

Building jobs, skills and training for the future

Discussion paper

We're planning for the City of Whittlesea's economic future, and we know that skills and training will be central to unlocking inclusive growth and industry transformation. This paper explores how strategic partnerships, inclusive training models, and industry-aligned pathways can unlock local talent. A draft strategy will be shared for public feedback in 2026 – but we'd love to hear your thoughts now on the ideas and opportunities ahead.

Positioning the City of Whittlesea for industry-led skills growth

Leverage major projects to drive skills development in construction, trades and key industries

Australia's infrastructure boom is creating new business and employment opportunities. The City of Whittlesea is well positioned to benefit from major projects in the area that are driving demand for skilled workers and services across construction, trades, transport, healthcare, clean energy and advanced manufacturing.

Opportunities:

- National priorities in freight and health infrastructure align with strategic precincts including the Beveridge Intermodal Precinct, Epping Health Precinct and Cooper Street Employment Precinct, offering significant potential for construction and trade-based employment.
- Industry demand is growing for skilled workers in areas across construction, trades, healthcare, clean energy and advanced manufacturing.
- Education and training providers are increasingly looking to partner with local communities and major projects to deliver hands-on, real world learning experiences that help residents build pathways into construction and trade careers.

Align skills pipelines with priority growth sectors

State and federal governments are focusing on fast growing industries like advanced manufacturing, clean energy, digital services and health technologies. The City of Whittlesea is well placed to align local training

with these areas to help prepare our community for future jobs.

Opportunities

- National and state investment in priority industries like robotics, clean energy and digital technology is increasing demand for specialised skills.
- Universities and training providers are offering more flexible, short courses to help people gain skills in these areas.
- Information from employers and job market trends is helping shape training programs to better match real world needs.

Activate diverse, local talent

State-wide efforts to build a more inclusive workforce are creating opportunities for the City of Whittlesea to support its diverse communities. By providing culturally safe training to businesses, welcoming workplaces can be fostered and meaningful employment pathways opened for residents from all backgrounds.

Opportunities:

- Interest is growing among governments and community organisations in training programs that are led by local communities and create culturally safe environments.
- Flexible work and learning models are being scaled nationally to support women, carers and under-represented groups.
- The City of Whittlesea's diverse population presents a unique opportunity to build a more inclusive and skilled workforce, while helping broaden access to talent and create fairer job opportunities for residents.

Harness digital transformation and AI literacy

Digital skills are now a national priority, with federal and state governments investing heavily in technology upgrades. The City of Whittlesea has an opportunity to position itself as a leader by supporting local learning in areas like AI, cybersecurity and digital tools.

Opportunities:

- Federal and state programs are funding digital skills training and smart region pilots.
- Small to medium enterprises are increasingly seeking tailored support to adopt emerging technologies and remain competitive.
- Education providers are integrating digital technologies and AI into core training programs and business support services.

Strengthen collaboration between industry, government and education providers

Across Australia, there is growing interest in workforce planning that meets local needs. The City of Whittlesea is well-placed to support this by bringing together businesses, education providers, government, employment services and the community to ensure training aligns with real job opportunities.

Opportunities:

- National programs now support employers to help shape training courses and work with local partners to build skills in their communities.
- New data tools and job market insights are helping training providers quickly adapt to changing workforce needs.
- Universities and TAFEs are working closely with local councils to design training programs that better support local jobs and industries.

THE FACTS



23% of residents have a Bachelor or higher degree^{1a}



62% of residents drive to work while only **4%** use public transport^{1a}



63% of residents travel outside the City of Whittlesea for work^{1a}



Globally, job opportunities in AI-exposed industries increased by **10%** from 2024 to 2025²



In 2025, there were **3,335** students enrolled at Melbourne Polytechnic's Epping campus^{3a}, **8,705** students enrolled at RMIT University's Bundoora campus^{4a} and **24,000** enrolled at La Trobe University's Bundoora campus^{5b}

Data sources:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021
2. PwC Australia 2025
3. Melbourne Polytechnic
4. RMIT University
5. La Trobe University
- a. City of Whittlesea
- b. City of Darebin

Barriers to skills alignment

Skills mismatch and workforce gaps

Rapid industry change is outpacing education delivery, leaving gaps between what employers need and what graduates offer.

- Local growth industries such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, healthcare and digital services report shortages in trades, robotics, IT and soft skills.
- Education providers often find it challenging to keep training programs up to date with emerging technologies.
- Businesses are increasingly experiencing delays in growth and innovation due to a shortage of job-ready talent, especially in fast changing industries.

Limited local access to jobs and training

Geographic and transport barriers are limiting residents' ability to access nearby employment and education opportunities.

- Local economic activity is constrained as residents spend income and time outside the municipality.
- Northern suburbs lack accessible training hubs, especially in growth areas.
- Poor east-west transport connectivity makes it harder for businesses to recruit locally.

Barriers to participation

Young people, women, First Peoples and migrant communities face systemic barriers to participation in training and employment.

- Limited childcare and inflexible work arrangements restrict workforce entry.
- Cultural safety, language barriers and challenges in recognising overseas qualifications reduce engagement with mainstream training programs.
- Skilled workers remain disconnected from emerging career pathways, limiting access to new opportunities and industry growth.

Gaps in collaboration between key groups

Greater coordination between education providers, industry and government could significantly strengthen the impact of training initiatives.

- Many programs run independently, which can limit opportunities to work together and reach more residents.
- Businesses aren't always involved in shaping what or how training is delivered.
- Residents and local businesses may find it hard to understand or access the full range of available support and training options.

Employer demand outstripping supply

Key sectors are growing faster than the local workforce can supply, creating urgent skills shortages.

- Advanced manufacturing, logistics, healthcare and digital services are expanding rapidly with major projects underway that may face delays or underperformance due to skills shortages.
- Employers report difficulty sourcing skilled workers locally, especially in specialised roles.
- Residents may miss out on high-value job opportunities due to lack of targeted training.

Global insights that inspire local action

Across Australia and internationally, governments have shown how innovative training programs, strong industry partnerships and targeted investment in skills can help communities adapt to change and thrive. Valuable insights can be gained to shape the future for the City of Whittlesea.

SkillsFuture Initiative, Singapore

Singapore's lifelong learning model shows how modular, employer-led training can build a resilient workforce with industry-aligned skills and training.

- Citizens receive credits to pursue industry-relevant training throughout their lives, supporting continuous upskilling.
- Government-industry collaboration ensures training remains aligned with evolving economic needs.
- SkillsFuture demonstrates that lifelong learning systems can equip residents with adaptable, industry-relevant skills that evolve with economic demands.

Partnership with Amazon, City of Casey (VIC)

Strategic investment in logistics infrastructure can drive local employment and catalyse workforce development.

- Amazon's fulfilment centre created 500 jobs and introduced specialised logistics training through on-the-job learning.
- The project attracted further investment and strengthened the region's industrial capabilities.
- Casey's partnership with Amazon shows how aligning infrastructure with workforce development can deliver immediate jobs and long-term industry growth.

ACE-UP College-Employer Partnerships, USA

Co-designed training programs between colleges and employers ensure education aligns with labour market needs.

- Curricula are shaped by real-time labour market data and employer input, improving relevance and responsiveness.
- Regular engagement with industry supports inclusive and equitable workforce development.
- ACE-UP proves that employer-led education models can close skills gaps and create more inclusive pathways into emerging industries.

Imagining the City of Whittlesea's future:

- How can we better connect local training and workforce development with growing and emerging industries to position the City of Whittlesea as a national leader in shaping a thriving, innovative and resilient economy?
- How can we start preparing now with education providers to ensure our community has the skills needed for major projects like the Beveridge Intermodal Precinct, transport infrastructure, data centres and other emerging industries, while also creating hands-on learning experiences that lead to long-term careers?
- In what ways can we work with education providers to activate the City of Whittlesea's diverse community through inclusive and flexible training that prepares residents for future jobs and closes participation gaps?



HAVE YOUR SAY

For more information and to tell us what matters to you, visit engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Scan the QR code to have your say!



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131 450

Arabic خدمة الترجمة الشفهية المجانية
Chinese Simplified 免费电话传译服务
Chinese Traditional 免費電話傳譯服務
Greek Δωρεάν τηλεφωνική υπηρεσία διερμηνέων
Italian Servizio di interpretariato telefonico gratuito

Macedonian Бесплатна телефонска услуга за преведување
Persian/Farsi خدمات مترجم شفاهی تلفنی رایگان
Punjabi ਮੁਫ਼ਤ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੇਵਾ
Turkish Ücretsiz telefonla tercümanlık servisi
Vietnamese Dịch vụ thông dịch qua điện thoại miễn phí



**City of
Whittlesea**