

Activating Gippsland's Renewable Energy Workforce

Action Plan 2022 – 2025

Updated February 2023

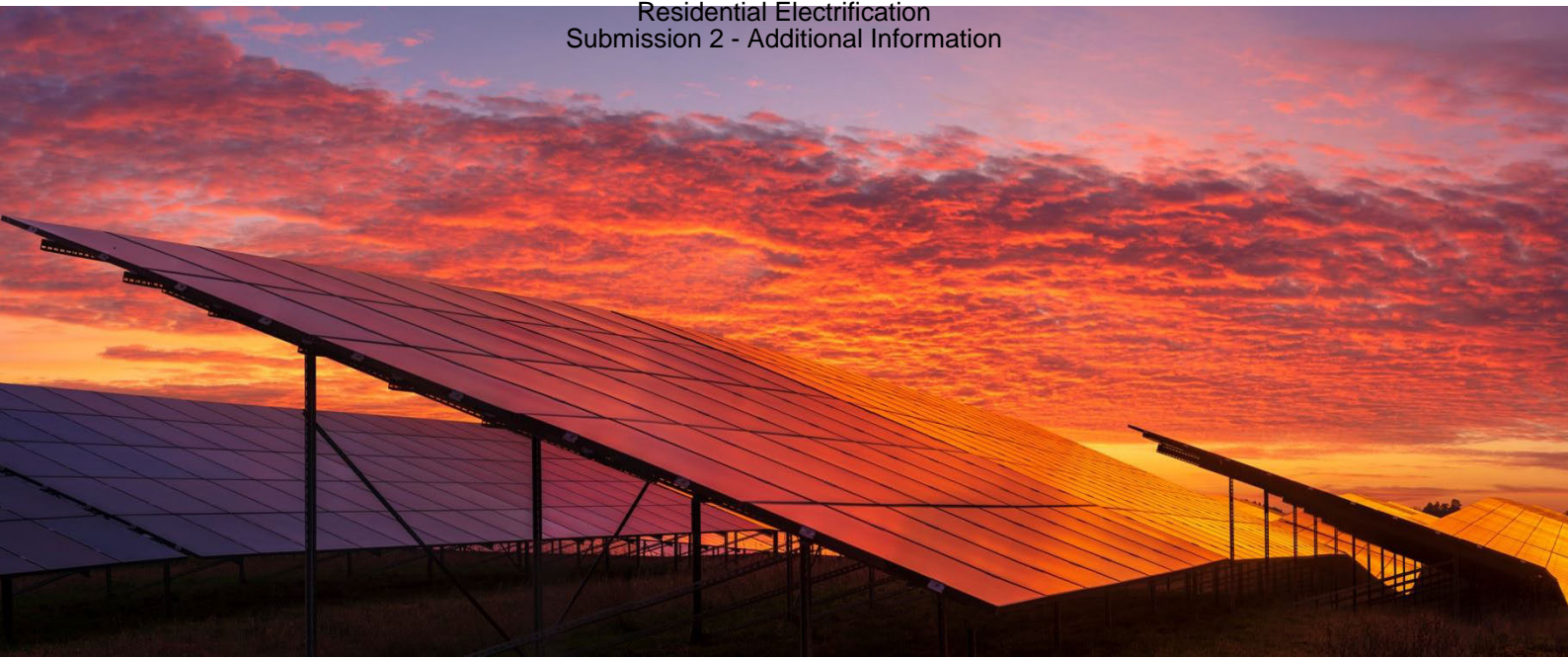




Australian
Renewables Academy

**Australian
Renewables Academy**

acknowledges the
Gunai/Kurnai and Bunurong
People as the Traditional
Custodians of this place we
now call Gippsland, and we
acknowledge their continued
connection to Country. We pay
respect to Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Elders
past, present and emerging.



Introduction

In December 2021, the Australian Renewables Academy (ARA) hosted the inaugural Activating Gippsland's Renewable Energy Workforce Forum in Gippsland, Victoria.

The purpose of the Forum was to explore opportunities arising from rapid growth in the renewable energy sector in Gippsland and agree on actions for industry, business and community stakeholders to take together, with the support of governments, to grow a skilled local workforce.

In November 2022, ARA hosted the second annual forum (see Attachment 1 - Forum Agenda), where key industry and education representatives presented on the broader context for the renewables boom in Gippsland, the demands for a national new energy workforce, skills and training needs for Gippsland's labour market to meet industry and supply chain demands and the imperative to ensure *"no one gets held back and no one is left behind"*.

Forum participants reported on current initiatives, discussed key workforce challenges, listened to young students from local secondary colleges discuss the careers of the future and identified practical actions and next steps for 2023 and beyond (refer [Attachment 2](#) for a picture of the Collaborative Mural that captured the discussions on the day).

Nationally, around half of Australia's coal power stations are scheduled for retirement in the late 2020s/early 2030s, and transition to clean energy is accelerating. The Victorian government has set new renewable energy targets of 65% by 2030 and 95% by 2035 and announced the establishment of a new SEC as an energy market proponent under a 10-year plan to deliver cleaner and cheaper energy, with profits invested back into the system.

Major skills shortages are evident in the broader economy as demand for labour outstrips supply, with up to one-third of jobs predicted to be unfilled in the coming year. Over the longer term, there is an ongoing risk associated with labour shortages, with over 40% of the current workforce approaching retirement in the next 15 years.

The renewable energy industry will likely experience skills and labour shortages as it competes with the infrastructure and resource sectors for employees. The industry faces major challenges in its efforts to increase local employment, avoid skill shortages, enhance regional benefits, and create social licence.

In Gippsland, in the coming 5–10 years, significant investment and growth in the renewable energy sector is predicted, with indications being that it could be over \$50bn. Growth of this magnitude will need more than 12 – 15,000 workers, with the first tranche of workers being required in 2023 and numbers building as developments come online.

Forum participants considered the immediate and longer-term challenges facing Gippsland and the potential collaborative actions that can ensure the community optimises the benefits of these renewable energy developments for all in the region.



The following themes, opportunities and challenges were identified in 2021 as critical for consideration in activating Gippsland's renewable energy workforce **and have been updated to incorporate feedback from the 2022 Forum.**

Marketing and Promotion

Challenges (Problems)	Opportunities (Solutions)
<p>Energy jobs can seem intimidating and appear 'mathematics heavy'. Immediacy of need – (2022 - 2025). Workers' fears regarding change. Build local understanding of the opportunities.</p>	<p>A shared narrative for stakeholders to communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exciting new renewable energy industries adventure. • Real jobs available to Gippslanders. • Long-term community benefit. • A beautiful region with lifestyle opportunities. • Engage young people whilst still at school. • Regular conversations in local towns to grow understanding. • Showcase career opportunities. • Stories of people who have transitioned from traditional industry to renewables.

Demand for workers and skills

Challenges (Problems)	Opportunities (Solutions)
<p>Candidate shortage generally and so need to: Inspire potential workers. Transition existing energy workforce. Address perception of lower wages. Attract, train and retain a diverse workforce. Reach young people, women, First Nations peoples, people with disability, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people. Understand the pipeline of projects and avoid a 'boom-and-bust' cycle. Minimise the use of 'fly in-fly out' workforce options. Ensure workers live and spend in the Region Need to build trainer capability. Scale and timing of the work. Persistently high youth unemployment rates (13.4%) and very low workforce participation rate for all age groups (51.4%).</p>	<p>Transition existing workforce – identify transferable skills and fast-track careers. Map the pipeline of work, understand the jobs and locations and opportunity for workforce mobility and match workers. Complete the work, led by TAFE Gippsland, to identify current skills vs skills required to work in offshore wind based on Energy Australia Yallourn and Star of the South. Final report to contain a blueprint for future industry transitions. Long-term new energy workforce planning. Work with the Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) and other government dept initiatives to support local and systems wide solutions. Develop supply chain. Use entry-level jobs to start building skills. Utilise work experience to build skills. Jobs Expos and Career Showcase events. Design flexible jobs models. Work with Learn Locals to support learners into entry-level jobs in the RE sector.</p>

New vocational education and training

Challenges (Problems)	Opportunities (Solutions)
<p>Need to increase access to and uptake of VET and tertiary studies in local institutions/providers in the region and improve access to online and hybrid learning options.</p> <p>Need new energy skills learning training products, pathways and facilities that meet industry and worker demand.</p> <p>Lack of government funding to support new renewable energy course development.</p> <p>Potential for duplication of effort.</p> <p>Partner with schools to start careers early.</p> <p>Understand the impact on supply chain in terms of skills needs.</p> <p>Need to engage people in training as required, not wait 3 months.</p> <p>Impact of COVID on the readiness of young people for work and on interpersonal skills in the workplace.</p>	<p>Industry-driven development of training products and courses – interactive, micro-credentials - stackable, skillsets.</p> <p>Industry, Local Government and Committee for Wellington to advocate for funding.</p> <p>Federation University new energy tertiary courses in 2023.</p> <p>TAFE Gippsland’s range of training aligned to the New Energy sector including traditional trades pathways and industry upskilling.</p> <p>Workforce Plus (WfP)/ARA Entry to Renewables Course; WfP/ARA/Sale College Women in STEM.</p> <p>Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) Energy Skills Mapping to inform development needs and transferable skills from industries such as Oil, Gas, Coal and Timber.</p> <p>Train current staff in TAFE and RTOs.</p> <p>Explore apprenticeships in OSW.</p>

Connectivity and collaboration

Challenges (Problems)	Opportunities (Solutions)
<p>Misalignment between state and federal policies on renewables.</p> <p>Skills investment needs to be driven by industry.</p> <p>Lack of shared infrastructure – shouldn’t be competing on a spiderweb of powerlines.</p> <p>Strategies must span across projects and include workforce, infrastructure and community planning.</p> <p>Need cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders.</p> <p>Not all the LGAs are in the room, and they need to be.</p> <p>Hard to keep up with the number of initiatives.</p>	<p>Coordination of government services and funding (a local coordinating body).</p> <p>Industry to identify peak workforce demands inc leverage the existing Gippsland Regional Skills Network Industry Advisory group established by Federation University and TAFE Gippsland to ensure alignment of training and workforce demands.</p> <p>Support alignment between schools, TAFE and University to attract and retain local students for local training and employment.</p> <p>Gippsland as a manufacturing hub for the circular economy - vehicle building (e.g. H2X), contractors and services that can pivot quickly, including from power station contracts to the RE sector, by sequencing of large projects, cooperation across and retooling of the large contractors.</p> <p>Legislation/policy support for the industry and the region.</p>

Community and Infrastructure

Challenges (Problems)	Opportunities (Solutions)
<p>Problem of housing availability and quality across Gippsland.</p> <p>Need to fast-track residential and industrial zoning across all 6 councils.</p> <p>Transport infrastructure needs upgrading, freight/logistics – shipping costs, passenger & freight train upgrades need scoping (workforce needs to ability to travel Sale-Melbourne with reliable regular services).</p> <p>Local affordable transport solutions must be developed to assist the workforce in taking up available work.</p> <p>Available and affordable childcare with flexible options.</p> <p>Need to ensure development of social infrastructure.</p> <p>New renewables construction will be in or close to small communities that will need infrastructure and services.</p> <p>New energy infrastructure needs to link to the grid.</p> <p>Gippsland REZ needs to be prioritised now by VicGrid in terms of timing (not 4-5 year delivery).</p> <p>Need to demonstrate community benefit/ownership.</p>	<p>Collaborate to address the housing shortage, in particular affordable and social housing. Community benefits sharing strategy to ensure benefits across the social spectrum, especially to low socio-economic status (SES) communities and hard-hit regions such as East Gippsland.</p> <p>Investment in civil infrastructure – upgrade and gold plate, e.g. roads, and investigate ways to mitigate impact on roads.</p> <p>Develop initiatives to engage the community and build enthusiasm.</p> <p>Support the growth of local manufacturing. Attract peri-urban industries to Gippsland, especially those linked to supplying the renewable energy industry.</p> <p>Education facilities to provide for an increase in population.</p> <p>Joint community consultation and community grants by all Renewable Energy (RE) projects for greater impact and streamlined approach.</p> <p>Digital strategy to address technology divides and areas of poor connectivity.</p> <p>Recognise dimensions and complexities for local communities.</p> <p>Build a legacy.</p> <p>Co-design with communities for future changes.</p> <p>Measure and report on local impact.</p>



Activating Gippsland's Renewable Energy Workforce - Action Plan 2022 - 2025

The following actions were identified in 2021 **and updated in 2022** as priorities for collaborative action:

1 Action: Marketing & Promotion

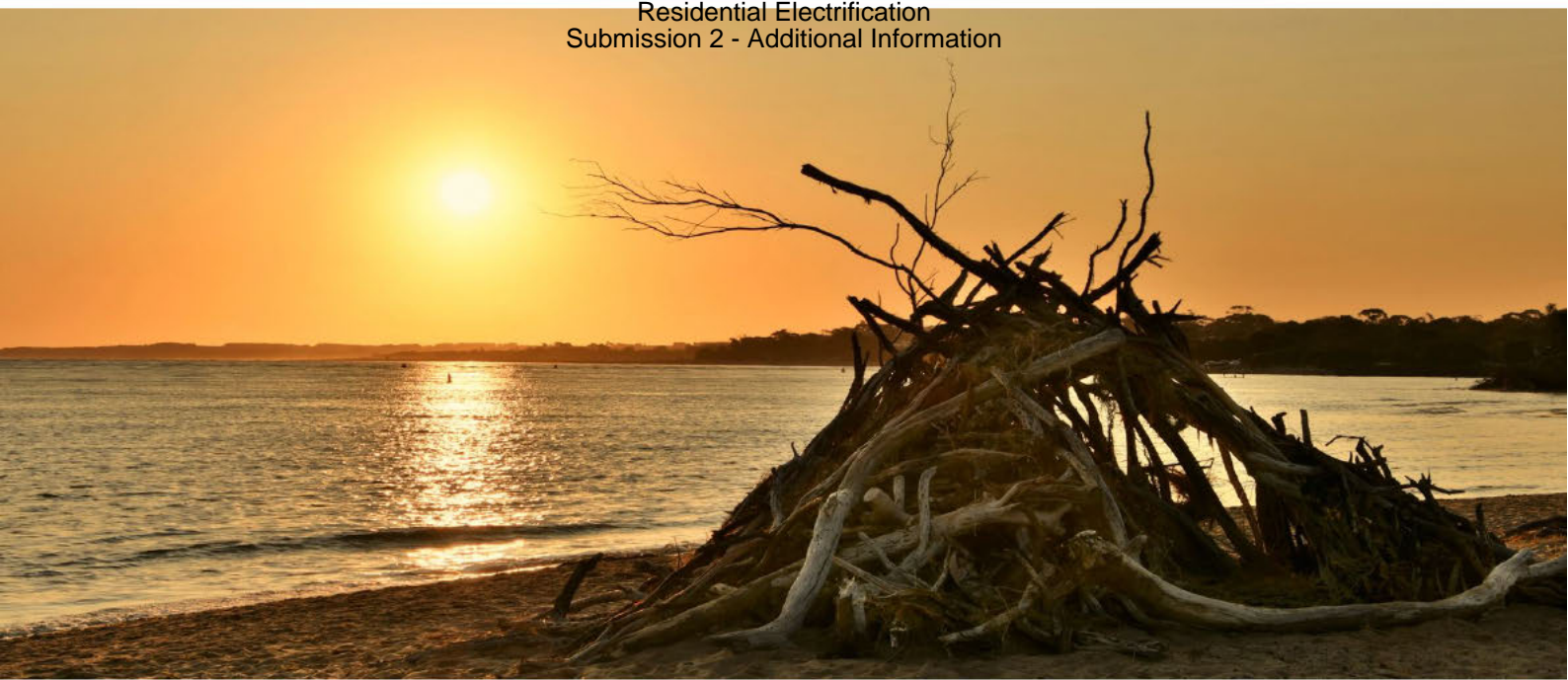
Deliverables	Lead Stakeholders	Timeframe
<p>1.1 A comprehensive Marketing and Promotion Plan targeting a potential workforce and skilled professionals to showcase renewable energy opportunities in Gippsland and the region's attractions.</p> <p>1.1.1 Resource the Plan with an appropriate web and digital presence and human resources</p> <p>1.1.2 Support implementation of the Plan with rolling campaigns aimed at generating ongoing interest in renewable energy jobs and industry transition opportunities through local stories</p> <p>1.1.3 Hyper-local activation with rolling conversations in towns and communities across Gippsland to engage locals and develop a greater understanding of the opportunities.</p>	<p>Wellington Shire Council (WSC), Australian Renewables Academy (ARA), Gippsland Climate Change Network (GCCN)</p>	2022 - 23
<p>1.2 Engage schools, employers, job agencies and the community to build the social license.</p> <p>1.2.1 Develop interactive and innovative resources and activities to engage primary and secondary school students in thinking about the renewable energy industry.</p> <p>1.2.2 Capture the voice of young people in showcasing career paths, including industry information sessions in schools and industry visits to build awareness.</p> <p>1.2.3 Introduce options within Senior Secondary Schools for VDSS course offerings as pathways to new energy training.</p> <p>1.2.4 Encourage the take up of generic trade professions to ensure a pipeline of skilled tradespeople is ready to take up work in the renewable energy industry.</p> <p>1.2.5 Grow linkages to the LVA Transition Plan, LLENs, TAFE and Federation University.</p> <p>1.2.6 Provide clear aspirational messages about the jobs of the future.</p>	<p>WSC, GELLEN, ARA, Workforce Plus, Industry</p>	2022 - 2025

2 Action: Demand for workers and skills

Deliverables	Lead Stakeholders	Timeframe
<p>2.1 Renewable Energy Workforce and Skills Strategy drawing on Wellington Shire Council Renewable Energy Readiness & Impact Study, LVA Gippsland Energy Skills Mapping Report on transitioning worker skills sets from power stations, oil and gas and timber industries and Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) Victorian Skills Plan.</p> <p>2.1.1 Map the staging of developments and jobs to achieve right people, right skills, right place and right time, including transition for sunset industries.</p> <p>2.1.2 Work with local First Nations organisations to identify possible Land and Water custodian roles.</p> <p>2.1.3 Understand the demand for ongoing jobs post-construction.</p> <p>2.1.4 Understand the workforce and skills needs of supply chain and other businesses and industry in local communities.</p>	<p>Industry, ARA, GBS, WSC, Workforce Plus, TAFE Gippsland, LVA</p>	<p>2022 - 2025</p>
<p>2.1 Efficient, targeted access to a skilled workforce</p> <p>2.2.1 Single platform for industry and potential employees to facilitate matching.</p> <p>2.2.2 Understand development needs of potential untapped labour sources and barriers to uptake into the labour market.</p> <p>2.2.3 Understand needs of supply chain.</p> <p>2.2.4 Identify opportunities for industry to contribute to skills and training via teaching positions to ensure competency and currency with industry</p> <p>2.2.5 Identify opportunities to provide work experience and industry ‘tasters’.</p> <p>2.2.6 Sponsor Jobs Expos and opportunities for communities to meet industry needs.</p> <p>2.2.7 Develop and trial a range of recruitment strategies with specific campaigns to attract older workers, youth, First Nations people, women and people with disability</p> <p>2.2.8 Explore opportunities for flexibility of work hours and joining up of jobs.</p> <p>2.2.9 Encourage culturally safe and encouraging workplaces, e.g. embed use of workcarefactor.com.au resource.</p>	<p>ARA, GBS Employment Facilitator LVA GELLEN</p>	<p>2022 - 2025</p>

3 Action: New vocational education and training

Deliverables	Lead Stakeholders	Timeframe
<p>3.1 Develop training courses, resources, delivery modes, and infrastructure to support workforce skilling, including apprenticeships, earn-and-learn models, interactive digital experiences, and work placements.</p> <p>3.1.1 Explore education passport models.</p> <p>3.1.2 Via industry skills councils - review of training packages currently underway, to influence how industry can contribute to future training requirements.</p> <p>3.1.3 Develop onsite training models.</p> <p>3.1.4 Identify and address barriers to recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>3.1.5 Entry-level courses to include interpersonal and other soft skills for young people and job seekers.</p> <p>3.1.6 Facilitate a national network of TAFEs and RTOs to facilitate curriculum sharing.</p>	<p>ARA, Workforce Plus, TAFE Gippsland, Federation University, Skills and Jobs Centres</p>	<p>2023 - 25</p>
<p>3.2 Facilitate a roundtable on innovation and best practice education.</p>	<p>ARA</p>	<p>2022 - 2025</p>
<p>3.3 Facilitate collaboration between industry and schools (including Careers Teachers) to create careers and deliver innovation in work placements and tasters.</p> <p>3.3.1 Map educational pathways at all levels and ensure integration.</p> <p>3.3.2 Identify supply chain needs and support skills development.</p> <p>3.3.3 Develop just-in-time models to engage people in training with minimal delays.</p> <p>3.3.4 Explore models that strengthen connection between industry and education.</p> <p>3.3.5 Build on the current partnership between TAFE Gippsland and Federation University to utilise expertise and specialist facilities in offshore wind training, and develop local facilities for interactive learning, including turbine training.</p> <p>3.3.6 Support Women in STEM programs in local schools.</p>	<p>Industry, ARA, TAFE Gippsland, Federation University, Skills & Jobs Centre GELLEN</p>	<p>2022 - 2025</p>
<p>3.4 Ensure training providers have access to skilled, experienced trainers</p> <p>3.4.1 Train teachers on the application of new technologies</p> <p>3.4.2 Develop models that involve mentors and coaches</p>	<p>Industry, ARA, TAFE Gippsland</p>	<p>2023 - 24</p>



4 Action: Collaboration and Connectivity

Deliverables	Lead Stakeholders	Timeframe
<p>4.1 Facilitate Activating Gippsland's Renewable Energy Workforce Action Plan 2022 – 2025 progress through:</p> <p>4.1.1 An annual Activating Gippsland's Renewable Energy Workforce Forum.</p> <p>4.1.2 Working Parties.</p> <p>4.1.3 A shared communication platform that includes community initiatives.</p>	ARA	2022 - 2025
<p>4.2 Develop a local/regional system to support coordination and ensure information is available about Federal, State and Local Government initiatives.</p> <p>4.2.1 Industry works together and with government to map timing of developments and demand timeframes for labour and skills.</p> <p>4.2.2 Explore possible benefits of a Gippsland Renewable Energy accord.</p>	LVA WSC Industry	2022 - 2025
<p>4.3 Collaborate to engage/activate a diverse local labour market</p>	ARA, WFP GBS	2022 - 2025
<p>4.4 Work together to seek funding for training and upskilling and specialist facilities</p>	ARA, TAFE Gippsland, Federation University	2023 - 2025

5 Action: Community and Infrastructure

Deliverables	Lead Stakeholders	Timeframe
<p>5.1 Develop a Community Benefits Sharing Strategy to drive coordination of effort on:</p> <p>5.1.1 Exploring models to address issues of housing availability (including affordable and social housing). Advocate for changes to planning policy to facilitate housing solutions to issues including key worker accommodation and housing pressure on low socio-economic families.</p> <p>5.1.2 Sustainable transport solutions at a hyper-local level.</p> <p>5.1.3 Providing affordable, available childcare.</p> <p>5.1.4 Engaging people traditionally locked out of the labour market.</p> <p>5.1.5 Developing a digital strategy to address the availability and affordability of technology.</p> <p>5.1.6 Planning for impact on health, schools, retail, and hospitality.</p> <p>5.1.7 Undertaking co-design with communities on changes to their towns.</p> <p>5.1.8 Measuring the impact of change through collective impact studies.</p>	<p>GCCN, WSC, ARA, MGA (DECH)</p>	<p>2022 - 2025</p>
<p>5.2 Support the work of the Wellington Shire Council and other regional Local Governments in facilitating a collaborative approach between Federal, State and Local Governments to planning, infrastructure and workforce.</p>		<p>2022 - 2025</p>



Attachment 1: Activating Gippsland’s Renewable Energy Workforce Forum November 2022 Agenda

	Agenda Item	Speaker
9.30am	Forum Opening & Purpose	Bernadette O’Connor, Chair Australian Renewables Academy
	Welcome to Country	Aunty Sandra Patten
9.40am	Context for the 2022 - 2025 Action Plan	Anthony Clucas
9.45am	2023 & New Energy Workforce	
	National perspective on the demands for a new energy workforce	Dr Anita Talberg, Director of Workforce Development, Clean Energy Council
	'The workforce challenges from the renewables boom - a local government perspective.'	Brent McAlister, General Manager Development, Wellington Shire Council
	Finding unicorns in Gippsland's labour market	Rachael Newton, Recruitment Director, GBS Recruitment
	Mobilising the renewables and supply chain workforce - a business perspective	Brett Singh, CEO, Marathon Group
	The Way Forward - The importance of collaboration as Gippsland mobilises a new energy workforce	Darren McCubbin, CEO, Gippsland Climate Change Network
10.45	Morning Tea	
11.15am	Energy Skills, Training and Education	Mikaela Power, Executive Director, Strategic Engagement, TAFE Gippsland and
		Bill Mundy, Associate Director, Partnerships and Growth Federation University
	'Planning for the Future – Together'	Chris Buckingham, Chief Executive Officer, Latrobe Valley Authority
	<i>No one gets held back; no one gets left behind</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition update • Workforce Participation Report • Energy Skills Mapping Report • Planning for Transition • Developing our workforce 	

	Gippsland's Labour Market - the challenges and opportunities	Luke Arber, Employment Facilitator, Gippsland
12.00noon	Current Initiatives and Key Workforce Challenges in 2023	Breakout Table Discussions
1.00pm	Lunch	
1.40pm	Careers of the future – through the eyes of our young people	Students from local schools engaging in Women in STEM Deborah Daff, Facilitator
2.00pm	Practical Actions – next steps, by when, resources?	Breakout Table Discussions
2.55pm	Reporting back	
3.10pm	A commitment to action	Darren McCubbin & Bernadette O'Connor
3.25pm	Summary and Conclusion	Bernadette O'Connor
3.30pm	Afternoon tea	

Attachment 2: Collaborative Mural of 2022 Forum Discussions

