

**LODDON CAMPASPE
HEALTH SECTOR**

**SKILLS AND
PATHWAYS
ROAD MAP**

2021



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

The health sector is a vital and expanding area of economic activity for the Loddon Campaspe region and a highly significant employer. Health services are critical to maintaining wellbeing and participation of our diverse population.

The Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Skills and Pathway Roadmap will ensure that our region can stay ahead of the predicted large demand for health workers. Through the partnership of regional health services and educators there is now a comprehensive and practical set of actions identified to align efforts for a regional learning system.

This roadmap has been developed through extensive and well targeted consultation ensuring that its recommendations are grounded in both the strengths of our region and the opportunities that are yet to be realised. The roadmap has anticipated future needs and extends our ability to draw new people into the workforce, ensure depth of quality training and anticipates graduation of skilled workers when they are needed. There is a technological evolution occurring in all facets of the provision of health care, the needs of our population are changing as demographics change and the health sector itself is continuing to evolve. The roadmap addresses these needs.

The Loddon Mallee Regional Development Australia Committee recommends The Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Skills and Pathway Roadmap as a guide to ensure health sector workforce development is future ready.

Linda Beilharz
Loddon Mallee RDA Committee, Chair

INTRODUCTION

The Loddon Campaspe region's health industry requires a workforce that has the skills to meet the future's anticipated health demands. The health sector will be the highest job growth area for the Loddon Campaspe region.¹

Despite a trend of employment growth for the region (pre-COVID-19), local employers continue to report difficulty in attracting the right skills. In the region, there are a higher proportion of lower-income earners compared to the rest of the state, which compounds the skills deficit.

The Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Skills and Pathways Road Map is a guide for government, education, industry, students and parents to strengthen the regional learning system for the Health sector, so that participants are better equipped to meet the current and future workforce needs.

The Health Sector Skills and Pathways Road Map outlines four focus areas to address the health sector's skills pathway challenges and opportunities:

- 1. Enhancing Collaboration between Industry, Education and Community**
- 2. Addressing Perception**
- 3. Addressing Skill Shortage**
- 4. Grow Our Own**

Each focus area has recommendations with short and long-term actions, with the aim to support the future workforce needs of the region's Health sector and to leverage opportunities that are unique to this region.

The Health Sector Skills and Pathways Road Map is informed by the Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Pathways Environmental Scan, September 2020.² The environmental scan can be used as an accompanying document to the road map. The scan presented the Loddon Campaspe region employment data, education participation data and an overview of the sector regarding anticipated future health sector workforce needs.

Further thinking, coordination and possibly funding will be required to implement a number of the actions. Each stakeholder is encouraged to take an appropriate lead to activate the pathways road map.

Health Sector Skills and Pathways Road Map, planning for the skills of now and into the future

¹ 84% of future growth in Bendigo expected to come from Health Care, Manufacturing and Construction. Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, Employment Projections, five years to May 2023.

² A copy of the Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Pathways Environmental Scan September 2020 can be requested from the contact details supplied at the back of this document.

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We respectfully acknowledge that the Loddon Campaspe Region encompasses the traditional lands and waters of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wurundjeri and Yorta Yorta people. We pay our respects to them, their culture and their Elders past, present, and future.

We also acknowledge the ongoing impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people, including their health and wellbeing. Discrimination, trauma, and forced severed connections to land and culture result in Aboriginal people experiencing higher rates of chronic disease and lower life expectancies than the non-Aboriginal population. Our commitment with this work is to focus on healthy equity: to acknowledge and address barriers faced by members of our Aboriginal community to ensure equity of access in achieving improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

BACKGROUND

We know that there will be considerable growth in demand for our region’s Health Sector in the near future and beyond. An increase in demand will be a combination of job growth, a change in how health services are delivered, the transition to the 4.0 industry and existing workforce retirement and turn over.

“Longer term, healthcare and social assistance is expected to require another 85,000 workers in regions through to 2023 and 28,000 in education. With long lead times on professionals in these industries it is vital that action starts now to create the skills development pathways.”³

Health Sector Skills And Pathways Road Map Growth Careers Of Focus

When developing the health sector skills and pathways road map consultation and focus was given to:

- Residential Care Workers
- Registered Nurses
- Enrolled Nurses
- Midwives
- Paramedics
- Aboriginal Healthcare workers
- Allied Health Professionals

Who Is The Road Map For?

The Loddon Campaspe’s learning system is multifaceted, and the systemic nature of these relationships is crucial as it impacts all stakeholders in the system. Led by an education and health partnership, the Road Map invites everyone to play a role in the planning for the future of jobs in our health sector. This includes employers, young people, educators, trainers, older job seekers, government, industry groups, families and the broader community.

³ The Future of Regional Jobs, April 2019, The Regional Australia Institute.

In an increasingly competitive market across regions, supporters of regional development will need to foster regional learning systems as much as fostering business and infrastructure investment, as it is the quality and capability of these systems that will determine which regions do well from changes coming to the labour market.⁴

Consultation:

We asked health and education organisations and influencers, government and the community about the region’s health workforce and the health learning system to identify the short and long-term initiatives to support the growth of the future Health Sector workforce.

We Asked About The Workforce:

Where is the existing workforce coming from?

What is the gap?

How can we grow our own workforce?

Where are the opportunities, what are the blockers or barriers?

We Asked About The Learning System:

How is the existing learning system geared to support the current and future workforce?

Do the pathways exist?

Are courses on offer meeting the workforce needs?

Are the learning systems producing enough graduates to fulfil the needs of the Health Sector?

⁴ The Future of Regional Jobs, April 2019, The Regional Australia Institute.

WE CONSULTED WITH:

**68
PEOPLE
REPRESENTING
THE FOLLOWINGS
STAKEHOLDERS:**

4

Public health organisations
and 7 departments within

1

Private health organisation
and 2 departments within

2

Indigenous organisations

8

Influencer organisations

7

Students

19

Parents

2

Public secondary education providers

2

Private secondary education providers

1

Tertiary organisation and
6 departments within

2

TAFE organisations and
5 departments within

Method

Informed by the Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Environmental Scan⁵ September 2020, yet limited by the constraints of COVID-19 restrictions, 68 one-to-one consultation were held over a five-month period and two remote health education customer journey road map workshop and nineteen community perception surveys.

Consultation outcomes informed the opportunities and challenges for the health sector pathway and the resulting recommendations, guided by the Project Reference Group.



Geographic Region

The road map encompasses the six municipalities that the Regional Partnership Loddon Campaspe embraces including: Campaspe Shire, Central Goldfields Shire, City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander Shire.

Road Map Partners

Partners leading the Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Road Map project are; Bendigo Health, La Trobe University, Bendigo TAFE and Bendigo Senior Secondary College.

About Create Business

Research and consultation for the Health Sector Road Map was devised and undertaken by Tamara Marwood, Director of Create Business. She grew up in the Loddon Campaspe region (near East Loddon School) on a dairy farm, and has the expertise and passion for supporting regional businesses, communities and pathways for the future of work.

⁵ A desktop review providing evidence of trends and findings to inform the Project Reference Group analysis of opportunities and barriers of the health and education sector. Included regional employment data, education participation data, external influences and an overview of the sector regarding anticipated future health sector workforce needs and the impact of COVID-19.

ADVISORY GROUP

“Through Bendigo Senior Secondary College having Allied Health as an option, it has prepared me and allowed me to gain insight to help me decide on a future avenue for work in the health industry.”

Year 12 Student, Certificate III Allied Health, Bendigo Senior Secondary College, 2020

A Project Reference Group was established to oversee the deliverables of the project. The group consisted of the following members:

Hayley Cail – Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership Coordinator, Regional Development Victoria

Melanie Bish – Director of Academic Partnerships, Associate Professor of Rural Nursing and Midwifery La Trobe Rural Health School, La Trobe University

Bev Sutherland – Director Organisational Development, Bendigo Health

Jodie White – Senior Nurse Educator Transition Programs, Bendigo Health

Cheryl Sobczyk – Lead Educator Health and Nursing, Bendigo TAFE

Kait Kelly – Student Engagement Coordinator, Bendigo Senior Secondary College

Jennifer Moloney – Assistant Principal (VET & RTO Partnerships), Bendigo Senior Secondary College



MISSION

TO ACT TOGETHER SO THAT THE LODDON CAMPASPE REGION WILL HAVE A THRIVING HEALTH WORKFORCE, SUPPORTED BY A LEARNING SYSTEM CONNECTED EFFECTIVELY WITH THE HEALTH SECTOR.

TRENDS LODDON CAMPASPE

COVID-19 Impact on Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Skills and Pathways Road Map

Most trends, data and research findings guiding the consultation for the road map was obtained from pre-COVID-19.

The impact of the pandemic has had and continues to create, wide-ranging implications for this region, significant to both the health and education industries. These include:

Online and Virtual Solutions:

Education is rapidly transitioning to online curriculum delivery and creatively managing clinical placements opportunities, despite social restrictions.

Uncertainty: COVID-19 has created a great deal of uncertainty. Many organisations, peak bodies and governments are investing to pivoting business operations and delivery, strategically preparing for the medium to long-term COVID-19 impacts and future opportunities.

Strain: The crisis has added strain upon the existing health workforce, limited and in some cases, prevented placements from taking place. The daily functioning of both education and health workplaces has radically transformed, offering new challenges and opportunities.

Youth: Securing employment during and post COVID-19 recovery, post-school qualifications will be more important than ever, with a trend towards more highly skilled jobs – both University and VET. Despite the pandemic shock, the 'old rules' still apply: education, experience and employability skills (core skills) are essential.⁶

Should the demand for skilled health workers continue to rise, while health education pathways are inaccessible to many young people in our region, there will be a lost opportunity to build our own health workforce.

The first National lock down resulted in 30% of young people in Australia out of full-time work or education⁷.

6 DET Ivan Neville Webinar August 2020 re COVID-19 impacts and student career planning.

7 <https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/6816914/pain-on-the-way-post-september-economists-warn/?cs=3341>

Young people have been more impacted by COVID-19 than other groups, and they are facing more difficult transitions from education to employment. Previous economic downturns have shown that the young are hit the hardest. Due to the difficulty of finding opportunities (and potentially the mental health impacts) young people disengage from both work and education.

Potential Opportunities Resulting From COVID-19

The impact and influence of the pandemic has led to rapid acceleration in new technologies and partnerships to deliver services in both health and education.

Virtual service: There has also been the expanding of virtual service delivery and service offerings for students and health consumers. COVID-19 has resulted in many changes to how education and health services are delivered that are advantageous to regional and rural communities. Virtual service delivery is co dependent on the availability of connectivity. This can be a barrier in some rural and socioeconomic locations.

Partnerships: There is anecdotal evidence of this region's strengthening health and education partnerships and collaborations to deliver clinical placements and skill shortages.⁸

More Rapid Transition to the workplace:

Due to the demand and pressure created by COVID-19 on the existing work force, Bendigo Health has secured a 'fast-transition' pathway for third year nursing students to enter the work force, as well as re-engaging older/retired nurses.⁹

Trends Loddon Campaspe Region Pre-COVID-19

Job growth: Bendigo had an annual employment growth rate of 14.9%¹⁰ and the Loddon Campaspe region had a five-year annual jobs growth rate of 2.0%.¹¹

8 Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Project Reference Group comments stakeholder commentary 17 June 2020 – pre- Second Victorian Stage 3 Lockdown.

9 Tamara Marwood interview with Rachel Mays, Director, Workforce Planning and Resourcing Bendigo Health, 26 August 2020.

10 ABS, Labour Force, December 2018, annual averages and seasonally adjusted figures.

11 ABS (2019) 2013 – 2018 financial years.

Youth Employment: Despite a rapid employment growth rate some cohorts, such as young people, were (and still are) at risk of missing out on employment and training opportunities, due to generational disadvantage.

The National Youth Unemployment rate is 11.2% and Bendigo's youth unemployment rate is 18.3%. In Bendigo, annual employment growth for people aged 18 to 25 is 4%, compared to 18% for those aged 25 years and above.¹²

Ageing Population

The region has a high proportion of ageing people and this is anticipated to continue to grow, shifting health care skills in demand from acute to chronic.

19.85% of people are seniors, (over the age of 65 years), which is higher than the state of 15.13%.

Analysis of 20 years average population growth rate indicates a significant projected growth of people 65 years old. 93,010 people are projected to be over 65 years old by 2036.¹³

The Future of Work

The prediction for the future of work for all growth industries transferable 'core skills' will be required. The future of a healthcare workplace requires a work force with 'core skills'.

12 ABS, Labour Force, December 2018.

13 <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/land-use-and-population-research/victoria-in-future>

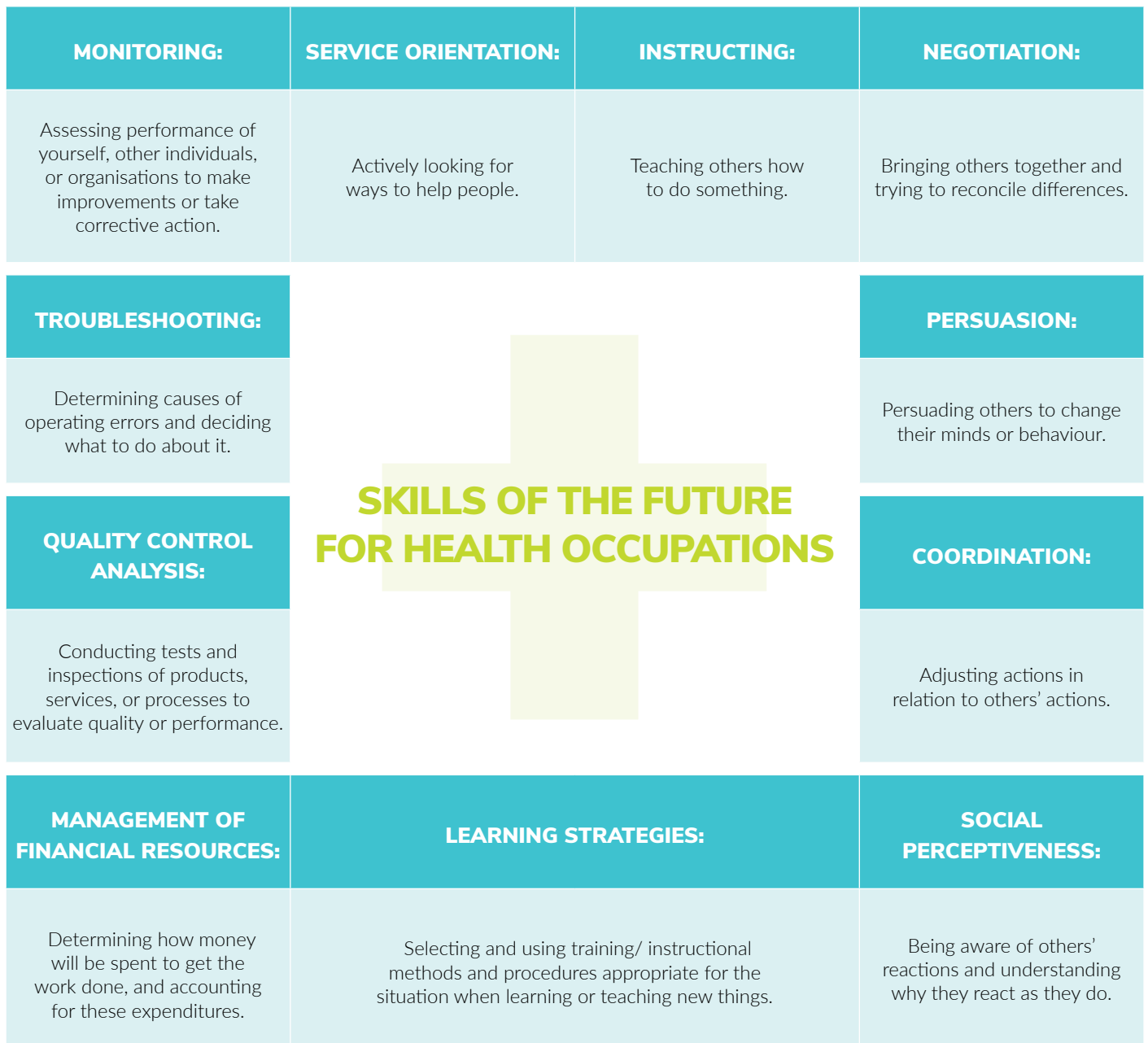


Diagram Source: O*Net <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Skill Shortage

There is a skill shortage for nurses in residential aged care in Loddon Campaspe and Australia.

How Healthcare is Delivered is Changing

How health care is delivered is shifting from a hospital-based practice to a preventative or long-term care community-based and virtual practice.

Rural Communities & Skill Shortage

The issues impacting the Loddon Campaspe region are more prevalent the further a community is located from Bendigo, the central service area.

Limited Capacity to Deliver Industry-Based Education Experiences

Successful transition to the workplace from training is higher with industry experience, however regulation, high demand and the increasing level of participation in health education and COVID-19 restrictions has severely constrained linkage between education and industry to deliver workplace-based training experiences (such as work experience and placements).

LODDON CAMPASPE HEALTH SECTOR SKILLS PATHWAY - EXISTING HEALTH EDUCATION PATHWAYS IN OUR REGION

Key: Course has Clinical Placement Darker grey: Entry Level Positions

Year 7 - Year 10	Year 11 & 12	TAFE	La Trobe University	Graduate/Program	Health Career Examples
Year 10 Work Experience					
Career Expos General					
Career Expo Sector specific					
My career portfolio – available for state school secondary students					
Industry ambassadors	Cert III Community Services incorporating Cert II Community Services Marist College, Catherine McAuley College & Bendigo Senior Secondary College Structured workplace learning: 120 hours				Ward Assistant • Health Administrator Assistant
	Cert III in Health Services Assistance Bendigo Senior Secondary College, North Central Trade Training Centre, Catherine McAuley College, Marist College & Doxa School Cert III Allied Health Assistance Structured workplace learning: 80 hours total (40 hours for Year 1 and 40 hours for year 2)	Cert IV in Allied Health Assistance 120 hours of workplace placement required for completion of qualification	Bachelor of Health Science		Allied Health Assistant • Medical Receptionist • Personal Care Attendant • Therapy Assistant
		Cert III in Health Services Assistance. If undertaking the specialisation 'Assisting in nursing work in acute care' there is an 80 hours workplace placement requirement.			Orderly • Nurse Support Worker • Health Services Assistant • Hospital Cleaner • Stores Assistant • Health Support Services Worker • Therapy Assistant • Allied Health Assistant • Physiotherapy Assistant • Rehabilitation Assistant • Occupational Therapy Assistant
		Cert II Health Support Services			Patient Services Assistant • Ward Assistant • Orderly • Hospital Cleaner • Stores Assistant
		Cert III in Individual Support Specialisations - Ageing, Home and Community Services, or Disability			Aged Care • Personal Care Assistant (PCA) • Home and Community Care Worker • Disability Support Worker If undertakes Cert IV - Radiography Specialisation can add Dental Radiography, Treatment Coordinator.

	120 hours of workplace placement required		Oral Health Promotion specialty can add Oral Health Advisor, Dental Hygienist Assistant
	Cert III Cert IV Dental Assisting		Dental Assistant • Dental Nurse • Dental Receptionist • Dental Sterilisation Nurse
	Diploma of Nursing 440 hours of workplace clinical placement over 2 years. Year 1 - 80 hours Aged Care and 80 hours Sub-acute placement. Year 2 - 80 hours Mental Health / Primary Health Care, 80 hours sub-acute and 120 hours Acute	Bachelor of Public Health Bachelor of Health Science Bachelor of Nursing	Acute Care • Sub-Acute • Rehabilitation • Mental Health • Aged Care • Palliative Care • General Practitioner • Community Health Centres and Other Primary Health Care

INDUSTRY VOLUNTEER PATHWAYS

Ambulance Victoria	Ambulance Community Officers - Accelerated Graduate pathway	Paramedic	Diploma of Community Services
Heathcote Health	Heathcote Health and Bendigo Tafe Volunteer Model	CERT III Health and other certifications	Orderly • Nurse Support Worker • Health Services Assistant • Hospital Cleaner • Stores Assistant • Health Support Services Worker • Therapy Assistant • Allied Health Assistant • Physiotherapy Assistant • Personal Care Assistant (PCA) • Rehabilitation Assistant • Occupational Therapy Assistant

Year 7 – Year 10	Year 11 & 12	TAFE
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HEAD START – APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Cert III Health Services Assistance	Nursing Assistant • Hospital Orderly • Paramedical Aide • Personal Care Assistant
Cert III in Allied Health Assistance	Community Rehabilitation Therapist Assistant • Physiotherapists Assistant • Occupational Therapist Assistant • Nursing Support Worker
Cert III and Cert IV Dental Assisting	Dental Assistant • Dental Nurse specialisations include either Radiography and / or Oral Health Promotion • Dental Radiographer • Oral Health Advisor • Dental Hygienist Assistant

Biomedical Science (medical) Bachelor of Public Health Dentistry • Exercise Science • Health sciences • Occupational Therapy • Oral Health • Paramedicine • Pharmacy • Psychology • Physiotherapy • Social Work • Speech Pathology		
Nursing Clinical placement Year 1 - 80 hours, Semester 2, Aged Care. Year 2 - 80 hours, Semester 1, 120 hours, Semester 2, Acute, 80 hours, Semester 2, Primary Health & Community Year 3 - 120 hours, Semester 1, Mental Health & Acute Complex 240 hours, Semester 2, Nursing Reflection and Consolidation	Midwifery Graduate Program • Neonatal And Paediatric Graduate Nurse Program • Blended Stream Graduate Nurse Program • Aged Care Graduate Nurse Program • Enrolled Nure Graduate Program • Perioperative and Perianaesthetic Graduate Nursing Program • Mental Health Graduate Nurse Program • Registered Nurse/Registered	Midwife • Neonatal And Paediatric Graduate Nurse • Aged Care Nurse • Enrolled Nurse • Perioperative And Perianaesthetic Graduate Nursing • Mental Health Nurse
Diploma of Health Science Bachelor of Health Science 120 hours work integrated learning		Acute Care • Sub-Acute • Rehabilitation • Mental Health • Aged Care • Palliative Care • General Practitioner • Clinic • Community Health Centres and other primary health care
Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor and Midwifery		

Information was up-to-date at time of publication. Please check with education providers for the most of up-to-date information.

Aged Care Leadership Program	Aged Care Nurse
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THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

CHALLENGES

What are the region's key challenges to meeting the current and future workforce needs?

During the consultation process, a number of key challenges were identified to be addressed as part of this Road Map, based on the needs of the Loddon Campaspe region.

Perception Of Undesirable Health Career Paths

There is a perception that some jobs/ career paths are not as desirable as others. 44% of the Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Skills Pathway Road Map Survey respondents, targeted at parents, indicated that they were aware of residential aged care as a potential career pathway for their children; however, zero respondents would encourage their child or children to consider residential aged care as a career pathway.

The Royal Commission Into Aged Care And COVID-19 media coverage of these has enhanced perception in the general community that residential care is an undesirable career choice.

Limited Capacity To Offer Students Experiences That Connect Them To Industry

Nationally, a massive increase in nursing students, has resulted in intense competition to find sufficient numbers of clinical placements, among vocational education providers and higher education providers.¹⁴

Health services in the region are at capacity to provide placements and work experience. In addition, they have reported they have limited capacity to offer the support and time required to employ and supervise trainees or people employed at a low-level entry. Yet some health providers within the region reported being unable to find the 'right people' with the 'right skills' and 'experience'.

Within the secondary schools setting, it was found there is also a limited capacity for young people to connect with industry and realise the potential of career pathways in the region into health. This results in connection to industry relying heavily upon personal connections and 'chance.'

Young people value and understand the benefit of work-based and industry-based training. The youth of Greater Bendigo have identified that meaningful and recognised work experience through local businesses is an essential element of strengthening their prospects.¹⁵

Consultation undertaken by the Independent Review of Nursing Education (2019) found that Nurses feel unprepared to 'teach' on clinical placements. They felt they:

- Lacked appropriate preparation to teach
- Clinical supervision is not counted in their workload – squeezing in supervision while performing regular duties
- Lack of monetary or career advancements taking on extra work
- Students from many different providers have different expectations

“Placements are core to ensuring people are work ready. Achieving great placements is about having successful relationships between education providers and the organisation hosting the placement. Transitions programs nurture and support new graduates and existing staff.”

**Jodie White, Senior Nurse Educator
Transition Programs, Bendigo Health.**

“I never knew nurses could have a role in surgical procedures with patients, and it wasn't until my placement I realised how much nurses are involved. I found this a privilege to be in such a life changing position for people and to support patients through a time when they are really vulnerable – we change people's lives in a matter of hours.”

Bendigo Health Graduate Nurse, 2020.

Successful Transition Into The Work Place

Employers are seeking 'core' skills and experience in their area of work. The demand for skilled healthcare workers who are clinically based and have 'core skills' will continue to rise.

Skills such as;

- the ability to work in teams;
- to be good communicators;
- to work independently;
- to have empathy;
- and skills in chronic health management.

Research shows that Transition-to-Practice programs reduce turnover and work stress, while improving patient safety and enhancing job satisfaction.¹⁶

Despite the shared understanding of the value of transition, consultations found that the health sector is under resourced to successfully transition students into the workplace or undergraduates into graduate programs. Additionally work transition supports within the community are under-utilised and under-developed.

¹⁴ Educating the Nurse of the Future. Report of the Independent Review of Nursing Education. 2019.

¹⁵ <https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/A%20Stronger%20Greater%20Bendigo%202030.pdf>

¹⁶ Education the Nurse of the Future. Report of the Independent Review of Nursing Education (2019).

Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative, play an active role in recruitment and also mentoring indigenous people in new roles, delivering this service to local and state government departments.

Mentoring programs have been piloted in the region, as well as resourcing volunteers to undertake training into paid positions. Short courses and programs that offer skill development in 'core-skills' in resilience, collaboration and communication training are also available through Bendigo Tech School and Head Start.

“VET is successful as young people experience employment outside of the school curriculum. They grow in responsibility and into young adults – they need to wear a uniform, need to remember their pass to get into work – they step up into a work place.”

Jon Lee, Director Student Pathways, Go TAFE

A High Percentage Of Young People In The Region Are Disengaged From Work Or Education

Young people in low social economic communities lack networks within their families to receive insights into career opportunities to know what is possible and the pathways.

There is an increasing number of young people in the region with limited employment prospects and opportunities; a growing proportion of households are experiencing systemic disadvantage; greater numbers of both young and older workers are poorly equipped to deal with a rapidly changing work scene; and there are too many children and young people, who because of their circumstances, have limited opportunities to secure long term employment in satisfying jobs.¹⁷

17 <https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/A%20Stronger%20Greater%20Bendigo%202030.pdf>

There is a great potential to engage an unskilled young work force to meet the growing demand for skilled health workers, but barriers exist for people who don't have the skill set or support to enter the education skills pathway. It is reported that it is difficult for disadvantaged students to move from Certificate III into Certificate IV or Diploma, because they do not achieve minimum Australian standards for numeracy and literacy.

Loddon Campaspe region has the highest number of early school leavers in the state. 15% of 18 to 24 year olds are not studying, not employed or looking for work, this compares to the state average of 11%.¹⁸

This is a complex problem that requires a collaborative focus. It is an issue that is acknowledged in many regional strategies and initiatives in the region – including the Bendigo Education plan, many of which offer a multi-faceted solution approach, requiring collaboration and resources from community, education and industry.

Limited Opportunities For Low Level Entry Employment

Head Start has a partnership with 17 secondary schools and since its operation in 2019 has secured 70 student apprenticeships and traineeships, but none in the health sector, as yet.

Health organisations report the most significant barrier to taking on a person in low-level entry employment, such as a traineeship is having staff members available to supervise the trainee.

The consultation revealed it is unlikely a health organisation will employ someone with a certificate in Allied Health Assistance. This is an education pathway that is experiencing an increase in enrollments in the region. A health organisation is more likely to engage a person with a Certificate in Health Services Assistance.

Over 50% of the Loddon Campaspe Health Sector Road Map Survey respondents, targeted at parents, indicated that they did not believe there are enough entry-level employment opportunities for young people in health.

18 ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

Increased Demand For Skilled Health Workers In Residential Aged Care And In-Community Care

- Industry- wide skilled-workers shortage in Enrolled Nurses in Residential Aged Care.
- Skill shortage of Cert III and IV Allied Health Assistance and Diploma of Nursing trainers throughout the region.¹⁹
- Rural health professional shortage. Including: Registered and Enrolled Nurses, Allied Health professionals Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy, located and practicing within a rural community.

Specific Skill Shortages Of Qualified Health Professionals Due To Changes In Society, Government Policy And How Services Are Demanded, Curriculum And The Sector's Regulation Requirements

- Concern that the health workplace may not represent diversity within the community. The Educating the Nurse of the Future Report states that the existing health workforce does not represent the gender and cultural diversity of the community.²⁰
- Government policy National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and myaged care delivery requiring skills in 'person centred care' and 'ageing in-place' care.²¹
- Balancing education requirements and work place experience can mean that recent graduates do not have the 'Ready for work skills' that are in demand for all levels of work entry.
- Core skills are in demand as more health delivery takes place in a non-acute setting. Core-skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving, IT skills, team work and decision making.

19 Bendigo TAFE and North Central Trade Training Centre, Charlton.

20 Educating the Nurse of the Future. Report of the Independent Review of Nursing Education. 2019.

21 Education the Nurse of the Future. Report of the Independent Review of Nursing Education. 2019.

Demand For Entry-Level (Low Skill) Health Sector Workforce Options

- Free TAFE and an increase in young people undertaking VET or VCAL options has increased the demand for health sector entry level positions.²²

Skill Shortages Due To Technological Change

- Digital health technicians and digital health navigators (who will likely be a key part of any health and social support system in the future) to ensure health professionals and patients can connect rapidly with each other at any virtual consultation.
- Digital health navigators who can guide patients to the information they require to assist them better manage their chronic diseases in a safe environment- their homes and communities. They will also play a role in connecting the patient rapidly with their usual health professional, providing a greater immediacy of response to the patient's health concern and reducing stress.
- The health sector is not removed from the impacts of a transitioning workforce to Industry 4.0. The technology revolution is creating a unique environment for all industries to grow and evolve. In this new landscape, the health sector will continue to transform and require new skills in robotics, intelligent machines, and other unique tools. With Industry 4.0, training and education needed to transform to match the new skills required.

OPPORTUNITIES

Advantages the region has to leverage from to strengthen the region's learning systems for the participants in the Health Sector - now and into the future.

Engaged Youth

Evidence of a growing trend that young people want to work in health. They are seeking health education pathways and low entry-level employment opportunities. A secondary college reported that a majority (60%) of their cohort applies for a course in the health industry on completion of VCE or VCAL.²³

In 2020, at Bendigo TAFE, there were 120 Diploma students enrolled in Nursing, selected from 500 applicants, demonstrating the strong aspiration to study nursing and enter this education pathway.

Commencing in 2013, with 8 students, Bendigo Senior Secondary College has offered Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance. This number has steadily grown to 25 students in 2020.

The La Trobe University Bendigo Campus continues to grow at a fast pace, with 1,695 students enrolled in 66 courses in 2018. 221 students are graduates from Bendigo secondary schools with approximately 120 of these students graduating from Bendigo Senior Secondary College.²⁴

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is predicted in the short to medium term, that more young people will stay closer to home to pursue education, although the anticipated level of change and in what sectors/courses is not clear.

Diversity Of Health Education Offerings And Pathways

Health education is offered as VET and as degrees. Short courses and micro credentials are available to suit the skill needs of students and organisations.

Strong linkages exist between the education and health sector within the region. There are agreements between Bendigo TAFE and La Trobe University in relation to articulation pathways for;

- Graduating Diploma of Nursing students into the Bachelor of Nursing
- Certificate IV in Dental Assisting into Bachelor of Health Sciences
- Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance into Bachelor of Health Sciences

The La Trobe's Rural Health School's mission is to improve the recruitment and retention of health professionals in rural Australia, and is the largest rural health school in Australia. Established in 2000, the Federal government invested \$64million for purpose-built facilities, that simulate real life scenarios, and to provide world-class learning and research opportunities.

The Rural Health School's priority is the recruitment of rural students. La Trobe offers diverse pathways to university, recognising that not everyone is ready to go to university. Programs include entry via ATAR, a year 12 leaver pathway, mature age conversion program and connection with feeder schools and TAFE. The Rural Health School actively partners with health organisations to service clinical placements.

Opened in 2018 the Bendigo TAFE Health and Community Centre of Excellence delivers high-quality health and community training and gives students access to state-of-the-art facilities with a focus on applied learning. The new facilitates increased the capacity of number of students and has enabled TAFE to deliver more health and community courses. Exponential growth has continued, as not long after the building opened, the State Government offered free courses for priority occupations.

Within the secondary setting is the Bendigo Tech School providing STEAM programming to secondary students, in both public and private secondary schools. Underutilised are the health VET offerings available in the north central region with the North Central Trade and Training Centre and the apprenticeship and school-based trainee pathway offered by Head Start for the region.

Additional pathways supports and influencers for secondary students are provided by Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), North Central LLEN, Goldfields LLEN, Campaspe Cohuna LLEN and Central Ranges LLEN.

Weenthunga Health Network supports Indigenous women into health pathways within their community.

²² In 2020, at Bendigo TAFE, there are 120 Diploma students enrolled in Nursing, there were 500 applicants in 2019 with only 120 places available, demonstrating a strong level of aspiration to study in this sector. Since 2013 Bendigo Senior Secondary has on offer College Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance, commencing with 8 students. In 2020 there were 7 classes of 25 students.

²³ Interview with Megan Dixon, Bendigo regional careers association and Catherine McAuley College Careers Advisor 9 October 2020.

²⁴ Bendigo Education Plan 2018.

Active Health Sector

Since March, due to COVID-19, the Bendigo Health workforce has increased by 300 people, with many people moving from one area to another to drive projects. COVID-19 response has proven that both the education sector and health sector can be responsive and flexible to meet changing needs rapidly.

The new Bendigo Hospital delivers a world-class regional hospital incorporating the latest design and technology solutions, and is currently the largest regional hospital development in Victoria.

Bendigo Health provides clinical placements across 51 weeks of the year to undergraduate students.

This year at Bendigo Health, over 100 nurses and midwives began their careers across eight different graduate programs. Entry into those programs is competitive, however for 2021 only 40 applications were received for the six Aged Care Graduate Nursing program positions.

Graduate programs are also offered in many of the rural hospitals in the region, as well as St John of God Health Bendigo.

Loddon Mallee Regional Health Service Partnership and the CEOs of Health and Community Services in Loddon Mallee Region come together from across the region meeting quarterly to collaborate and pilot solutions unique to health providers in rural and regional locations.

Necessity to meet skill shortage with limited resources has resulted in many rural hospitals innovating and adapting collaborative skill shortage solutions. Such as; collaborating to 'share' skilled staff costs across hospital locations, design and pilot volunteer to certification training programs and piloting the recruitment of nurses internationally.

FOCUS AREAS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the consultation undertaken, analysing the challenges and opportunities and identifying the reoccurring themes, the project reference group agreed on four focus areas. These are:

- 1 Enhancing Collaboration between Industry, Education and Community**
- 2 Addressing Perception**
- 3 Addressing Skill Shortage**
- 4 Grow Our Own**

Each focus area has recommendations intended to support the region's future health sector workforce needs, address challenges, and leverage opportunities that are unique to this region. Identified are lead collaborators and stakeholders for each action, which could inform future working groups and lead the implementation of actions.



FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDUSTRY, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Increase collaboration between local health workforce key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

Local health and education providers extend and deepen current partnerships to have a greater impact on generating and strengthening the regional healthcare workforce.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

Audit existing and initiate new opportunities for workplace learning.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

Increase opportunities for Indigenous people to access and participate in health education and ongoing meaningful employment opportunities in health.

DEFINITION:

Organisations use existing resources and networks collaboratively to address the skills needed in the region even more effectively. COVID-19 has been a pressure test for health and education partners being able to work together to respond. The region's effective response to COVID-19 demonstrates the resilience and innovative thinking required to keep the workforce flow going and keep engagement active between industry sectors and the community.

BENEFITS:

Get more done with the same (existing) resources. The region is home to large world-class organisations; La Trobe University, Bendigo TAFE and Bendigo Health, but is small enough to have personal (networking) relationships.

GOAL:

Leverage existing health, education and community partnerships, with a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges and the shared goal to strengthen regional learning systems for the health sector, so that the region is better equipped to meet the current and future workforce needs.



RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Increase collaboration between local health workforce key stakeholders.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
1.1.1 Activate opportunities for career practitioners, teachers/educators and health providers to network and interact - i.e. annual symposium, regular networking events and industry tours	All partners, Bendigo Regional Careers Association & LLEN networks, La Trobe University Future students	Work differently, using existing resources
1.1.2 Create opportunities for young people and the health sector to demonstrate their commitment to growing a workforce - ready for work and readiness to take low entry level employees. i.e. Invite year 10 students to meet VET Allied Health students and find out about their career pathway into health	All partners, Bendigo Regional Careers Association & LLEN networks	Work differently, using existing resources
1.1.3 The region's education pathways into health unpacked and presented dynamically online	All partners, Bendigo Education Plan, Bendigo Regional Careers Association, CEOs of Health and Community Services in Loddon Mallee Region	Funding required
1.1.4 Establish a working group to enhance collaboration between sectors and advocate to government with the shared vision to 'grow our own workforce'	All partners, Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative	Work differently, using existing resources
1.1.5 Annual health careers' videos for social media campaigns and school career resources	All partners, LLEN, St John of God Hospital Bendigo, Bupa, Secondary schools and local government and business networks	Funding required
1.1.6 Industry tours for parents and students or 'taster sessions' for careers in health and health career events within the healthcare space throughout the region, linked with the health ambassador network - in person and virtually	All partners, LLEN, St John of God Hospital Bendigo, Bupa, Secondary schools and local government and business networks	Work differently, using existing resources

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

Local health and education providers extend and deepen current partnerships to have a greater impact on generating and strengthening the regional healthcare workforce.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
<p>1.2.1 Organisations to allocate a team member or members' time and space for partnerships' development and to gather knowledge and resources to enhance collaboration between health, education and community at all levels of the health education pathway</p>	<p>All partners</p>	<p>Higher education fund - Federal budget - partnership work between university, industry and school providers - HEPPP - more support for rural, aboriginal people into higher education \$7.1Mil - young people to choose health</p>
<p>1.2.2 Clear education pathways articulated for students and students transitioning to further study or a work place to enhance their core skills, cultural and inclusion awareness, and workforce readiness at each transition point of the health education and career pathway</p>	<p>All partners, St John of God Hospital Bendigo</p>	<p>Work differently, using existing resources</p>



RECOMMENDATION 1.3

Audit existing and initiate new opportunities for workplace learning.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
1.3.1 La Trobe Rural Health School clinical teaching facility, Bendigo TAFE Health and Community simulation facilities and Bendigo Tech School to be opened up to other schools and TAFE students as a work experience and placement option - 'tour model' including visits to health care campuses	All partners, Bendigo Regional Careers Association, Bendigo Tech School & LLEN networks	Work differently, using existing resources
1.3.2 TAFE and schools to expand networks for placements, Structured Workplace Learning and Work Experience to include private aged care providers.	Bendigo TAFE and all secondary schools, BUPA, Bendigo Education Plan, Pathways Manager, Department of Education, Loddon Campaspe Area	Work differently, using existing resources
1.3.3 Leverage from existing linkages that exist between La Trobe University, secondary students and secondary teachers	La Trobe School of Rural Health - Science Health and Engineering - School experiences - school partnership program - SHE Outreach - Career Practitioner Network	Work differently, using existing resources
1.3.4 Adopt learnings from achieving better doctor management in aged care sector collaboration lead by Murray PHN - with the aim to increase registered nurses into aged care	Bendigo Health, Murray PHN, Aged Care network/collaboration group	Work differently, using existing resources
1.3.5 Education providers to provide regular training to the hospital team who host placements sharing learning outcomes and core skill development for students on placement	All partners, St John of God Hospital Bendigo	Work differently, using existing resources
1.3.6 Resource volunteer rural health leadership positions that fast track into certification and further qualifications	Heathcote Health, Bendigo TAFE	Funding required

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

Increase opportunities for Indigenous people to access and participate in health education and ongoing meaningful employment opportunities in health.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
1.4.1 Engage Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative in Indigenous mentoring and leadership network/resource for Indigenous health work experience, placement, traineeship and employment	All partners, Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative	Funding required
1.4.2 Host indigenous health career events within the healthcare space	All partners, Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative, LLEN, Bendigo Regional Careers Association	Work differently, using existing resources



FOCUS AREA 2: ADDRESSING PERCEPTION

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

Actively generate a renewed perception of health careers linked to community value.

DEFINITION:

We heard that working in residential care and rural locations are perceived to be undesirable as compared to other career opportunities for health professionals. This negative perception of residential care as a chosen health career has further been exacerbated by the Royal Commission into Aged Care and COVID-19 media coverage.

BENEFITS:

If we change the perception, we believe the workforce will be ready. Evidence demonstrates a growing trend that young people in our region want to work in health.

GOALS:

Overcoming perceptions that some areas of the health sector are less desirable than others will attract more people to acquire skills in demand, now and into the future.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

Actively generate a renewed perception of health careers linked to community value.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
2.1.1 Media & social media campaign with case studies to promote the diversity of health career pathways to influencers, educators and industry	All partners	Funding required
2.1.2 Educate employees in health sector about the benefits of sharing their skills and knowledge to their future colleagues (students)	All partners	Work differently, using existing resources
2.1.3 Educate students and educators that the health sector has increased opportunities in residential aged care, community-based care, as well as opportunities in acute care	All partners	Funding required
2.1.4 Campaign targeting parents and students raising awareness of the multiple pathways into the healthcare sector in our region	All partners, LLEN network	Funding required
2.1.5 Increase current and future students' exposure to the healthcare industry through experiential learning opportunities	All partners	Funding required

FOCUS AREA 3: ADDRESSING SKILL SHORTAGE

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

Increase diversity in education offerings throughout the health sector career pathway.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Create and resource leadership programs for early career health professionals and final year students at stages of transition in the health education pathway.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3

Establish and pilot an early career-mentoring framework that can be duplicated across to other health care providers.

DEFINITION:

There are a number of complex factors that have resulted in skill shortages in both health and to a lesser extent education that are not unique to this region. Skill shortages are related to specific health services; skill shortages are due to changes in society and government policy; changes in technology and increased demand for low skill health sector workforce entry, due to uptake of opportunities like free TAFE.

BENEFITS:

If we understand the cause of skill shortages, education pathways and resources available (such as short and micro-courses) both short-term and medium-term responses can be designed and implemented to meet skill demand.

GOALS:

Understand and address the unique influencing factors that have created skill shortages and continue to activate education resources to meet skills required.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

Increase diversity in education offerings throughout the health sector career pathway.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
3.1.1 Educate and raise awareness of La Trobe University designing and delivering short cycle course or micro credentialing within the health sector and pathways to access	La Trobe University, TAFE and other education providers	Funding required
3.1.2 Design and offer courses in core skills responding to industry skill shortage	La Trobe University, TAFE and other education providers	Funding required
3.1.3 Design specific recruitment requirements for targeted skills required, such as core skills and work place readiness - link these skills to micro-courses and career pathways. Educate career advisors on these recruitment requirements	All partners	Funding required
3.1.4 Advance digital health and health management education presence in the region, and increase enrollment in the region from La Trobe University new course offerings	La Trobe University, TAFE and other education providers	Funding required

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
3.1.5 Work across TAFE and VET providers to grow a pool of health trainers available for the region. Offer training and leadership advancement opportunities	Bendigo TAFE, Senior secondary schools both public and private offering VET	Funding required
3.1.6 Collectively promote graduate opportunities within the region and explore linkages between health providers to capture a broader graduate experience for each graduate	Bendigo Health, St John of God Hospital Bendigo	Funding required
3.1.7 Utilise successful student screening process to select students who are committed and developing core skills to transition to the workplace	All partners	Work differently, using existing resources
3.1.8 Establish and maintain pathways for health education which include short cycle courses and micro-credentialing offerings for people within the existing workforce	La Trobe University, TAFE and other education providers	Funding required

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Create and resource leadership programs for early career health professionals and final year students at stages of transition in the health education pathway.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
3.2.1 Recruit health care professionals (>3years experience) and final year students into industry specific leadership programs with mentors and advisors, offered throughout the region	All partners	Funding required
3.2.2 Explore successful volunteer pathways into certification and low entry employment and how this process can be duplicated	All partners, Heathcote Health	Funding required

RECOMMENDATION 3.3

Establish and pilot an early career-mentoring framework that can be duplicated across to other health care providers.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
3.3.1 Mentor program for graduates - every graduate is linked to a mentor in an ongoing relationship throughout the graduate year linking the workplace and education setting	Bendigo Health, CEOs of Health and Community Services in Loddon Mallee Region, St John of God Hospital Bendigo	Funding required

FOCUS AREA 4: GROW OUR OWN

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

Attract, develop, support and retain local residents to create a sustainable health workforce - at all entry points into the industry, including existing employees across the sector.

DEFINITION:

Grow Our Own is a place-based workforce model that focuses on attracting, developing, supporting and retaining local people to create a sustainable pipeline of workers for the region's health industry.

BENEFITS:

La Trobe Rural Health alumni data demonstrates that people who train rurally and regionally stay in rural and regional communities.

GOALS:

The road map aims to attract and recruit local people into local education pathways and the workforce and support employees within the health and education industry to develop in-demand skills and progress up to the next level.

“Echuca Regional Health have partnered with Campaspe Cohuna LLEN to plan for the future and meet the growing demand for health professionals. We have hosted health career events that aimed to engage students in year 8 and rural disadvantaged students to consider pathways to health and meet local people working in health.”

Anne Tricky, Executive Officer Campaspe Cohuna LLEN

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

Attract, develop, support and retain local residents to create a sustainable health workforce - at all entry points into the industry, including existing employees across the sector.

Action	Recommended Collaborators	Policy change and/or Funding required and/or change in way of working with existing resources
4.1.1 Research and establish a pathway for entry level employment for Certificate III training	All partners	Advocate for VTAC guide Cert III to be a highly recommended prerequisite
4.1.2 Establish pathways for health organisations to establish traineeships, with a supportive entry platform and a secure pathway to a post-traineeship position	Bendigo Health, Head Start, Bendigo TAFE	Funding required
4.1.3 La Trobe University and TAFE to examine how students can navigate pathways in allied health, nursing and dentistry and design and deliver clear, articulated pathways	All partners	Funding required
4.1.4 Increase number of positions available for Indigenous people in clinical health and establish visible pathways to these employment opportunities	All partners, Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative, St John of God Hospital Bendigo, Weenthunga	Funding required
4.1.5 Existing health sector lower-level staff to have opportunity to attend information session and guided to be up skilled	All partners, St John of God Hospital Bendigo	Work differently, using existing resources
4.1.6 Inclusion and diversity approaches to be extended to people with a disability - mentoring organisations	All partners, St John of God Hospital Bendigo	Work differently, using existing resources

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