek Steering Committee		
Nature-based recreation and tourism Sub-Committee	Education & Skills Centre Sub-Committee	Value-add primary industry Sub-Committee

Table 4: Structure of the project committee's

Communication Plan and reporting structure

What	To who	By who	When	How
Project planning	Alyce Richards	Pauline Farrell	Initial fortnight	Email
Project milestone reports	Education Working Group	Pauline Farrell	Against milestone dates	Report via email
Internal Project Meetings	Alyce Richards	Pauline Farrell	Weekly	Weekly update- email and meeting
Ongoing feedback and requests	Alyce Richards	Rita Chiu	As needed	Phone/email

Table 5: Communication Plan and reporting structure

4. REVIEW OF EXISTING DOCUMENTATION

The task assigned was to conduct a comprehensive review of relevant local, regional, and national strategies, plans, policies, and existing research relevant to the project. This section also has completed an assessment of the current operating environment, including regulatory, economic, and social factors. This section of the report is also a summary of an analysis of a range of similar experienced-based all-age learning facilities around Australia and identify the gaps in audience and learning opportunities that may be filled within the Swifts Creek District.

Summary of the analysis of literature

This research project provides a comprehensive analysis of the Swifts Creek Region's transition from traditional industries to sustainable and innovative economic practices. Key literature included in this analysis are listed below:

Domains	Summary
Policy and Legislation:	Analysis of policies that emphasizes sustainable forest management, economic diversification, innovation, and community resilience i.e The Victorian Forestry Transition Program, Australian National Forestry Policies, and the Forest Policy Statement are examples
International Regulations and Laws:	Adhering to international regulations such as the The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use Act Amendment, Illegal Logging Prohibition Act, and the European Union Timber Regulation ensures legal compliance and promotes sustainable forestry practices.
Workforce Development Needs:	By focusing on reskilling and upskilling, supporting businesses, community collaboration, inclusive employment, and funding opportunities, Swifts Creek can build a resilient and innovative workforce We have included projected job numbers in key areas and highlight the potential for economic growth.
Digital and Broader Skills:	Ensuring digital literacy, advanced IT skills, digital marketing, e-commerce, and remote work capabilities are crucial for economic prosperity.
Qualifications and Microcredentials:	Focusing on qualifications and microcredentials in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, healthcare, education, environmental conservation, entrepreneurship, and leadership will build a skilled workforce ready to drive innovation and economic growth.
Degrees and Postgraduate Qualifications:	Emphasizing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in renewable energy engineering, agricultural science, environmental science, business, information technology, tourism management, nursing, entrepreneurship, and public health will prepare the population
Secondary School Programs:	Implementing programs in STEM, business/ entrepreneurship, VET, digital technologies, creative arts, health, and agriculture and environmental management will equip students with the skills needed
Viable New Businesses:	Developing new businesses in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, remote work, healthcare, education, environmental conservation, creative arts, food, and entrepreneurship
Future Jobs and Emerging Techs:	Identifying future jobs such as renewable energy technicians, agricultural technologists, Investing in emerging technologies like renewable energy, precision agriculture, LEO satellites, AI, IoT, and others.
Key Reports and Their Impact:	Leveraging insights from key reports such as the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, East Gippsland Shire Council Community Vision 2020-2040, Swifts Creek Regional Context Analysis Final Report, and Victorian Skills Plan for 2022-2023
Comparison of Initiatives	Comparing initiatives from various councils, such as Orbost, Yarram, Murrindindi, Benalla, and Heyfield, highlights the importance of local economic development, community, and sustainable practices.
Collaboration and Research Integration:	Building collaboration and research integration by identifying existing stakeholders, researchers, and intellectual property in the region can enhance the educational facility for the Swifts Creek project. Leveraging these assets will support innovation and skill development tailored to the region's unique needs.



Establishing a Residential Learning Hub:	Creating a residential learning hub that integrates local culture, sustainability practices, and advanced technologies will provide a unique and immersive educational experience. This hub will serve as a model for green building and living, promoting hands-on and experiential learning.
Social Impact:	The proposed initiatives will have a significant social impact by promoting inclusive employment, enhancing community engagement, and improving access to education and healthcare.

Table 6: Summary of the analysis of literature

Overview

Skills for the future has undertaken a literature review which reflects four levels of inquiry across four research areas.

The review provides a comprehensive of existing knowledge on the predetermined lines of inquiry, helping to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas for further investigation. More importantly the literature review establishes the context and significance of the current research.

For each of the research area information and data was obtained at the following levels; International, National, State and/or Regional The four research areas covered;

1. Policy and legislation,
2. Relevant current and future projects,
3. International and national supplementary initiatives and
4. Regional workforce development.

Skills 4 the Future has also included a section ensuring that the research is clear in understanding the need to tie the report back to the project's key objectives. Due to the extensive nature of the review documents generated a number of appendices have been provide for further reading and/or in-depth investigation. A number of overlapping areas were also identified. Theses have been addressed via the combining the overlap under relevant headings. Key Reports and Their Impact on Swifts Creek Region.

Relevant documents included in the Literature analysis

Australian Universities Accord Final Report (2024)	The Australian Universities Accord Final Report, released on February 25, 2024, outlines 47 recommendations aimed at reforming the higher education sector to meet Australia's future skills needs. The report emphasizes the need for a more equitable and innovative higher education system to address the nation's social, economic, and environmental challenges. Overall, the Australian Universities Accord Final Report aims to create a more inclusive and supportive higher education system that addresses the unique needs of remote regions and contributes to their development.
East Gippsland Shire Council Community Vision 2020-2040	The East Gippsland Shire Council's Community Vision 2020-2040 outlines the aspirations, values, and priorities of the East Gippsland community, aiming to shape the region's future by 2040. Overall, the East Gippsland Community Vision 2020-2040 aims to create a thriving and innovative community that values education and fosters a culture of lifelong learning.
LDS Strategy	A document prepared by Alyce Richards to set out a strategy for the Swifts Creek Futures projects with clear objectives
Swifts Creek Regional Context Analysis Final Report	<p>The Swifts Creek Regional Context Analysis Final Report provides a comprehensive examination of the region's economic and community data, aiming to identify areas with potential for innovation and bolster the local economy.</p> <p>Education & Skills Centre: Establishing an Education & Skills Centre to provide training and educational opportunities tailored to the needs of the local community, enhancing residents' skills and supporting lifelong learning.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Discovery Process Workshops: Facilitating workshops to identify entrepreneurial opportunities and potential areas of innovation within the region, involving multiple stakeholders to foster collaboration and idea generation.</p> <p>Smart Specialisation Strategy: Employing the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) methodology to identify and develop regional strengths and assets, focusing on fostering economic growth and innovation.</p> <p>Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Encouraging collaboration between the community, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to drive innovation and improve educational outcomes.</p> <p>Overall, the Swifts Creek Regional Context Analysis Final Report aims to create a thriving and innovative community by enhancing education and fostering a culture of lifelong learning and entrepreneurship. This</p>

	<p>report examines the region's economic and community data to identify areas with potential for innovation and bolster the local economy. It proposes the establishment of an Education & Skills Centre to provide training and educational opportunities tailored to the needs of the local community.</p> <p>The report also suggests facilitating Entrepreneurial Discovery Process Workshops to identify entrepreneurial opportunities and potential areas of innovation within the region. The Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) methodology is recommended to identify and develop regional strengths and assets, focusing on fostering economic growth and innovation.</p>
Victorian Skills Plan for 2022-2023	<p>The Victorian Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023 outlines a comprehensive strategy to address the skills needs of Victoria, with a particular focus on education and innovation in remote regions. Overall, the Victorian Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023 aims to create a more inclusive and innovative education system that addresses the unique needs of remote regions and supports their economic development. By leveraging the insights and recommendations from these key reports, Swifts Creek can build a resilient and innovative community that is well-prepared for the future.</p>
Gippsland Employment Region, VIC, July 2024	<p>The region faces several local labour market challenges including low labour force participation rate, significant long-term unemployment, high early school leaving rates, low higher education completion rates, and higher unemployment rates among First Nations people. Additionally, the aging population is increasing demand in the health care and social assistance industries, with one-third of the population over 65. There are growing workforce shortages in the care and support sector, industry transitions from traditional sectors like mining and forestry, limited access to public transport in the large geographical region, high levels of people without driver's licenses or private transport, housing and childcare shortages, and a shortage of skilled and professional workers to meet workforce requirements.</p> <p>The two reports related to Swifts Creek are highly relevant as they provide comprehensive insights into the region's economic, educational, and community development. These reports aim to create a thriving and innovative community in Swifts Creek by enhancing education, fostering a culture of lifelong learning, and addressing local economic challenges. They provide a roadmap for the region's development and highlight the importance of collaboration between the community, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.</p>
Gippsland Employment Region VIC July 2024:	<p>This report outlines the challenges faced by the Gippsland region, including low labour force participation, significant long-term unemployment, and high early school leaving rates. It highlights the importance of creating employment pathways and improving skills for the future workforce by collaborating with industries and training providers. The report emphasizes the need for promoting training and employment opportunities through job expos, networking events, and online resources⁷.</p>
Impact of the Local Job Plan on Swifts Creek	<p>The impact on Swifts Creek is part of the broader Gippsland Local Jobs Plan, which addresses various challenges and strategies for the region. The plan focuses on supporting workforce transitions to a net zero economy, with an emphasis on regional needs and community engagement¹. In Swifts Creek, this means there will be efforts to upskill and reskill employees, assist businesses with workforce needs, and collaborate with educational institutions to develop future training solutions. The program also aims to address challenges such as skill shortages and high unemployment by consulting with local groups, connecting industries with educational institutions, and supporting sector-based activities.</p> <p>Additionally, the plan promotes government initiatives and funding, shares labour market data, and raises community awareness about the impact of the net zero transition. This comprehensive approach is designed to ensure that Swifts Creek, along with other areas in the Gippsland region, can effectively navigate the transition to a sustainable and prosperous future.</p>
Workforce Australia	<p>Skills and Training including initiative to upskill and train people for current and future jobs through apprenticeships and training. The principles and policies are outlined in the following documents and programs: National Skills Agreement, Skill councils and committees, Building Women's Careers Program and the Skills reform. Employment which includes the provision of services and support to assist with overcoming barriers and development of required employment skills.</p>

Table 7: Relevant documents included in the Literature analysis

Forestry specific Policies and Papers

Victorian Forestry Transition Program	The Victorian Forestry Transition Program aims to support businesses, workers, and communities as they transition away from native timber harvesting, which ended on January 1, 2024. The program provides various forms of support to help these groups adapt to new economic opportunities and sustainable industries.
"After the Logging" Research Paper	The "After the Logging" research paper, published by the Victorian National Parks Association in November 2021, examines the failure to regrow Victoria's native forests after logging.
Australian National Forestry Policies	The Forestry Policies document from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry outlines the policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the forestry sector, promoting sustainable forest management, and ensuring the long-term viability of the industry.
Forest Policy Statement	The Forest Policy Statement from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry outlines the policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the forestry sector, promoting sustainable forest management, and ensuring the long-term viability of the industry.
National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS)	The National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS) aims to support Indigenous communities in managing forest resources sustainably. It focuses on building capacity, creating employment opportunities, and promoting economic development through sustainable forestry practices.
2020 Vision for Australia's Forests	The 2020 Vision for Australia's Forests outlines the long-term goals for sustainable forest management in Australia. It aims to balance environmental, social, and economic objectives to ensure the health and productivity of forests for future generations.
Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs)	Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are long-term plans for the sustainable management and conservation of Australia's native forests. They aim to balance environmental, social, and economic objectives while providing certainty for forest-based industries.
Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use	The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, signed by over 140 countries at COP26 in November 2021, aims to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by 2030. The declaration promotes sustainable land use practices, financial incentives for forest conservation, and the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This framework supports the development of new industries and job opportunities in the Swifts Creek Region, enhancing economic diversification and community resilience.

Table 8: Forestry specific Policies and Papers

International Regulations & Laws

Australia has both formally and informally is committed to several international wood harvesting laws and regulations, including:

The Lacey Act Amendment:	A 2008 U.S. law that requires businesses to ensure their forest products are legal.
The Illegal Logging Prohibition Act (AILPA):	A 2012 Australian law that prohibits illegal logging and promotes the trade of legal timber products.
The European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR):	A 2013 EU law that requires businesses to ensure their forest products are legal.
The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):	A 1963 agreement that regulates the trade of endangered species, including wood from certain tree species.
The EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR):	A law that requires products to be produced in accordance with certain legislation, including forest-related rules.

Table 9: International Regulations & Laws

Impact of Policy and Legislation for Swifts Creek Region

The Victorian Forestry Transition Program provides comprehensive support to businesses, workers, and communities affected by the end of native timber harvesting. The program offers grants, training, and resources to help these groups adapt to new economic opportunities and sustainable industries. Key components include the Forestry Transition Fund, Timber Innovation Fund, and Local Development Strategies (LDS) that focus on creating new jobs in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and eco-tourism. These policies and legislation collectively aim to support the Swifts Creek Region's transition to a sustainable and diversified economy, ensuring long-term community resilience and environmental conservation.

Summary of Projects and Relevance to Swifts Creek Region

The Victorian Government's decision to end native timber harvesting by 2030 was challenging for communities to comprehend and even harder to adjust to. The recent change to a closure date of January 1, 2024, makes adaptation nearly impossible. Businesses and communities had been working towards the 2030 closure. The accelerated timeline means a smooth and orderly transition is unachievable. The financial and emotional pressures on businesses, affected councils, the community, and families have significantly increased. Timber towns and communities and their councils have articulated the support required through to 2030 using the diagram below



Figure 2: Support required through to 2030

The Cessation of Native Forest Harvesting in Victoria <https://timbertownsvictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-TTV-Position-Paper.pdf> discusses the future of timber towns in Victoria, including Swifts Creek. It highlights the challenges and opportunities these towns face as they transition from traditional timber industries to more sustainable practices. Overall, the document emphasizes that with the right measures, timber towns like Swifts Creek can have a sustainable and prosperous future.

Comparison of Initiatives from Different Councils

This section compares the initiatives from various councils to identify similarities and differences in their approaches to fostering economic growth, community engagement, and sustainability.

Comparison Table

Council	Initiative	Focus Area	Key Components	Similarities	Differences
Orbost Council	Innovation Working Groups	Competitive Advantage	Seeds, Agricultural Opportunities, Forest Stewardship, Visitor Economy, P13+ Education	Focus on local economic development and community engagement	Emphasis on formal education and training (P13+ Education)
Yarram Council	Various Initiatives	Innovation and Community Resilience	Creative Yarram, One Day Studios, Strzelecki Koala, Outdoor Recreation, Remote Work, Working Holiday Makers	Focus on local economic development and community engagement	Emphasis on creative arts, remote work, and conservation
Murrindindi Council	Sustainable Development Initiatives	Sustainable Development	Farm Forestry, Renewable Energy and Circular Economy, Health, Aged Care, and Social Assistance, Tourism, Sustainable Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Horticulture	Focus on sustainable development and economic growth	Emphasis on renewable energy, healthcare, and sustainable agriculture
Benalla Council	Vision and Strategy	Innovation and Economic Development	Developing a shared vision and strategy	Focus on local economic development and community engagement	General focus without specific initiatives mentioned
Crowdfunding (Spain)	Crowdfunding for Rural Development	Financial and Legislative Support	Educational Initiatives, Financial Literacy Programs, Legislative Support, Public-Private Partnerships	Focus on fostering innovation and community engagement	Emphasis on financial literacy and legislative support
Heyfield Council	Sustainable Development Initiatives	Sustainable Development	Various initiatives focused on sustainable development and economic growth	Focus on sustainable development and economic growth	General focus without specific initiatives mentioned

Table 10: Comparison of Initiatives from Different Councils

Similarities

- **Focus on Local Economic Development and Community Engagement:** All councils emphasize the importance of fostering local economic development and engaging the community in their initiatives.
- **Sustainable Development:** Several councils, including Murrindindi and Heyfield, focus on sustainable development practices to ensure long-term growth and environmental conservation.

Differences

- **Education and Training:** Orbost Council's P13+ Education initiative emphasizes formal education and training, while the Crowdfunding initiative in Spain focuses on financial literacy.
- **Creative Arts and Remote Work:** Yarram Council places a strong emphasis on creative arts and remote work as economic catalysts, which is not a primary focus for the other councils.
- **Renewable Energy and Healthcare:** Murrindindi Council highlights renewable energy projects and healthcare services, which are not prominently featured in the other councils' initiatives.
- **Each council aims to leverage local strengths and opportunities to foster economic growth, community engagement, and sustainability, but they differ in their specific approaches and areas of focus.**

Jobs and training needs

The purpose of identifying jobs and training needs is to ensure that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the evolving job market. By focusing on reskilling and upskilling, supporting businesses, community collaboration, inclusive employment, and funding opportunities, regions like Swifts Creek can build a resilient and innovative workforce¹. This approach highlights the potential for economic growth in key areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and digital and remote work¹. Identifying future jobs and investing in emerging technologies like renewable energy, precision agriculture, AI, IoT, and telehealth will enhance resilience, sustainability, and economic growth.

Regional profile

291,000
Population
(2020)

12.0%
Population
growth
(2011-20)

\$18B
Gross regional
product
(2020)



Employment			
	Gippsland %	Regional average %	Metro Melbourne %
Unemployment rate (September 2021)	6.1	4.2	6.0
Average annual employment growth (2011-20)	0.8	1.0	2.1
Top employing sectors (2020)			
	Workers		
Health care and social assistance	17,100		
Retail trade	11,800		
Construction	11,400		
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	10,300		
Education and training	10,200		
Manufacturing	8,900		
Top sectors by gross value add (2020)			
Mining	\$4.3B		
Construction	\$1.4B		
Health care and social assistance	\$1.2B		
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$1.0B		
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	\$975.7M		
Manufacturing	\$869.9M		

Figure 3: Regional profile

Gippsland Regional Economic Development Strategy – Summary

Gippsland has identified five strategic directions based on the region's unique attributes, industries, and socioeconomic context: maximizing the role of the food and fiber industry in the local economy, accelerating advanced manufacturing capabilities, pursuing opportunities in clean and renewable energy, supporting growth in the visitor economy, and enhancing regional specialization in health care and social assistance.

The Gippsland Employment Region's Local Jobs Plan outlines strategies to address the region's workforce challenges and priorities.

Projected Job and Skill Requirements

To provide metrics around the numbers of new jobs and skills needed for Swifts Creek Region, we can analyse the data from the provided resources and identify key trends and projections. Here are some key areas and their projected job and skill requirements:

Sector	Jobs needed	Skills needed
Renewable Energy	Solar and wind energy technicians, renewable energy project managers, maintenance workers.	Technical proficiency in renewable energy systems, problem-solving, project management, and maintenance skills.
Sustainable Agriculture	Agricultural technologists, precision farming specialists, sustainable farming consultants.	Data analysis, knowledge of modern farming techniques, familiarity with agricultural technology, and sustainable practices.

Eco-Tourism and Nature-Based Recreation	Eco-tourism guides, hospitality managers, conservation officers.	Customer service, marketing, environmental science knowledge, and organizational skills.
Digital and Remote Work	IT support specialists, digital marketers, online educators.	Digital literacy, communication, adaptability, and technical support skills.
Healthcare and Social Assistance	Nurses, allied health professionals, aged care workers.	Medical knowledge, empathy, strong communication skills, and caregiving abilities.
Education and Training	Secondary School teachers willing to stay, Vocational trainers, adult educators, online course developers.	Teaching, curriculum development, digital literacy, and instructional design.
Environmental Conservation	Environmental scientists, conservationists, forest restoration workers.	Environmental science knowledge, research abilities, project management, and sustainable land use practices.
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	Entrepreneurs, small business owners, business consultants.	Business management, financial literacy, innovation, and marketing.

Table 11: Projected Job and Skill Requirements

Projected Job Numbers

Based on the data from the Gippsland Local Jobs Plan and other resources, we can estimate the following job numbers for Swifts Creek Region over the next decade:

Sectors	Project job growth
Renewable Energy	50-100 new jobs
Sustainable Agriculture	30-60 new jobs
Eco-Tourism and Nature-Based Recreation	40-80 new jobs
Digital and Remote Work	20-40 new jobs
Healthcare and Social Assistance	30-50 new jobs
Education and Training	20-30 new jobs
Environmental Conservation	20-40 new jobs
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	10-20 new jobs

Table 12: Projected Job Numbers

These projections are based on the current trends and priorities identified in the provided resources. By focusing on these areas and developing the necessary skills, Swifts Creek can build a resilient and innovative workforce that is well-prepared for the future.

Skill education to consider for driving innovation and new businesses

To drive innovation and new businesses in Swifts Creek Region, focusing on the following qualifications and microcredentials can be highly beneficial:

Industries and skill sets	Qualifications:	Microcredentials
Renewable Energy	Certificate IV in Renewable Energy, Diploma of Renewable Energy Engineering.	Solar PV Installation, Wind Energy Systems, Renewable Energy Project Management.



Sustainable Agriculture	Certificate III in Agriculture, Diploma of Sustainable Agriculture.	Precision Farming Techniques, Sustainable Crop Management, Agricultural Data Analysis.
Eco-Tourism and Nature-Based Recreation	Certificate III in Tourism, Diploma of Travel and Tourism Management.	Eco-Tourism Management, Conservation and Land Management, Sustainable Tourism Practices.
Digital and Remote Work	Certificate IV in Information Technology, Diploma of Digital Media Technologies	Digital Marketing, Remote Work Management, IT Support Essentials.
Healthcare and Social Assistance	Certificate III in Individual Support, Diploma of Nursing.	Aged Care Support, Mental Health First Aid, Telehealth Services.
Education and Training	Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, Diploma of VET.	Online Teaching Strategies, Curriculum Development, Digital Literacy for Educators.
Environmental Conservation	Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management, Diploma of Environmental Science.	Environmental Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Land Use Practices.
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	Certificate IV in New Small Business, Diploma of Business.	Business Innovation, Financial Literacy for Entrepreneurs, Marketing for Small Businesses.
Leadership and Management	Certificate IV in Leadership and Management, Diploma of Leadership and Management.	Strategic Leadership, Change Management, Effective Communication.

Table 13: Skill education to consider for driving innovation and new businesses

By focusing on these qualifications and microcredentials, Swifts Creek can build a skilled workforce that is well-prepared to drive innovation and develop new businesses in the region. These programs can provide the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt to emerging industries and create sustainable economic growth.

Programs for Secondary Schools in Swifts Creek Region

To skill up the current and future population of Swifts Creek Region and drive innovation and new businesses, secondary schools should focus on designing and developing the following programs:

Study Field	Option 1	Option 2
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)	Robotics and Coding: Programs that teach students the basics of robotics, programming languages, and coding. This can foster problem-solving skills and innovation.	Environmental Science: Courses that focus on sustainability, conservation, and renewable energy technologies. This can prepare students for careers in green industries.
Business and Entrepreneurship	Small Business Operations and Innovation: Programs like the Certificate II in Small Business Operations and Innovation, which teach students essential skills to run a small business effectively.	Entrepreneurship and Startups: Courses that cover business planning, marketing, financial management, and innovation. This can encourage students to start their own businesses.
Vocational Education and Training (VET)	VET Delivered to Secondary School Students (VETDSS): Programs that provide practical skills and training in various industries, such as agriculture, tourism, and healthcare.	School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships: Opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience and qualifications in their chosen fields while completing their secondary education.
Digital Literacy and Technology	Digital Media and IT: Courses that teach students about digital marketing, IT support, and remote work management. This can prepare them for careers in the digital economy.	Tech Schools: High-tech, hands-on STEM programs that allow students to design solutions to real-world problems using new technologies.
Creative Arts and Design	Creative Arts Programs: Courses that focus on digital arts, graphic design, and multimedia production. This can foster	Design Thinking: Programs that teach students the principles of design thinking, encouraging them to develop innovative solutions to complex problems.



	creativity and innovation in various industries.	
Health and Social Services	Healthcare and Social Assistance: Programs that prepare students for careers in nursing, aged care, and social services. This can address the growing demand for healthcare professionals in the region.	Mental Health and Wellbeing: Courses that focus on mental health awareness and support services. This can promote a healthy and resilient community.
Agriculture and Environmental Management	Sustainable Agriculture: Programs that teach students about modern farming techniques, precision agriculture, and sustainable practices. This can prepare them for careers in the agricultural sector.	Conservation and Land Management: Courses that focus on environmental conservation, land management, and biodiversity protection. This can promote sustainable land use practices.

Table 14: Programs for Secondary Schools in Swifts Creek Region

By focusing on these programs, secondary schools in Swifts Creek Region can equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to drive innovation and develop new businesses. These programs can provide a strong foundation for future economic growth and community resilience.

Summary of Future Jobs and Emerging Technologies for Swifts Creek Region

Future Jobs and Skills Needed

Job Role	Skills Needed
Renewable Energy Technicians	Technical proficiency, problem-solving, knowledge of renewable energy systems
Agricultural Technologists	Data analysis, modern farming techniques, agricultural technology
Healthcare Professionals	Medical knowledge, empathy, strong communication skills
Digital and Remote Work Specialists	Digital literacy, communication, adaptability
Tourism and Hospitality Managers	Customer service, marketing, organizational skills
Environmental Scientists and Conservationists	Environmental science knowledge, research abilities, project management
Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners	Business management, financial literacy, innovation
Education and Training Providers	Teaching, curriculum development, digital literacy

Table 15: Future Jobs and Skills Needed

Emerging Technologies for Small Remote and Rural Communities

Technology	Benefits and Skills Needed
Renewable Energy Technologies	Sustainable energy solutions; skills in installation, maintenance, management
Precision Agriculture	Optimized farming practices; skills in data analysis, remote sensing, agricultural technology
Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites	High-speed internet connectivity; understanding satellite technology and applications
Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning	Predictive maintenance, healthcare diagnostics; skills in AI programming, data analysis, machine learning
Internet of Things (IoT)	Efficient resource management; skills in IoT device management, network setup, data interpretation
Telehealth and Remote Education	Improved access to healthcare and education; skills in telecommunication, digital literacy, online teaching

3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing	Custom tools, parts, housing components; skills in 3D modeling, printing, material science
Blockchain Technology	Secure transactions, supply chain management, voting systems; understanding blockchain principles and applications

Table 16: Emerging Technologies for Small Remote and Rural Communities

Understanding the project's key objectives

The project has been designated with three key objectives:

- **Establish a Residential Learning Facility:** Investigate the feasibility of creating a facility that supports on-site, experiential learning in key sectors such as agriculture and forestry, with a focus on sustainability.
- **Collaboration and Research Integration:** Identify existing stakeholders, researchers, and intellectual property in the region, and explore how these assets can be leveraged to support and enhance the educational facility.
- **Long-Term Economic and Social Impact:** Ensure the project contributes to the long-term prosperity of the Swifts Creek district by fostering innovation and developing a skilled workforce.

The following section aims to explore what has been done Internationally and Nationally around identifying the opportunities and processes required to deliver on these three objectives. As these objectives are more tangible, they will be further explored and actioned in the *Feasibility Report*.

What unique collaborations of research topics would benefit the Swifts Creek region

To benefit the Swifts Creek region, unique collaborations of research topics should focus on leveraging local strengths, addressing specific challenges, and promoting sustainable development. Here are some research topics and potential collaborations that could be highly beneficial:

Sectors	Research Topic	Potential Collaborators	Outcome
1. Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-Tech	Precision farming, organic agriculture, and sustainable land management.	Local farmers, agricultural scientists, agri-tech startups, and universities.	Improved agricultural productivity, reduced environmental impact, and enhanced food security.
2. Renewable Energy and Energy Storage	Solar and wind energy, bioenergy, and advanced energy storage solutions.	Renewable energy companies, engineering researchers, and government agencies.	Increased adoption of renewable energy, reduced carbon footprint, and energy independence.
3. Eco-Tourism and Nature-Based Recreation	Development of eco-friendly tourism infrastructure and sustainable tourism practices.	Tourism operators, environmental scientists, local government, and community organizations.	Boosted local economy, preserved natural resources, and enhanced visitor experiences.
4. Digital Infrastructure and Remote Work	High-speed internet connectivity, remote work solutions, and digital literacy.	Technology companies, digital infrastructure providers, and educational institutions.	Improved digital access, increased remote work opportunities, and enhanced digital skills.
5. Telehealth and Remote Education	Telehealth services, online education platforms, and virtual classrooms.	Healthcare providers, educational institutions, and technology experts.	Improved access to healthcare and education, especially for remote and underserved populations.
6. Environmental Conservation and Biodiversity	Reforestation, habitat restoration, and wildlife conservation.	Environmental NGOs, conservation scientists, and local government.	Enhanced biodiversity, restored ecosystems, and increased eco-tourism opportunities.
7. Smart Specialisation and Regional Innovation	Identifying and developing regional strengths and unique advantages.	Local businesses, academic researchers, government agencies, and community leaders.	Focused economic growth, increased innovation, and sustainable development.

8. Creative Arts and Cultural Heritage	Promotion of local arts, cultural festivals, and heritage conservation.	Local artists, cultural organizations, and educational institutions.	Enriched cultural landscape, increased tourism, and strengthened community identity.
9. Food and Beverage Innovation	Development of farm-to-table initiatives, craft breweries, and local food products.	Local farmers, food scientists, culinary schools, and entrepreneurs.	Enhanced local food economy, increased culinary tourism, and sustainable food practices.
10. Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development	Support for start-ups, business incubators, and innovation hubs.	Business mentors, financial institutions, government agencies, and educational institutions.	Increased entrepreneurial activity, job creation, and economic diversification.

Table 17: Benefits for the Swifts Creek region

By focusing on these unique research topics and fostering collaborations among local stakeholders, researchers, and institutions, Swifts Creek can build a strong foundation for sustainable development, economic growth, and community resilience.

Exploring viable New Businesses for Swifts Creek Region and the skills needed to successfully explore and implement

Swifts Creek Region has the potential to develop a variety of new businesses that can employ skilled workers, build the community, and contribute to economic prosperity and sustainability. Here are some viable business ideas:

Renewable Energy	Solar and Wind Farms: Establishing solar and wind energy farms can create jobs in installation, maintenance, and management. This can also provide a sustainable energy source for the community.	Renewable Energy Consulting: Offering consulting services to help other regions and businesses transition to renewable energy.
Sustainable Agriculture	Organic Farming: Developing organic farms that produce fruits, vegetables, and livestock using sustainable practices.	Agri-Tech Startups: Creating businesses that focus on precision farming, agricultural drones, and data analytics to improve farming efficiency.
Eco-Tourism and Nature-Based Recreation	Eco-Tourism Lodges: Building eco-friendly lodges and cabins that attract tourists interested in nature and sustainability.	Adventure Tourism: Offering activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and guided nature tours to attract adventure enthusiasts.
Digital and Remote Work	Co-Working Spaces: Establishing co-working spaces with high-speed internet to attract remote workers and digital nomads.	IT and Digital Services: Providing IT support, digital marketing, and web development services to local and global clients.
Healthcare and Social Assistance	Aged Care Facilities: Developing aged care facilities that provide high-quality care and support for the elderly population.	Telehealth Services: Offering remote healthcare services to improve access to medical care in the region.
Education and Training	Vocational Training Centres: Establishing centres that offer training in various trades and skills, such as carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work.	Online Education Platforms: Exploring platforms that offer online courses and training programs in various fields.
Environmental Conservation	Conservation Projects: Initiating projects that focus on reforestation, habitat restoration, and wildlife conservation.	Environmental Consulting: Providing consulting services to businesses and governments on sustainable practices and environmental impact assessments.
Creative Arts and Culture	Art Galleries and Studios: Opening galleries and studios that showcase local artists and provide spaces for creative workshops.	Cultural Festivals: Organizing festivals and events that celebrate local culture, art, and heritage.
Food and Beverage	Farm-to-Table Restaurants: Establishing restaurants that source ingredients from local farms and promote sustainable dining.	Craft Breweries and Distilleries: Creating breweries and distilleries that produce craft beers and spirits using local ingredients.
Entrepreneurship and Small	Business Incubators: Setting up incubators that support startups and small businesses with resources, mentorship, and funding.	Local Markets and Retail: Developing markets and retail spaces that promote local products and crafts.



Business Development		
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Table 18: Exploring viable New Businesses for Swifts Creek Region

By focusing on these business ideas, Swifts Creek can create new job opportunities, build a strong community, and ensure long-term economic prosperity and sustainability.

Unique Features to consider for Residential Learning Facilities globally

The following is a brief analysis pertaining to what the unique features are globally, for designing and developing a residential learning facility and what needs to be included to assist its success.

Features	Details
Integration with Local Culture and Environment:	Many facilities incorporated local cultural practices and environmental features into their design and curriculum, creating a unique and immersive learning experience. i.e Agriculture,
Focus on Sustainability:	Emphasized sustainable practices in both the construction and operation of the facilities, serving as models for green building and living.
Hands-On and Experiential Learning:	Provided students with practical, hands-on experience through fieldwork, research projects, and community engagement.
Introducing new skills and emerging technologies	To ensure the population is on the front foot to experiment and capitalise of emerging opportunities specifically relating to jobs and industries of the future
Collaborative Research and Innovation:	Fostered collaboration between educational institutions, local businesses, government agencies, and community organizations to address regional challenges and promote innovation.
Community Engagement:	Actively involved the local community in educational programs and initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. Ensuring that the majority of demographics are included.

Table 19: Unique Features to consider for Residential Learning Facilities globally

Conclusion and Recommendations for Swifts Creek Region

The Swifts Creek Region is at a pivotal moment as it transitions away from traditional industries such as native timber harvesting. This applied research project has explored various national and international policies, regulations, and initiatives to provide actionable insights and recommendations for building a resilient and innovative community.

Linking IWG Key Objectives to Enabling Strategies

The Education & Skills Innovation Working Group (IWG) is instrumental in guiding and providing a vision for the "Education & Skills live and learn feasibility in Swifts Creek District Applied Research Project." The IWG focuses on exploring the potential for creating an educational facility that offers both residential and learning opportunities. This initiative aims to position Swifts Creek as a hub for innovation, resilience, and growth by providing the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an economy that emphasizes regenerative practices and sustainability.

Key Objective	Enabling Strategies
Establishing a Residential Learning Facility: Investigating the feasibility of creating a facility that supports on-site, experiential learning in key sectors such as agriculture and forestry, with a focus on sustainability	Create a Learning Hub that can support a variety of learning initiatives Implementing Training Programs: Develop and implement training programs focused on reskilling and upskilling the workforce in key areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and digital skills. Develop Secondary School Programs: Design and implement programs in secondary schools that focus on STEM, business and entrepreneurship, vocational education, digital literacy, and environmental conservation Leverage Existing Assets to Enhance the Educational Facility Promote Innovation and Entrepreneurship



<p>Collaboration and Research Integration: Identifying existing stakeholders, researchers, and intellectual property in the region, and exploring how these assets can be leveraged to support and enhance the educational facility.</p>	<p>Local Challenges: Focus on research projects that address specific local challenges, such as sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and eco-tourism.</p> <p>Community Benefits: Ensure that research initiatives provide tangible benefits to the community, such as job creation, skill development, and environmental conservation.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary Approach: Encourage interdisciplinary research that combines expertise from different fields to address complex regional issues</p> <p>Implement a Research Integration Framework</p>
<p>Key Objective: Long-Term Economic and Social Impact: Ensuring the project contributes to the long-term prosperity of the Swifts Creek district by fostering innovation and developing a skilled workforce</p>	<p>Viable New Businesses: Developing new businesses in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, digital and remote work, healthcare, education, environmental conservation, creative arts and culture, food and beverage, and entrepreneurship will create job opportunities, build a strong community, and ensure long-term economic prosperity and sustainability.</p> <p>Future Jobs and Emerging Technologies: Identifying future jobs such as renewable energy technicians, agricultural technologists, healthcare professionals, digital and remote work specialists, tourism and hospitality managers, environmental scientists, entrepreneurs, and education providers will help build a resilient community. Investing in emerging technologies like renewable energy, precision agriculture, LEO satellites, AI, IoT, telehealth, 3D printing, and blockchain will enhance resilience, sustainability, and economic growth.</p>

Table 20: Linking IWG Key Objectives to Enabling Strategies

Analysis of Agriculture Colleges Nationally

College title	Description	Location	Qualification or short courses. programs	Focus cohort and fees
Marcus Oldham	<p>As Australia's only independent agribusiness and agricultural business management college, Marcus Oldham offers students a unique educational experience.</p> <p>Marcus Oldham College is an agricultural, equine and farm management tertiary education institution located in Geelong, Victoria and is the only private agricultural college operating in Australia. Founded in 1962, the institution attracts enrolments from domestic and international students.</p>	145 Pigdons Rd, Waurin Ponds VIC 3216	Courses: Advanced Diploma, Degrees, short courses and a focus on Leadership	<p>Post-secondary students</p> <p>Residential (160 single rooms and off-site)</p>
Australian College of Agriculture & Horticulture	"ACAH is a specialist training and consulting provider for the Agriculture and Horticulture industry. With two campus locations in Melbourne and Cairns, providing both tropical, sub-tropical and temperate studies in Agriculture, Horticulture and Agribusiness and ELICOS programs."	55 Swanston St, Melbourne ; 67 Lake Street, Cairns, QLD; Belgravia Leisure, LOXTON, SA	Studies in Agriculture, Horticulture and Agribusiness and ELICOS programs."	Post-secondary students
Australian Technology & Agricultural College	"Australian Technology & Agricultural College offers educational pathways for students in Years 10-12 who want to complete their QCE and pursue a	4808-4822 Mount Lindesay Hwy, North MacLean QLD 4280		Post-secondary students



	technical, trade or an agricultural career."			
Western Australian College of Agriculture Cunderdin		267, Baxter Rd, Cunderdin WA 6407		Post-secondary students
WA College of Agriculture - Denmark	The WA College of Agriculture - Denmark is a 560-hectare working farm and educational facility. Our college offers a wide variety of studies for Year 10, 11 and 12 students in an agricultural and trade related context. Our VET gives students the chance to gain skills in their future career while still at School. Students also have the opportunity to gain entrance to University with ATAR pathways provided at the College.	872 South Coast Hwy, Denmark WA 6333	Numerous TAFE courses from CII to CIII in Agriculture, wool handling. Beekeeping, horse care and Conservation and ecosystem management, forestry operations and Engineering (Agriculture specialisation)	Boarding and day attendance options Annual fee of \$9,500.00 plus up to \$950.00 a year for academic fees
Longerenong Agricultural College	Longerenong College, often abbreviated Longy, is an agricultural college in western-Victoria near the city of Horsham, Victoria. The focus of study at the College is "agronomy, rural merchandise management, wool classing, agricultural education, farm management, research and livestock sales."	229 Longerenong Rd, Longerenong VIC 3401	Certificate II to IV in agriculture, Applied Agronomy, Wool Classing. Advanced Diploma in Agribusiness and Prepare Livestock Agricultural Chemical Skill Set, Operate and Maintain Chainsaws, Operate Side By Side Utility Vehicles, Inspect and Clean Machinery, Tools and Equipment to Preserve Biosecurity	Campus Based \$7,318.80 - \$7,704.00 plus academic fees
Tocal Agricultural College		815 Tocal Rd, Paterson NSW 2421	AHC30122 Certificate III in Agriculture	Prefer post-secondary but will take Year 11/12



			ACM30821 Certificate III in Horse Care AHC40122 Certificate IV in Agriculture AHC50122 Diploma of Agriculture (online)	\$2,770 plus \$368.00 per week
SW TAFE Glenormiston College	We've developed a range of courses in consultation with the region's industry leaders, in dairy and agriculture - along with a range of short courses all offered at Glenormiston.	333 Glenormiston Rd, Glenormiston South VIC 3265	Certificate II to IV in Agriculture Short courses: AgVet Chemical Users Course, AgVet Chemical Users , Provide CPR, Provide First Aid (level 2) , Testing and Tagging of Portable Electrical Equipment, Operate and Maintain Chainsaws , Basic Farm Safety Training Cups On Cups Off, Feeding Pastures for Profit	Not residential yet. Demand is not there
Advance Community College Horticulture		43 Mitchell St, Mornington VIC 3931	AHCSS00074 Agricultural Chemical Skill Set (AusChem)	
Melbourne Polytechnic: Northern Lodge	Predominately equine with non-residential agriculture	Eden Park, Glen Robin Ct, Eden Park, VIC		
Australian Agricultural College		Blackwater QLD 4717		
Secondary Schools				
Bundoora Secondary College	Urban Agriculture Program at Bundoora Secondary College	Balmoral Avenue, Bundoora VIC 3083		



	Bundoora Secondary College is committed to fostering sustainable practices and providing students with hands-on learning experiences in urban agriculture. Our Urban Agriculture Program offers a comprehensive curriculum that integrates agricultural science, environmental science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through practical engagement with agricultural practices, emphasizing sustainability.			
Alpine Colleges	The School for Student Leadership (SSL) is a Victorian Department of Education and Training school specialising in leadership education for students in Year 9.	The Alpine School has four Campuses	Dinner Plain, Victorian Alps; Snowy River Campus, Marlo, in East Gippsland; Gnurad-Gundidj Campus, Glenormiston, Western Vic; Don Valley Campus, Yarra Ranges.	One term for Year Nine students
Heywood and District Secondary College	The school farm enables us to offer studies in Agriculture and Horticulture to students from all year levels in our school as well as providing an outdoor resource for other subject areas and RIST students. We currently have a flock of sheep, alpacas, chickens, vegetable patches and fruit trees.	23 Gorrie St, Heywood VIC 3304		
Good Shepherd College	Good Shepherd College specialises in offering a range of agricultural experiences for young people who have a passion for developing their skills. Our lunch time Ag Club provides opportunities for students to actively engage in their agricultural pursuits,	297 Mt Napier Road, Hamilton, Vic 3300		\$7950.00 per student



	<p>including cattle, alpaca and sheep handling.</p> <p>With a fully operational farm and a dedicated team of volunteers led by an experienced farm manager, the college is able to provide hands-on experience to young people who want to pursue a career in a wide variety of rural industries. We maintain a close working relationship with Rural Industries Skills Training (RIST)</p>			
Bellarine Secondary College	<p>Farm My School is partnering with Bellarine Community Health and Bellarine Secondary College to create the first Farm My School pilot farm. Established by skilled and passionate individuals, Farm My School is a not-for-profit association, working to transform unused land within schools, into regenerative market gardens providing food to the local community. With the aim of developing urban farming that connects farmers with schools, the program brings local food production back into the heart of our communities.</p>		<p>Students attend the Farm My School site at our Drysdale Campus to participate in a range of activities designed to engage students in the farm and develop their understanding of sustainable agriculture and healthy eating.</p>	
Croydon Community School: Woori Yallock Farm School	<p>The Woori Yallock Farm School is a unique educational setting. Established in 1873 as a 'tent school' by the early settlers of the district. In 1990, the site was converted into a 'hobby farm' setting by the secondary schools within the region. In partnership between</p>		<p>The Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management program. All Year 9 and 10 students enrol in this course at the school includes OHS, Maintain the Workplace and Maintain</p>	<p>One day a week attendance. Other schools can enrol their students in the program</p>





	OPTIONS and Cire Training (as RTO), the Farm School is now offering students the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification in Conservation and Land Management.		Cultural Places, Conservation and Nursery work	
Rutherglen High School	Rutherglen has a fully operational farm where students learn about different aspects of farming including animal husbandry, vegetable growing, building and construction and business. Currently the farm runs chickens, ducks, sheep and steers. Seasonal vegetables are grown organically. Our Cattle Team have been involved in the Parader's Competition and the Carcase Competition		The School offers an Agriculture program – VCE Agriculture, and the 'Farm-to-Table' subject at Year 9, as part of our alternative Year 9 Future Makers program.	
Universities				
<u>The University of Melbourne: Dookie Campus, Science</u> https://science.unimelb.edu.au/about/our-locations/dookie	Dookie campus is an agricultural facility set on the tranquil rolling hills between Shepparton and Benalla in Victoria, Australia.			Over 200 rooms Between \$402 and \$202 per week
University of Adelaide: Roseworthy Campus	Roseworthy Agricultural College was an agricultural college in Australia. It was 50 km north of Adelaide and 7 km west of Roseworthy town. It was the first agricultural college in Australia, established in 1883. It is now part of the University of Adelaide.	Mudla Wirra Rd, Roseworthy SA 5371		
<u>The University of WA</u>	<u>The University of Queensland</u>	<u>ANU</u>	<u>The University of Sydney</u>	Unclear programs
Government funds specifically focussed on Agriculture Programs				





Garinga djimbayang is a \$2.5 million initiative to support the inclusion of Aboriginal knowledge and practices in agriculture training, ensuring training is culturally safe for First Nations people and supports their increased connection to agricultural careers. It also aims to recognise the contribution of First Nations people in agriculture through self-determined storytelling.

Agricultural College Modernisation Program: The \$50 million Agricultural College Modernisation Program is delivering the agriculture skills of the future and helping more Victorians pursue an exciting career in this diverse industry.

Victoria's growing farm food and fibre sector needs more skilled workers with digital, business, risk and marketing skills. The agriculture sector also needs food and fibre entrepreneurs to take products to international markets. The sector will benefit from a stronger connection with the skills, knowledge and practices of First Nations Victorians. Developing culturally safe workplaces and learning institutions will help to support this.



A



Agriculture College Fund: \$20 million has been invested in building new accommodation and teaching facilities at [Longerenong College](#), [Marcus Oldham College](#) and [University of Melbourne's Dookie campus](#). The projects have increased the colleges' capacity to accommodate students by providing an additional 160 beds, as well as other on-campus upgrades. All 3 projects are now complete and the facilities are in use.

Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund (Skills Fund): \$30 million has been invested in delivering the Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund, supporting Victoria's TAFEs and other agriculture education and training providers to develop students' skills ensuring they have the training required for a future in agriculture.

Agriculture training and education is delivered through traditional agriculture colleges, TAFEs, other public and private training providers, and secondary schools. The Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund supported projects that ensure providers have high quality and state-of-the-art learning facilities and are delivering agriculture programs that meet the future skills needs of the industry. The design of the Skills Fund was undertaken in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Tech schools' stream: \$1 million has been provided to tech schools to invest in state-of-the-art resources and new technology to deliver online and outreach agricultural technology programs to meet the needs of industry as farming practices evolve.

Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund: The \$5.5 million Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund supported Victorian secondary schools to deliver the agriculture skills of the future by supporting students to transition into modern careers in agriculture. The Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund supported 42 projects between 2022 and June 2024 that delivered



vocational and applied learning programs and experience for secondary school students. Projects have now been completed, reaching around 11,000 students across 278 secondary schools. The fund was delivered by the Victorian Department of Education and funded by Agriculture Victoria.

Table 21: Analysis of Agriculture Colleges Nationally



Gap Analysis

There are a broad range of existing facilities across the State that predominately focus on Undergraduate University students and post-secondary VET students. Two colleges offer Year 11 and 12 students' early entry to be able to Live and Learn in a Regional setting:

Secondary Colleges

- Good Shepherd College, Hamilton
- Tocal Agricultural College, Tocal NSW

Post Secondary Colleges

- Longerenong Agricultural College
- Marcus Oldham College

Secondary Colleges

There are a range of secondary schools in Melbourne that offer agriculture-based programs for their local areas:

- Croydon Community School: Woori Yallock Farm School
- Rutherglen High School
- Bundoora Secondary College
- Bellarine Secondary College
- Heywood and District Secondary College

The colleges do not offer residential options, however, do have students who attend from out of area and organise their own living arrangements through share houses and billeting with a local family. These are significantly small numbers that have not warranted investment by the school or local community. They are considered niche programs.

Opportunities

There is not a school currently that offers agri-technology and new energy market options which could be attractive for students interested in Agriculture but not wanting to limit themselves. The combination with technology would allow them to pathway to technician or information technology roles as over 75% of students have not confirmed their ultimate career pathway by the end of year 10. If they have – it often changes.

There are considerable barriers to enrolling the youth market with legalities around “loco parentis” being in play. The students would also need a sustainable social infrastructure designed and developed to improve potential retention rates. The secondary schools contacted that ran Agriculture program shied away from including accommodation assessing that it was high risk with a low fiscal return.

5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

The Stakeholder consultation process has aspired to consult with both local and National specialists to provide insight into how Swift's Creek can identify "unique Selling Point's" and a clear direction for where the region can build a clear identity that is deliverable and purposeful. The goal is to sustain the current population and if possible, expand the population slowly.

The Swift's Creek Futures project aspires to create a hub for innovation and growth by providing the skills and knowledge required to thrive not just in its current economy but to keep a firm eye on the future and build the skills required to build efficiency and capability in the current workforce. The Swift's Creek region has several highly skilled females that could be used as a casual and skilled workforce to drive a few of the agenda. The Art Galleries creation demonstrates the tenancy and vision that some of the residents have demonstrated with limited or no funding. The current economy revolves around regenerative practices, sustainability, and innovation.

This can be achieved through the design and development of geographical centric Workforce Development Strategy because of a thorough analysis of the Swift's Creek Future: Regional Context Analysis. We could also consider:

- Emerging existing and new Skill requirements
- Expanding on existing and identifying potentially new products and services
- The development of an ecosystem of regional start-ups with a network to support growing pains and ultimately expansion of these small businesses to meet current gaps in the service and product offering.

Stakeholder Consultation Plan Overview

Stages	Steps
Plan	Clear understanding of the purpose of consultation within the stake holder groups
	Identification of the scope of stake holders to be consulted and gap analysis of any groups not appropriately included
	Alignment of project resources, timeline and costing with the proposed consultation methodology
	Organisation and administration of consultation events
Process	Virtual methods of consultation (surveys, tele focus groups, individual interviews)
	Resources and timing in accord with the project plan
	Identification of facilitators to be used and establishing their credibility prior to consultation events
	Development of effective methods of virtual consultation
	Logistics
	Recording of the data
	Recording of the process
Accountability and Presentation	Analysis of data (qualitative & quantitatively)
	Accurate representation of stakeholder vies
	Preparing of the white paper
	Reporting back to all stakeholders



Outcomes	
	Use of feedback
	Monitoring of stakeholder views overtime
	Expression of value of feedback
	Engagement metrics

Table 22: Stakeholder Consultation Plan Overview

Methodology

Sector	Cohort	Details	Scale	Output
Council	Working Committee	Committee presentations x consultation after	4 /5	Confirmation to proceed
Council	Staff Consultancy	1-2-1 interview	2	Ratification of research questions, Access to existing research Recommendations for other research and testing assumptions
Industry	Industry	1-2-1 interview	6	Aggregated against a range of sectors:
Government	Government: Politicians	1-2-1 interview	3	<u>Across political persuasions and geographic spread</u>
	Government employees	1-2-1 interview	5	Broad cross section
	Community	1-2-1 interview	6	Synthesised data
Education	Schools - Principal	1-2-1 interview	1	Directions and message clarified Synthesised data
	Schools Sector	1-2-1 interview	3	Synthesised data
	TAFE/RTO & Universities	1-2-1 interview	6	Directions and message clarified Synthesised data

Table 23: Methodology

Stakeholders consulted

Over 45 community, industry, government employees and politicians and education specialists were invited to a one-on-one meeting that lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The majority of the interviews were recorded and an interview summary generated through a combination of notes and transcription.

Final list of stakeholders consulted

The list below records all stakeholders consulted.

Number	Name	Role and employer
Post-Secondary Education		
1 & 2	Tim Fish and Ondine Bradbury	Monash University and Swinburne University
3	Fred Vanderslik	Business Partnership Manager, TAFE Gippsland
4	Linda Austin	Director, Education Delivery, TAFE Gippsland
5	John Flett	SW TAFE
6	Jeanette Swain	Kangan Bendigo TAFE and ex SWTAFE
School Sector		
7	Robert Boucher	Teacher/Principle
8	Ray Gallagher	Retired teacher
9	Gavin Fraser	Experienced teacher
10	Mark Reeves	Ex Councilor – pivotal Alpine Network School
Government – Politicians		
11	Melina Bath	Member for Eastern Victoria Region, Victoria
12	Tim Bull	Local National MP for Australian National Party
13	Fiona Nash	National Regional Education Commission
Government – employee's		
14	Jodee Price / Kate Storer	VSA
15	Scott Rosevear	East Gippsland Tourism Centre
16	Shona Sekene	DEECA
17	Kaylene Williams	Agribusiness Development officer, East Gippsland Shire Council
18	Rebecca Steinholdt	Council (Economic Development Coordinator)
Community		
19	Emma Halifihi	Community
20	Kath Smith	Community
21	Ronda Manhire	Omeo Community Hub
22	Annie Richardson	Art gallery
23	Leanne	Centre Manager for Swifts Creek Community Centre
Industry		
24	Daniel Cziperle	Omeo District Health –CEO
25	Peter Strong	Strong Business
26	Mary Anne Scully	ACRE
27	Darren Beggs	Employment Facilitator, Workforce Australia, Gippsland New Energy
28	Dominic Schipano	CITT and COSBOA

Table 24: Final list of stakeholders consulted



Final list of questions against the Iterative themes

Eight questions across four iterative themes were used to guide the interviews

Iterative Themes	Questions
Workforce Development and Skills Training	What do think we should build or create for the broader Swift's Creek region to meet our skills and education requirements for now and into the future?
	If I gave you a magic wand – with no Financial or time limitations – what would you create for the Swifts Creek Region that would meet their Skills and Education outcomes?
Education and Lifelong Learning	What types of educational partnerships and programs would best support lifelong learning in Swifts Creek?
	We are investigating the feasibility of creating a facility that supports on-site, experiential learning in key sectors such as agriculture, forestry and sustainability. Victoria does not currently have a full-time boarding facility, what are your thoughts on this facility being considered for Swifts Creek?
Community Engagement and Collaboration	How can we foster collaboration between educational institutions, community organizations, and industry stakeholders to enhance educational outcomes?
	What do you think the possible community uses of existing infrastructure as library facilities, meeting spaces, room hire and access to primary or secondary school workspaces.
Policy, Advocacy and Funding Support	What policies and funding models are needed to support the growth and quality of regional tertiary education and workforce development?
	What successful projects have you seen Internationally and Nationally we should pay attention to?

Table 25: Final list of questions against the Iterative themes

Summary of Qualitative data outcomes

Iterative Theme 1: Workforce Development and Skills Training
<p><i>What do think we should build or create for the broader Swift's Creek region to meet our skills and education requirements for now and into the future?</i></p> <p>The quantitative analysis provided some interesting insights into the stakeholder's thoughts and idea's around what should be built or created. Just under 30% of the respondent believed that a priority for the region was the completion of a skills audit for region to identify existing qualifications, skills and experience. This spoke to the communities need to capitalise of undercapitalised workers who were predominately female but upon reflecting on the data identified were also female. This provided a wealth of under tapped qualified leaders who could be capitalised upon the drive a skills and community growth agenda. 25% of the respondent were interested in building a learning and skills hub after analysing the needs of the region versus what services were already available. The University sector was well serviced by the Omeo hub and Bairnsdale Universities hubs. With 75% of projected skills needs for Australia being delivered by a skills agenda, the need to build a focus on TAFE, Private RTO's and the community centre was prevalent in the communities' thoughts.</p> <p>The respondents were also eager to reflect on the skills analysis and product and service analysis either currently being completed or being scoped to ensure that the skills agenda reflected the growth trajectories for jobs and skills versus the industries in the region. 25% also extended this conceptual thinking into the design and development of a broader Virtual skills hub that unified the region through sharing all skills-based training across the region and potentially including the next three Valleys that also were completing a similar project in Nowa, Nowa and Orbost. They felt that a regional calendar of training, short courses, microcredentials and programs would enhance the skills economy and social and community building required to build a sense of belonging for existing and new residents.</p>



A parochial approach to one small region was identified as problematic with a small population and recognising the need to unite to deliver programs that reflected a regional outcome as opposed to an agenda driven outcome for a town or smaller collection of towns that isn't sustainable or fundable.

17.5% advocated for a business incubator to build new business and expand existing businesses. One of the most vaunted aspirations for this initiative was to support secondary school students and recent post-secondary students to build their own businesses and to support under employed and or unemployment workers to create and develop their own small business around the themes of a service economy, agri-technology and food technologies.

10% of the respondents wanted to advocate for a housing and accommodation audit for the region to understand the difference between a housing and accommodation shortage versus and under-utilisation.

If I gave you a magic wand – with no Financial or time limitations – what would you create for the Swifts Creek Region that would meet their Skills and Education outcomes?

28% of the respondents favoured the design and development using existing infrastructure to expand the community centre to include all the expanded services: a Local food Pantry, room, hire, function Hire, Information booth, Story and adventure trail, Entrepreneurship Hub, Training program with a virtual hub to include all training in the area that includes samples of new and emerging technologies and a large outdoor area that could host events and meals with alcohol. This concept of building a skills economy and community hub was broadly supported. This concept was also supported with an agenda of creating a community centre that focused primarily on a regional skills agenda that was coordinated across the other two community centres that worked in a spoke and wheel approach to provide a broader skills-based calendar of events. The silo'istic approach currently employed need to be expanded to meet a regional agenda as opposed to a town-based approach. Over 20% of the respondents supported this approach.

Around 20% of respondents also supported the build of a build an entrepreneurship hub - all secondary school students and post-secondary to attend an innovation hub approach to build skills and life skills from Year 9. A focus on university pathways was disengaging students. This approach would skill all students regardless of their outcomes. Business like tour guides for visiting researchers, drones' innovators, IT support and other was suggested. Star Link was also suggested as an opportunity to build remote worker capability

12% identified sewerage and water treatment was assessed as an opportunity and threat for the region which curtailed building and development. This needed to be addressed as it limited some of the expansion opportunities.

Table 26: Summary of Qualitative data outcomes

Collation of responses

Number	Magic Wand
8	<i>Expand the community Centre to include all the expanded services: a Local food Pantry, room, hire, function Hire, Information booth, Story and adventure trail, Entrepreneurship Hub, Training program with a virtual hub to include all training in the area that includes samples of new and emerging technologies and a large outdoor area that could host events and meals with alcohol</i>
6	<i>Expand the Community Centre into a regional skills training hub</i>
6	<i>Build an entrepreneurship hub - all secondary school students and post-secondary to attend</i>
4	<i>Sewerage and a water treatment plant for the town</i>
3	<i>Star Link for the town and program to promote and support remote work</i>
3	<i>Better roads and public transport</i>
3	<i>Build a Boarding Facility that can deliver to students Year 10 to 12 and post-secondary students.</i>
3	<i>Regional map and virtual hub to reflect all training in the region and working together to survive</i>
3	<i>Skills passports built for all the industries</i>
2	<i>Build a GaG satellite Hub and work with Four Peaks to expand the program</i>
2	<i>Provide assistance to build and expand local businesses</i>
2	<i>Ensure the community centre, pub or café has a games area and more activities for the youth</i>



2	Turn the pub into a community owned asset (Like Buchan go fund me)
2	Finish the Independent living Hub and train appropriate staff so people can age in place
2	Buy the Mill houses and do them up for community owned accommodation for visiting Government workers, researchers and students wanting to experience the Forest to the Seas
Iterative theme 2: Education ad Lifelong Learning	
<i>What types of educational partnerships and programs would best support lifelong learning in Swifts Creek?</i>	
20% of respondents supported the build a local entrepreneurship/ business incubator model and 10% Advocated for a TAFE outreach with tailored outcomes with a cost analysis for programs to be re-introduced where it is co-viable. The idea of a Art and Craft learning hub was also mooted with the re-iteration of a whole school approach to building work and life skills for all students regardless of the their pathway.	
We are investigating the feasibility of creating a facility that supports on-site, experiential learning in key sectors such as agriculture, forestry and sustainability. Victoria does not currently have a full-time boarding facility, what are your thoughts on this facility being considered for Swifts Creek?	
<p>20% of respondents approved of the concept of building a residential boarding facility. They were hopeful that it would bring new students to town expanding the economy. They were hopeful that new jobs and an expanded service offering would result. The were also aspirational that the Government or a partner would co-fund this visionary opportunity. 60% of the respondents were concerned about this as a visionary option given the financial costs involved, the unviability of the location due to lack of public transport, lack of jobs for students, low social connection and lack of social opportunities. The cost of building a facility was also raised as a concern given the return-on-investment prospects with a projected low income.</p> <p>A lack of insight around the business case requirements and competition from viable agriculture and natural resources facilities in the region that were already struggling to be cost viable were also mooted. A number of respondents declared that this concept was a "field of dreams" or a "Hail Mary" approach. However, 12% were curious around the concept but channelled the lack of clarity and insight around the cohort, the requirements to build this type of facility and the failure or non-financial viability of facilities that had tried to extend or create tis type of facility Nationally. There was also curiosity around the "unique selling point" especially in light of the emerging presence of "GaG", Four Peaks and the Alpine School. This idea has merit however the recent experience with the international students in 2024 that left after 6 weeks due to social isolation and no work should be an indicator that perhaps more work needs to be completed to build a vibrant community with employment and social opportunity that would attract and retain students. A business case needs to be completed.</p>	
<p>Collation Of results of the merit of building a residential Boarding facility for educational purposes</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Residential Boarding Facility</p> <p>■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe</p> </div>	

Table 27: Collation of responses



Iterative theme 3: Community Engagement and Collaboration

How can we foster collaboration between educational institutions, community organizations, and industry stakeholders to enhance educational outcomes?

A 12.5 % response related to the “region needing to work together and understand that they are too small to work alone”
The sense that personal fiefdoms that wouldn’t understand the regional and broader community needs was articulated repeatedly. 10% re-iterated the need for the Community Centres to work together to save money, time and effort and understand regional need to create regional calendar was re-iterated. The community wanted a regional training calendar)
10% of respondents. 10% of respondents also wanted service requirements to be mapped and 10% also wanted a differentiation of Omeo as the university hub and Swifts Creek as the skills hub for the region. The sense that Swifts Creek should be Skills Learning hub was pervasive.

What do you think the possible community uses of existing infrastructure as library facilities, meeting spaces, room hire and access to primary or secondary school workspaces.

25% of respondents wanted to redevelop the community centre into a skills training and expanded community centre. 12.5% of respondent wanted to acquire existing homes to refurbish and become community assets to respond to rental and short-term rental opportunities. 10% wanted to build network of adult education provider in a wheel and spoke delivery model. The streetscape redevelopment also attracted some interest and was a priority with 7.5% of respondents. 10% also wanted to redevelop the pub as a community and training facility.

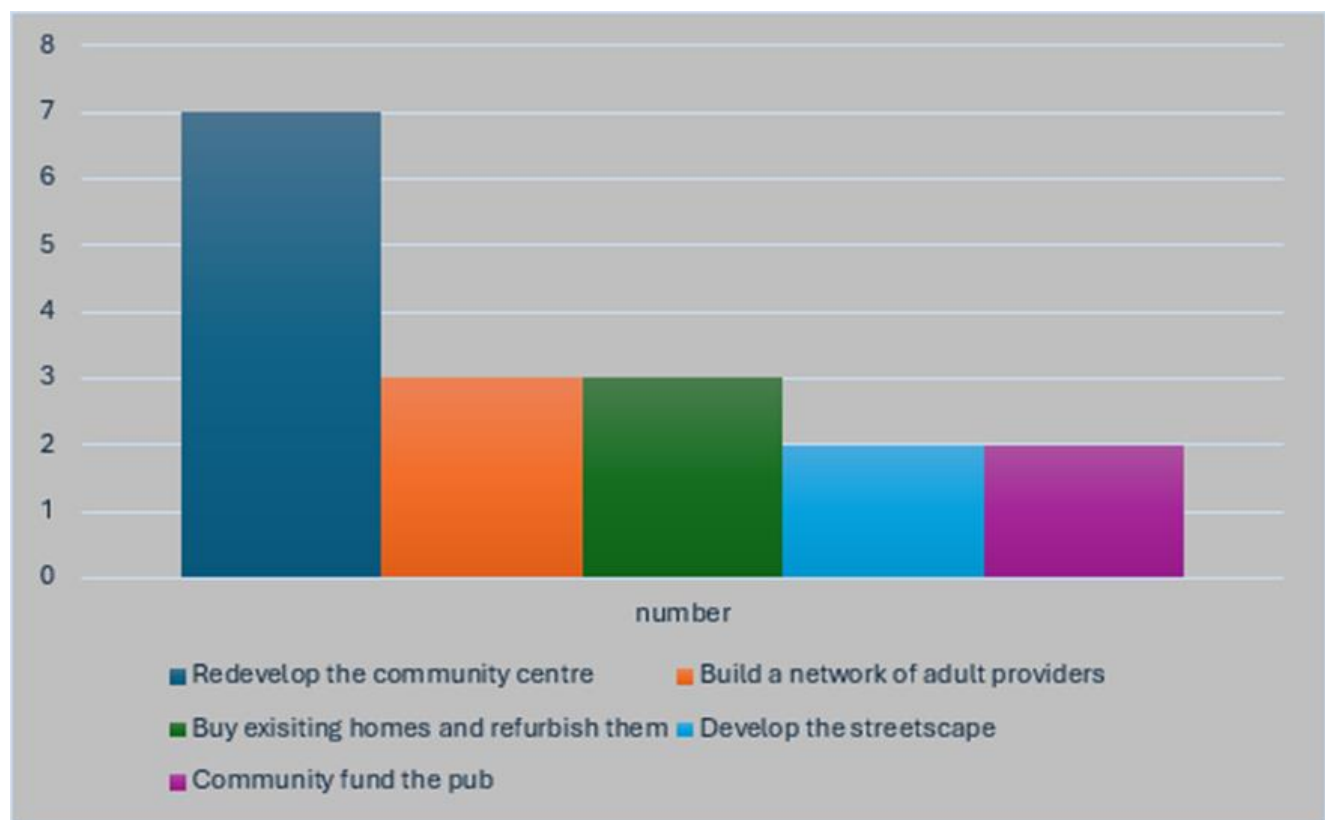


Table 28: Iterative theme 3: Community Engagement and Collaboration



Iterative theme 4: Policy, Advocacy and Funding Support
<i>What policies and funding models are needed to support the growth and quality of regional tertiary education and workforce development?</i>
<p>This question was answered sparingly and clearly identified a need to have greater insight into this question specifically pertaining to identifying grants and philanthropic opportunities. Two respondents noted the loss of the Regional Innovation Funds through the State Government and TAFE sector. The Workforce Innovation Training Funds has also ceased due to Victoria State Government ballooning debts. A number of existing funds were identified and included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forestry Transition Funding<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Energy Funds• Council quick funds <p>Opportunities through large national organisations that offer leadership and skills funding; Access to Skills First funding, Understanding and accessing Carbon Off-set funds, Reviewing WTIF and RSIF project outcomes for great ideas and work with private RTO's and TAFEs to pilot projects that can access Skills First funding and the Department of Agriculture has projects. Learn Local and Neighbourhood houses sometimes have access to community funding</p> <p>Numerous policy changes have impacted on the Swift's Creek region including: Rental and lease laws, Forestry Transition, Park and forest management and Remote management of emergency management</p> <p>These policy changes come off the back of numerous other policy changes over the past twenty to thirty years have eroded the services and provisions available to Swifts Creek.</p>
<i>What successful projects have you seen Internationally and Nationally we should pay attention to?</i>
<p>There was a plethora of different projects mooted in the above section. It is an eclectic mix of ideas, projects that are both successful and for some, unsuccessful.</p>

Table 29: Iterative theme 4: Policy, Advocacy and Funding Support

Priorities for the Stakeholders consulted

Priorities for Politicians

The political representation was eager to see a broader solution that worked collaboratively with the local communities. Both indicated that significant funding was not going to be available from State or Federal government perspective.

Priorities for Government employees.

Accommodation was a high priority for government employees. There was interest in expanding on Swift's Creeks current streetscape and an interest in improving the treescape, public amenities and building a playground. This cohort also wanted to see local RTO's and GaG and other providers integrated into the solution rather than the town trying to replicate services already available.

Priorities for Education

There were mixed responses from the Prep to Year 12 respondents. There was interest in building community capability in developing a business incubator that would enable current students and community members to build new businesses and expand existing businesses. A number of respondents felt that the current social offerings for current students needed to be improved in order to attract and retain any external students. There were three respondents who wanted to build a learning facility that would enable students external to area to attend the local secondary college and potentially include post-secondary education as the facility expanded.

Priorities for post-secondary

The post-secondary respondents were clearly divided between expanding research opportunities and building a stronger skills training agenda to meet the local community's needs. Two of the participants had identified a potential research project pertaining to building a community for new teachers or teachers doing placements to improve on retention and understands better what factors would impact these opportunities.



This skills agenda could be expanded to support the secondary school's aspiration to expand its product offering to current and potential students. The post-secondary respondents from the VET and RTO communities were also interested in collaboration and ensuring that all potential partners could be brought to the tables to create a response that reflected the size of the population. There was an appetite to build a virtual education hub that was shared across all eleven townships with the three community centres working to service the community more cohesively. The TAFE respondents and university respondents were clear that the population would not sustain setting up separate satellite campuses but were prepared to work on specific projects and with programs with a clear solution requirement.

Priorities for Community member

There was an appetite for building a community centred approach around the existing community centre and Art Gallery. Several community members wanted to see a broadening of the current offering and the inclusion of a food pantry, incubator and training room for a skills-based approach focussing on the skills requirements for the community in areas of growth i.e agriculture and Forestry. Reviewing the model for the pub was also on their radar to build a social hub for families.

Priorities for Education and Skills Committee

The Education and Skills Committee had three clear objectives. The build of a boarding facility that could be accessed by senior secondary students and post-secondary students as they completed a traineeship, a Vocational specialisation, or even access for post-secondary students completing placements wanting hands on experience.

The second priority was to offer researchers accommodation and access to the broader valley to support their research outcomes. The aspirations were that this community accommodation could attract researchers nationally with safe and secure accommodation. The third priority was to gauge the short term and long-term economic viability of the two strategies.

Options Analysis

Determine the service delivery, operating structure and governance combinations options for a live and learn skills facility, including associated accommodation.

Undertake supply and demand analysis based on the outcomes of the above tasks to determine what is feasible in the context of Swifts Creek.

Themes emerging that could be developed into structured and scaffolded project

Aligned to questions asked	Possible project alignments	Priority ranking
Iterative theme 1: Workforce Development and Skills Training		
What do think we should build or create for the broader Swift's Creek region to meet our skills and education requirements for now and into the future?	Skills audit for the local community	High
	Product and services audit (Industry and organisation included Audit	
	Align both audit to a clear skill development map	High
	Build a learning and skills hub in an existing building to deliver aligned programs	High
	Build a regional virtual education and skills hub	
	Set up a business incubator	High
	Housing census across the region	
If I gave you a magic wand – with no Financial or time limitations – what would you create for the Swifts Creek	Build a workforce of skilled and qualified trainer taken from under and unemployed females in the area.	High
	Expand the community Centre to include all the expanded services: a Local food Pantry, room, hire, function Hire, Information booth, Story and adventure trail, Entrepreneurship Hub, Training program with a virtual hub to include all training in the area that includes samples of new and emerging technologies and a large outdoor area that could host events and meals with alcohol	High



Region that would meet their Skills and Education outcomes?	Expand the Community Centre into a regional skills training hub and coordinate across the other two community centres to provide a broader calendar of events working with the TAFE and private RTO's. Build an Entrepreneurship hub - all secondary school students and post-secondary to attend	
Iterative theme 2: Education and Lifelong Learning		
What types of educational partnerships and programs would best support lifelong learning in Swifts Creek?	Training a skills-based workforce to augment and collaborate with Four Peaks and Peaks consulting Star Link for the town and program to promote and support remote work	High Medium
We are investigating the feasibility of creating a facility that supports on-site, experiential learning in key sectors such as agriculture, forestry and sustainability. What are your thoughts on this facility being considered for Swifts Creek?	Build a Boarding Facility that can deliver to students Year 10 to 12 students over a five-year staged trajectory but a full business case would need to be developed so the costs and Return on Investment if clarified. Commission a small research project to identified retention strategy requirements for education staff and potential students	Medium
Iterative theme 3: Community Engagement and Collaboration		
How can we foster collaboration between educational institutions, community organizations, and industry stakeholders to enhance educational outcomes?	Region needs to work together and understand they are too small to work alone. This would require all the community centres in the region to build a spoke and wheel approach and shared calendar displayed in a virtual hub. This would include Local Private RTO's and TAFE programs. Map the services requirements across the region to deliver local needs Omeo for the university hub and Swifts Creek as the Skills hub	Medium Medium Medium
What do you think the possible community uses of existing infrastructure as meeting spaces, room hire and access to primary or secondary school workspaces.	Re-develop the community centre and build a network of adult education providers. Buy existing home to use for visiting researchers, government workers and potential students as a lodging facility	High Medium
Iterative theme 4: Policy, Advocacy and Funding Support		
What policies and funding models are needed to support the growth and quality of regional tertiary education and	Complete a grant, tender and funding audit and build local skills to be able to respond in a timely and successful manner Phase 3B: Implementation of strategy and operational plan – could include bricks and mortar, technologies fit out of an existing facility and conceptual pilot projects	Medium High



workforce development?		
What successful projects have you seen Internationally and Nationally we should pay attention to?	Four to five of the projects to be developed into simple case studies that can guide and support the project team at Swifts Creek and the surrounding area to develop connections to gain knowledge and support as they implement the projects	Medium

Table 30: Possible project alignments

Stakeholder consultation summary and next steps

This Stakeholder consultation report has provided a qualitative analysis of the data provided through the interview process. There is a wealth of data and insights covered. Clear themes have emerged throughout the analysis stage. The Swifts Creek region have clarity over that they think the Regions points of difference should be

Strategy	Rationale	Enabling projects
Swifts Creek as a region service centre	Swift's creek has been built on flat ground and does not suffer the severe weather challenges on Omeo.	Improve Internet though assessing Star Link and advocate for Sewerage for the area to free up the building process but also protect the pristine Tambo River
Option 1: Swift's Creek as a skills hub for the region	Create a regional calendar of required Complete a skills audit Complete a product and service audit which is aligned to projected growth industries	
	Build a local workforce to liaise and collaborate with Gippsland TAFE and private RTO's	
	Consider converting the Swift's Pub into a regional asset for training college, room hire, a collaborative working space	
	Swift's creek as an entrepreneurial business incubator: build and grow expertise in food technologies, art, services to meet regional needs	
Option 2: Feasibility of a boarding facility	The education and skills committee would like to test the feasibility of a boarding facility for senior school aged students or post-secondary students	Census of existing buildings and houses in the area and their status
	Pilot promoting the Swift's Creek education hub as a destination for students in a staged approach	

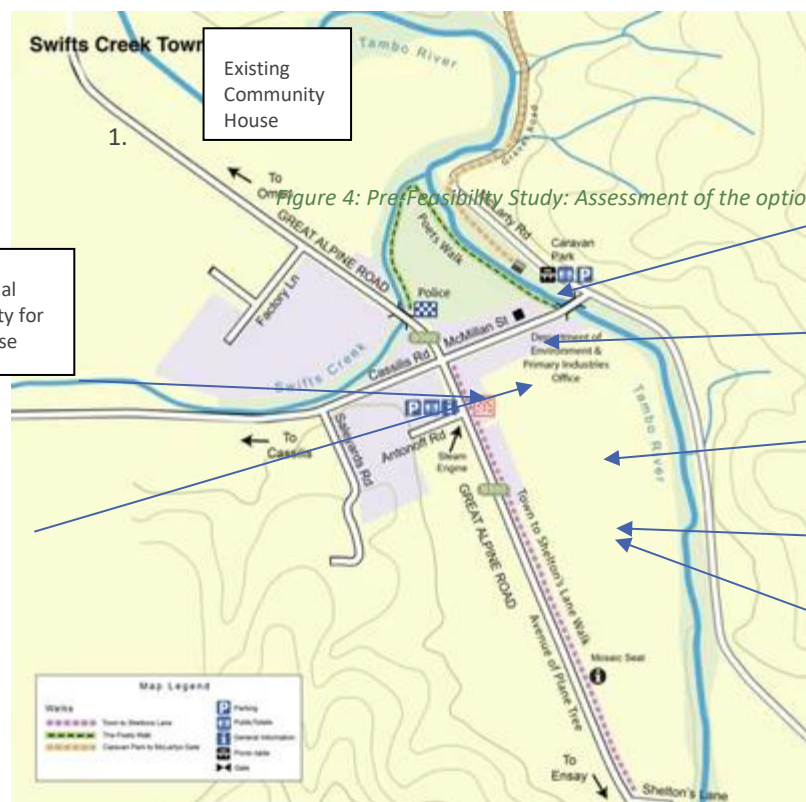
Table 31: Stakeholder consultation summary

Pre-Feasibility Study: Assessment of the options

- Option 1: Live and Learn Facility focussing on a skills-based agenda
- Option 2: Live and Learn facility focussing on Year 10 to Year 13
- Both Option 1 and 2 could be combined into a viable option 3

Assessment of existing facilities

What facilities could be utilised as a live and learn facility, considering appropriate facilities for different age groups and proximity to existing learning infrastructure.



DECA Facility: Assessed as a lower priority due to complexity

Old Bakery: Potential site for student hub

Swifts Creek Hotel: Potential accommodation and training College

Potential accommodation option for purchase

Secondary School Site: Potential location for VS delivery

Facility Assessment

Facilities Assessed	Learning Skills Hub	P to 12 Boarding facility	Identified gaps
Secondary School Campus		There are available classrooms and land currently available for expansion and location of a Boarding Facility.	Department of Education permission would need to be gained to re-purpose any lands for a commercial enterprise
Primary School Campus and Kindergarten	Deemed not appropriate	Deemed not appropriate	
Community Centre	Appropriate for expansion and refurbishment. Currently in the commercial component of the township which would allow for the aforementioned.		Permission from the property owner would be required. A partnership to get the building up to code with the land lord could be considered as any work will appreciate their asset.
DECA Facility	Deemed not appropriate	This is a viable option but initial enquiries would suggest that it would be a long and possibly unachievable goal. There are more viable local options available for rapid re-purposing.	The challenge will be around meeting the primary purpose of the building and an educational facility potentially impacting usage in times of crisis. This facility also has been custom built by DECA and it would be a challenge to get two disparate Government Departments to be prepared to allow a facility to be re-purposed. Significant redevelopment would be required
Old Bakery Site		Could be developed into a social hub for the local students with table tennis, gaming and other options available to begin to re-build the community for the youth and provide an attraction for attracting students external to the township	Lease arrangements would need to be considered and a community effort to refurbish and ensure it is up to code.
Swift's Creek Pub	Further enquiry into the facility current lease arrangements and costs would be required in the third	Could be redeveloped into a	The Pub applied for a permit to expand into a motel on these premises five years ago (hearsay only). This application was not approved due to the sewage and water filtration challenge. This location has potential to converted into a accommodation hub as it has existing services has the space to be able to be converted.
Houses for sale	7 Cassilis Road, Swifts Creek, This house would allow the Community centre to expand into a Skills Hub with significant refurbishment required. The half an acre would provide ample land	6846 Great Alpine Road, Swifts Creek, Vic 3896 This house is divided into two units and is right next to the Secondary School. The quarter on an acre land size would allow further units to be built as fund become available. It has existing	



	that is zoned commercial to expand as funds become available.	infrastructure which would enable a faster approach.	
Empty houses	Not viable in the short term		The Mill management would need to be approached and a discussion had
Air Bnb houses		These could be leased as a short-term option to get the Boarding facility up and running. Negotiating a reasonable weekly fee would be the most cost viable. Great Alpine Church 5 five bedrooms could accommodate 9 guests at between \$150.00 and \$175.00 a night \$27,000 a year maximum.	

Table 32: Facility Assessment



Housing purchase options for consideration

Housing purchase options for consideration by the Education and Skills working Committee

Option 1: Skills Hub expansion to include

Accommodation, 7 Cassilis Road, Swifts Creek, Vic 3896

3 bedrooms, 1 toilet,

land size of 2,882m²

\$375,000



Option 2: Boarding School option

6846 Great Alpine Road, Swifts Creek, Vic 3896

2 units with one bedroom each,

Land Size 976m²

\$348,000



Option 3: Long term lease

The Church House

Has five bedrooms and can accommodate 9 with the potential to expand to 12 with different bedding included.

A reduced daily rate could be negotiated with the cleaning cost waived. This could be a pilot program option with an annual cost of between \$20,000 and \$25,000.



Other options identified by the stakeholders

Purchasing the empty Mill Houses

Three houses 6819, 6823, 6825 Great Alpine Road that belong to the Mill Company do not have market appraisals but would fall within the 280,000 to 320,000k due to their current state.

Provide identification of the most feasible location for the development of a new facility.

The consensus from the stakeholder consultation was that a new facility should not be built as the funding would not be available and not have government support. There were ample empty sites capable of being repurchased or expanded to meet the pilot project requirements.

Project Stages for the two options identified

Option 1: Skills Hub

Tasks	Details	Who
Finalise what the skills hub should include in the two-year plan	Business Incubator Arts Gallery Food Pantry Information booth Room hire Site for the Story and Adventure Trail Skills training room (inside and outside) Design a virtual education and skills hub working with the other two community centre and Omeo Hub	Education and Skills Committee working with the three community Hub Leaders
Complete a product and services audit – complete an analysis of what businesses are in the region and what stage of maturity they currently are in i.e growth, maturity or decline.	Assess what jobs and skills local businesses want and need. Complete an analysis of the map across all three valleys	Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Assess the secondary students aspiration from Year 9 to create a roadmap that can be included where possible in the learning skills hub design		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and Swifts Creek Principal
Complete a community skills audit	Criteria to be assessed against job shortages skill shortages assets in the community i.e underemployed and unemployed residents	Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Meet with Gippsland TAFE and local private RTO's to identify what they could offer and their financial and service model.	Incorporate their offerings into the Skills Training hub methodology	Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Identify a skills program that address jobs and skills analysis and community skills audit that the TAFE and Private RTO's cant offer		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Complete a workforce development strategy to build up the local community to meet the skills requirement of the community		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist



Assess the hub requirements against the audit requirements and training provider collaboration		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager
Design a skills training program that meets the gaps analysis including the secondary school requirements		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Create a regional calendar of required training across the three community hubs and Omeo hub ensuring liaison with GaG and other Government providers.		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager
Design a virtual hub around Education and skills that all three valleys and Omeo can be part of to service the broader community,		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Finalise the design of the Swift's Creek community hub		Education and Skills Committee working with the three community Hub Leaders
Go and No Go Stage		Education and Skills Committee
Engage an architect – funding already available		Swifts Creek Community Hub Leader
Conduct a feasibility against re-developing the existing space		Financial specialist
Conduct an analysis against buying the third space on the corner and expanding the area.	Meet with the property owner to discuss opening up the space so it has walk through capability and his willingness to co-invest or allow the asset enrichment.	Financial specialist
Conduct a financial analysis against purchasing 7 Cassilis Road, Swifts Creek, to enable future expansion for the skills hub to service the primary, secondary schools and local community to meet the job and skills requirements		Financial specialist
Go and No Go Stage		Education and Skills Committee
Meet with Gippsland TAFE to assess the workforce development plan and assess what they can provide	ie C4in TAE through the Free TAFE scheme and other local skill sets requirements to create a flexible workforce across multiple industries to meet the seasonal workers requirements of the region i.e Farm Chemical skill set, Forestry Skill Set,	Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Meet with Private RTO's to assess the workforce development plan and assess what they can provide	i.e Farm Chemical skill set, Forestry Skill Set,	Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and VET Specialist
Assess local mentors and subject specialists to support the skilled workforce being created		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager
Assess engagement numbers after 3 months and gain feedback		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager





Conduct a survey in the local community around whether the new agenda is meeting their needs.	Identify what is successful and what needs changing. Expand or retract the program based on numbers and student satisfaction feedback	Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager
Meet with the secondary school executive to gain feedback on the service provision.		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager
Review and redevelop the Learn Local skills hub outcomes to meet actual expectation and outcomes.		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and Swifts Creek Community Hub Leader
Complete a pilot program report identifying whether the program should expand or retract.		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and Swifts Creek Community Hub Leader
If the program can expand, meet with TAFE Gippsland to design and develop the caravan and remote learning truck concept to support a broader offering of hands-on service delivery.		Swifts Creek Futures Project Manager and Swifts Creek Community Hub Leader

Table 33: Option 1: Skills Hub



Option 2: Boarding Facility

Tasks	Details	Who
Pre-assessment of the community and initial product offering		
Assess the product offering and identify what unique points of difference would be offered by the school	List how Swift's Creek community is different from the Market Analysis of other offering conducted	Financial analyst with an education specialty
Test the market as to which product package would be the most attractive:	1. Certificate III in Agriculture as a Vocational Specialisation 2. Certificate III in Agriculture as a traineeship 3. A range of skill sets put together to offer a "Course In" that focus on employability. DET would need to be consulted as to whether this is a viable option	Financial analyst with an education specialty
Identify who is qualified to deliver these qualifications	Analysis of both VIT and TESQA requirements. If CRICOS include EAL requirements	Principal
Clarify what components of the course would be delivered on-site, which components would be delivered in the "workplace" and which components would be delivered using a hybrid approach with the selected RTO or TAFE	Build the education model so that can also be costed with clarity over which partner will deliver which component	VET Specialist
Cost the requirements against the forecasted revenue	i.e cost of in-house teachers against the accommodation costs and tuition. Establish your breakeven point	Financial analyst with an education specialty
Clarify accommodation requirements, legalities and costs associated.	Option 1: Billeting the students with local families Option 2: Church house lease Option 3: Purchase of 6846 Great Alpine Road, Swifts Creek, Vic 3896 Option 4: Convert the Swifts Creek Pub into an accommodation hub with shared rooms for up to 20 students and/or visiting researchers and government workers. Cost in student support, Tutoring, retention mentor and social activities required usually costed at 15% of the total fee provided. Cost of teachers to sleep over-night and assess the costs of the over-time. Assess the cost of a booking system and payment system for the researchers and Government workers to access the accommodation. Cost the services, rates, insurance requirements, cleaning costs and OHS requirements for run options 2, 3 and 4	Financial analyst with an education specialty
Assess student number attraction requirements to ensure that this is a viable option	Minimum of ten students for the following reasons: Building a series of services to support retention and student support requirements	Financial analyst with an education specialty and a Marketing specialist



	Assess costs for CRICOS students (not covered by any government funding for secondary school or VET.	
<p>Build a financial model that clearly articulates the following:</p> <p>Cost to Attract: Marketing, Enrolment, On-boarding</p> <p>Cost to Retain: Student Support, Socialisation, Community connections</p> <p>Cost of Administration: Financial management, Accommodation including meals, Teacher Supervision, cleaning, and Resulting</p> <p>Cost to Teach: Cost to deliver Secondary Schooling, tutoring and mentoring</p> <p>Cost to Train: Cost to deliver Vocational specialisation with RTO or TAFE, cost of equipment, cost of specialist teacher,</p>	<p>Cost student fees to cover all aforementioned costs: ensure that all accommodation, teaching costs, student support costs are included and completed a cost benefits analysis</p> <p>Forecast mortgage costs for purchase of properties or refurbishment of existing facilities.</p>	Financial analyst with an education specialty
Finalise the product offering and cost and re-test with the marketplace		Marketing specialist and VET specialist
This is a GO or NO-GO point in the Feasibility Plan - Education and Skills Committee		
Preparation prior to commencing advertising for students		
Assess the market feedback and incorporate in the product offering taking into account partner, products and costs		Business Manager
Create the marketing material		Business Manager
Clarify the target markets and preferred messaging		Business Manager
Determine the most effective marketing channels i.e social media, main stream media, international agents, existing secondary school channels		Business Manager
Select the accommodation options deemed most cost viable - option 1 or 2 to test the market		Business Manager
Ensure the community has worked to build a community for the youth market		Business Manager
Ensure the school has skilled and qualified staff to meet the youth market needs		Business Manager
Develop the enrolment process ensuring that the duty of care is clearly identified and communicated		Business Manager



Assess current staff's willingness to provide accommodation support over-night if Option 2 is selected		Business Manager
This is a GO or NO-GO point in the feasibility Plan - Education and Skills Committee		
Enrolment process		Business Manager
Establish the enrolment timeframe that allows you time to go forward or stop i.e August until October,		Business Manager
Can you attract the numbers deemed minimum to meet the ROI?		Education and Skills Committee
This is Go or No Go point		
Build a social calendar for the students so they have activities or events every weekend		Business Manager
Build a student support network		Business Manager
Create the on-boarding program for students		Business Manager
Create the on-boarding program for teachers whether employed in-house, private RTO or TAFE,		Business Manager
Deliver the teaching and training program		Business Manager
Ask students to complete student satisfaction surveys Complete an analysis report of positives and negatives for action	1. Pulse survey at week 6 2. Pulse survey at the end of first term 3. Survey at the end of each semester	Business Manager
Complete the pilot report and amend the product and service offering prior to advertising for Year 2		Business Manager
Complete a financial analysis of whether this pilot has delivered what the vision aimed. Determine whether to proceed to Pilot Stage 2	Assessment criteria; Financial, Social and Community outcomes	Business Manager
This is Go or No Go point		Education and Skills Committee
Repeat and rinse with clarity over the student numbers required to either sustain the pilot number or expand the program.	Sustain – what needs to change and be costed in Expand – how will the accommodation options meet the growing need. Include this in the RIO	Business Manager

Table 34: Option 2: Boarding Facility

6 CONCLUSION AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Skills 4 the Future was contracted to complete:

1. Policy review and gap analysis.
2. A stakeholder engagement and collaboration plan.

Skills 4 the Future did not Tender for the last third of this project but is prepared to provide insight and guidance for whom you elect to employ to complete “A detailed feasibility report with analysis and recommendations”. Skills 4 the Future team has provided a step-by-step plan to assist the financial analyst or VET specialist to complete the third stage of this project.

The project asked a range of broad questions that this report has sought to answer:

Lines of Inquiry	Details
Complete a gap analysis of the market offering	<p>The agricultural sector is disparate and is referred to within the VET sector as a “Thin” market. This means that achieving student numbers to scale that TAFE and Private RTOs require to achieve a break -even is challenging. This is due to a range of reasons:</p> <p>Students can gain employment without qualifications</p> <p>Students are not remunerated for extra qualifications unless they are degree qualified or have completed management or leadership qualifications.</p> <p>Skill sets completion which is skills orientated is preferred by employers</p> <p>In the forestry sector a similar challenge has occurred. SWTAFE who are a Victorian TAFE specialist have struggled to find sustainable students numbers</p>
Build a Living and Learning facility that involves TAFE, University and private RTO's	<p>Senior Executives in two TAFE's and a senior executive from a local university have unequivocally stated that Swifts Creek does not have a population that would sustain a satellite campus. However, the University would be prepared to work with the Bairnsdale and Omeo campus to provide support for remote students. The two TAFE's would provide hybrid learning options, deliver specific programs with sustainable student numbers and consider a collaboration with Government funding, if won, to design and deliver trucks or caravans with the required equipment, SW TAFE already has caravans and trucks provisioned for this style of delivery.</p>
Attract researchers to work and study in the area	<p>There are 40,000 current Ph'd students in Australia (2024). 14% of these students are enrolled in the Science faculty. The average age of a Ph'd student is 38. Working remotely for fieldwork is an ongoing challenge as many have families and/or mortgages. Data around the number of potential students we could attract is nebulous and therefore difficult to cost</p>
Consideration for International students	<p>TAFE and private RTO's are not provisioned for CRICOS students in the local area. This means all skills based programs would be considered “Fee for Service”. This would require extra funds to be applied to any international students. There are also broader support requirements required for international students which include: EAL, Student support, Employment of parental figures, social activities. The competition for these students is challenging in preferred areas of study that pathway into Law, Medicine and Finance. Agriculture is not high on the international student preference list.</p> <p>National and State students would need considerable investment in the design and development of a social calendar and student support</p>



Feasibility of a secondary School Boarding facility	<p>While this concept did not attract broad acceptance by local stakeholders and political respondents, there was an appetite to build a staged approach to see if the concept could be proven viable. This report has sought to identify the scaled stages that could result in the capacity to expand the external student numbers.</p> <p>However, significant work would need to be completed on identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program partners • Program products • Wrap-around Services • Economic viability of purchasing or refurbishing accommodation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to provide the Den Parent requirements
Flexibility required to meet the changing needs of the community	<p>Ultimately, this project is about delivering a sustainable population for the Swift's creek region. There are retention issues with current residents particularly the residence between 30 and 45. This demographic are seeking career, basic employment or fiscal advancement. Succession challenges are impacting the community.</p> <p>Retaining students is also a stress point and will continue to be. Enhancing their reason to "boomerang" should be primary.</p> <p>Retaining attracted staff specifically in the Secondary College needs to be addressed and researchers from Deakin University and Swinburne University are seeking to explore this challenge. Their initial analysis has focussed on building a stronger community connection that reflects their current or past living experiences. This can include social activities, access to a gym, eating options and other challenges that new students would also want to experience.</p>

Table 35 This report has sought to answer

Propose strategies for attracting investment, ensuring long-term viability, and leveraging existing assets.

Change of Government opportunities

The recent campaign strategies for both the Liberal and Labour governments have included substantive funding targeted at the regions of Australia.

National Party

The National party has a tangible policy that has been costed:

After just two years of the Albanese Labor Government, life has become harder for regional communities. Families face a cost-of-living crisis, higher rents and mortgages and a lack of housing. Over three Federal Budgets, Labor has cut and delayed billions of dollars in funding for regional road, transport and water projects. It has cut funding for community facilities, reduced access to subsidised mental health services and it's never been harder for families to access a country GP or find local childcare places.

David Littleproud

<https://www.nationals.org.au/plan>



Liberal Party Offerings

A Liberal-National Coalition government will seek to end childcare deserts, improve healthcare access and fund more roads and infrastructure in the regions with a \$20 billion fund that would exist in perpetuity.

The Regional Australia Future Fund (RAFF) is one of two new funds the Coalition would establish, with a similar design to Labor's housing and manufacturing funds which it plans to repeal.

The Coalition expects the RAFF would provide a \$1 billion dividend each year to pay for infrastructure and services that local councils cannot afford, including ways to boost phone and internet connectivity.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-04-10/election-20-billion-regional-fund/105156176>

Labour Party offering

There is nothing tangible identified specific to the regions of Australia. However there are opportunities available through emerging and new technologies

Unlock \$8 billion of additional investment in renewable energy and low emissions technologies through a \$2 billion expansion of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation

<https://alp.org.au/protecting-our-climate/>

However, the Labour Government did announce significant funding aimed at Rural communities in 2024 and 2025.

We are putting regional industries and local economies at the centre of our Future Made in Australia plan, leveraging the competitive advantages outside of our big cities – from vast energy resources, advantages in new clean energy industries, world-leading agricultural sector and regional innovation.


Our record investments will stimulate regional economies and forge significant investment opportunities, and include:

\$8 billion over the decade to put Australia on the path to being a global player in hydrogen and unlock a new generation of opportunities for green industry and clean energy exports in our regions.

\$7 billion over the decade to strengthen Australia's critical minerals supply chains and support greater value adding to our resources through the new Critical Minerals Production Tax Incentive, with \$10.2 million establishing the Critical Minerals National Productivity Initiative.

\$1.7 billion over the decade for the Future Made in Australia Innovation Fund, supporting Future Made in Australia priority sectors, many of which are based in regional Australia.

\$566.1 million over the decade for Geoscience Australia to progressively map the whole of onshore Australia by 2060, delivering high-quality data and information of regional and remote areas' resource potential – advancing the understanding of Australia's potential for critical minerals, alternative energy sources, groundwater, and other resources necessary for the transition to net zero.



\$835.6 million over the decade from 2024-25 will grow Australian solar manufacturing, driving economic and jobs growth across regional Australia, where a significant proportion of solar manufacturing is expected to be located.

\$549 million over eight years will support battery manufacturing to drive the development of domestic battery manufacturing capabilities, including in our regions.

<https://alp.org.au/news/delivering-a-resilient-and-prosperous-future-for-regional-australia/>

Accessing carbon off set funds

This usually a regional application and would require all three valleys and potential a broader net to design a strategy that deliver on sustainability. The Victorian Carbon Farming Program has completed a recent pilot and the Government is preparing parameters for regional projects

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/climate-and-weather/policy-programs-action/victorian-carbon-farming-program>

Commercialising Research

Australia has a poor track record in commercialising research however there are plans to improve on this as an outcome. Australia ranks last in all OECD countries

<https://www.deloitte.com/au/en/services/financial-advisory/perspectives/the-path-forward-commercialising-university-research.html>

The Australian Government has allocated over 2.2 billion to improve our status.

<https://www.education.gov.au/research-translation-and-commercialisation-agenda>

Grants and program available to regional Victoria

Worth watching this page as new grants and programs are announced

<https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs>

<https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/grants-and-programs-search#:~:text=The%20Regional%20Infrastructure%20Fund%20seeks,stimulate%20economic%20and%20community%20development.>

Regional and community programs

This website has paused until after the Election, however this collates all Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and The Arts

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs>

Rural Aid

This can assist individual farmers and small collectives

<https://www.ruralaid.org.au/>

Philanthropic opportunities

Review the following funding opportunities

Philanthropy Australia

This website collates all philanthropic organisations across Australia. Consider attending their conference to better understand the environment and writing requirements.



<https://www.philanthropy.org.au/>

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal FRRR

This funds provides a large range of grants and funding option to help the people in communities

<https://frrr.org.au/funding/people/>

Grant Connect

This webpage list over 100 opportunities for applying for Grants across Australia

<https://www.grants.gov.au/Go/List>



Conclusion

The literature review and stakeholder consultation provided a plethora of insight and a broader understanding of the complexity of the challenge faced by Swifts Creek region. The greatest insight was gained by potential partners i.e University, TAFE and Regional Private RTO's who were able to qualify what their potential collaboration or investment could be. This enabled a realistic assessment of what could be achieved while staying true to the aspirations of the Education and Skills sub-committee.

The political appointees were also quite frank in their assessment of the viability of achieving significant investment for the Live and learn residential facility for the area. There is significant unmet demand and opportunities for the region if the partners in this project work together to achieve a goal for the greater good the region.

Two tops have been scoped in this report to better facilitate the completion of Stage three of this project. The two options:

- Option 1: Live and Learn Community Hub
- Option 2: Residential Boarding Facility to augment the secondary schools existing and expanded program

A third option is possible which would be a merging of both options to achieve an outcome that would benefit the whole community.

<Anything to add or remove – the committee voice is welcome>7 Bibliography and Reference List



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