Briefing Report 3 Scenario Workshops

Skilling the Bay - Geelong Regional Labour Market Profile

Prepared by

George Cairns
Peter Fairbrother

With
Darryn Snell
Emily Toome

RMIT UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONS AND WORK

About this Briefing Report

This report has been developed by the Centre of Sustainable Organisations and Work (RMIT University) for the Gordon Institute of Technology (The Gordon). The aim of the report is to summarise the background and approach to, and the implementation and outcomes of a series of three Scenario Workshops held with key stakeholders in the Skilling the Bay project. The scenario stories and the workshop discussions are designed to prompt further debate amongst the diverse stakeholder constituency in support of coordinated action towards the most positive future outcomes for the region.

This briefing report has been prepared by:

Professor George Cairns
Head of School
Management
RMIT University
Phone: +61 3 9925 5602
Email: george.cairns@rmit.edu.au

Professor Peter Fairbrother
Director
Centre for Sustainable Organisations & Work
RMIT University
Phone: +61 3 9925 5105
Email: peter.fairbrother@rmit.edu.au

Scenarios developed with the assistance of:

Dr Darryn Snell
Senior Researcher
Centre for Sustainable Organisations & Work
RMIT University
Phone: +61 3 9925 1426
Email: darryn.snell@rmit.edu.au

Ms Emily Toome
Research Co-ordinator
Centre for Sustainable Organisations & Work
RMIT University
Phone: +61 3 9925 1682
Email: emily.toome@rmit.edu.au

Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work

Established in 2009, the Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work promotes theoretically informed analyses across a number of disciplines. Unified by common enquiries into **Work**, **Sustainability and Organisations**, and **Globalisation**, Centre staff develop highly relevant evidenced-based theories and applied analyses of the contemporary social world. The aim is to inform and promote effective policy, practice and debate. A distinctive feature of the Centre's work is its use of historical and comparative reference. Thus, the work of the Centre is focussed on developing an understanding of people in the context of significant social, economic and organisational change.

www.rmit.edu.au/bus/research/csow

Table of Contents

Background and Context

As stated in the specification, 'Skilling the Bay aims to assist Geelong transition to a more diverse economic base by facilitating the development and implementation of an education and training led model of business growth and job creation. Providing the current and future workforce with higher level skills will be central to ensuring the economy makes a successful transition.

To maximise the effectiveness of labour market policy and training provision at the local level it is critical to understand:
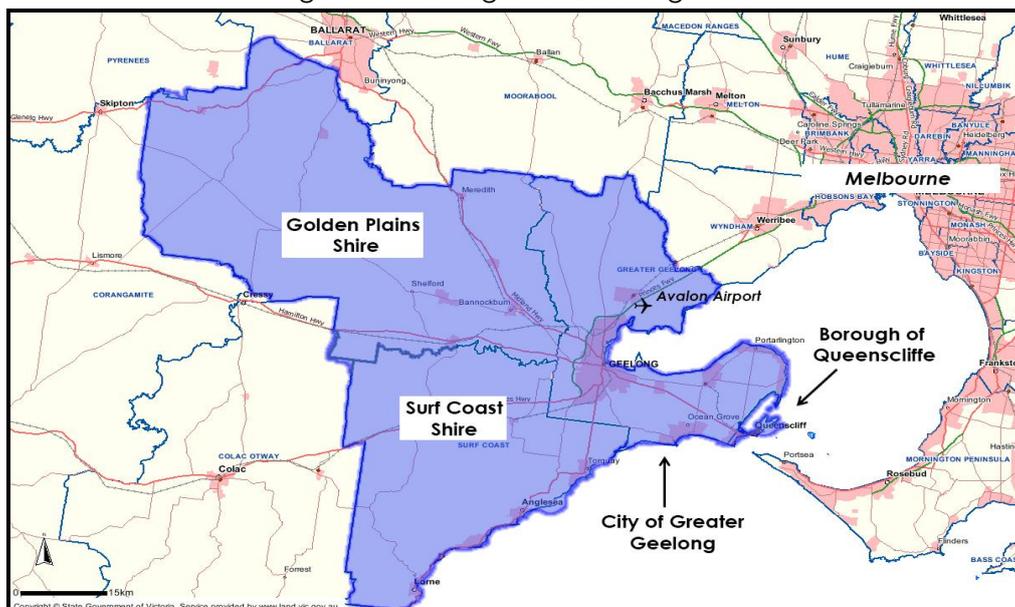
- The skills profile of the regional labour force; and
- Industry's skills needs, both now, and into the future.
- The regional labour market profile will inform development of a vision of the region's job profile in 5, 10 and 15 years and an action plan for achieving the vision'.

The Labour Market Profile carried out by RMIT University will assist such an understanding via an in depth, qualitative and quantitative exploration, utilising: data from the ABS 2011 Census; interviews and focus groups with employers, employees, government representatives, unions and other key stakeholders; international comparative case studies; and the scenario workshops discussed in this briefing report.

Geographic scope

The geographic scope of the Regional Geelong Area (RGA) is the four Local Government Authorities (LGAs) of the City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe, Surf Coast Shire and the Golden Plains Shire, as depicted below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Regional Geelong Area

Source: Land Channel, State Government of Victoria. The map has been modified to highlight the Regional Geelong Area

Scenario Workshops

As part of the 'Skilling the Bay: Geelong Regional Labour Market Profile', a series of scenario workshops were held in Geelong in February 2013, envisioning futures for the region in ten years' time. These workshops engaged a range of stakeholders from key sectors: health care and social assistance, manufacturing, education, and local government. The workshops enabled stakeholders in the Regional Geelong Area to consider 'extreme futures' and to identify and discuss key issues that are seen as central to future planning and policy making.

Objectives

Utilising 'extreme scenarios', these workshops aimed to open up discussion about industry futures and the identification of investment and job opportunities, as well as enable an understanding of skills profiles and strategies to deal with skills surfeits, deficits and up-skilling. Such an analysis intends to provide a focused understanding of skills issues, as they emerge and from different actors' perspectives, allowing stakeholders to identify potential ways forward for the region.

Rationale

The use of the scenario method represents a particular way of thinking. It is 'a mode of inquiry and analysis that enhances knowledge and understanding in order to inform and support planning' (Wright and Cairns, 2011: 14). Scenario method is ideally suited for exploration for issues that, as here, are of central interest to the participants, but are subject to considerable uncertainty as to how they might unfold over the coming months and years. The scenario workshops in this project were designed to facilitate 'strategic conversation' (Van der Heijden, 1996) amongst groups of involved and affected stakeholders on the possible and plausible futures that may unfold over a particular timeframe. In the case of this project, the timeframe given was the period to the year 2023. Workshop participants were asked to consider a focal issue of mutual concern: the future of the Regional Geelong Area in light of the transitions occurring within the regional workforce, in particular the declines in manufacturing sector employment and growth in health care and community services. The possibilities were captured in a number of medium-term scenarios that were designed to push the thinking of participants to the extremes of possibility and plausibility.

There is considerable variety in the types of scenarios that can be used in such an exercise, as well as in the methods for constructing them. These range from long-term global scenarios prepared by futurists to short- to medium-term local scenarios prepared by involved parties, most often with external facilitation. The 'basic method' (Wright and Cairns, 2011) of scenario development enables involved and affected stakeholders – with or without external facilitation – to work together to develop a set of four scenarios that, taken together, define the 'limits of possibility and plausibility' for how the future is likely to unfold. For a longer-term project with options for multiple iterations of scenario development and for research and analysis between iterations, a more complex scenario method would be more appropriate. Due to time and place constraints, an alternative

method was used in this project. Here, the scenario approach is based upon the 'backward logic' (Wright and Cairns, 2011) method of constructing extreme scenarios. This approach invites the involved and affected stakeholders to respond to one or two, 'extreme scenarios' – outlined by the external facilitator – in terms of a critical analysis of their degrees of possibility and plausibility in order to address the above aims.

This approach aimed to explore the likely impacts of the scenarios on the region's society and economy, and to stimulate debate on the current and possibly future policy and planning decisions. These scenarios were offered as contemplations of extremes of possibility and plausibility, to prompt discussion and exploration of:

- What might cause the worst extreme direction to unfold?
- Who would take what decisions that might accelerate this trajectory?
- What decisions and actions can be taken and what policies implemented in order to attenuate this development?
- What decisions and actions can be taken and what policies implemented in order to guide the future towards the best extreme?

Methodology

The scenario outlines were developed initially through engagement with the first two Briefing Papers for the 'Skilling the Bay – Geelong Regional Labour Market Profile' project. These Briefing Papers allowed the development of scenarios for the future that were thoroughly grounded in the current context. From this literature and discussions between the researchers, two 'extreme scenarios' were drafted and were then read out as introductions to the first two Scenario Workshops. Specific details of the scenarios presented to participants in these workshops can be found in Appendix 1.

In introducing the scenarios – one positive and one negative, both viewed from the perspective of the year 2023 – it was highlighted that these are not predictions of any future that is seen as 'probable' or 'likely'. They were, however, presented as options that are both possible and plausible. In the first two scenario workshops, these were presented as provocations, deliberately intended to excite responses that challenged them – whether in terms of them being too extreme and beyond the bounds of plausibility, or being all too possible and believable. Discussion in the workshops was directed at and facilitated to elicit understanding of the chains of chronology and causality that underpinned them or might cause them to be challenged.

Based upon the conversations of Scenario Workshop 1, minor refinement was added to the scenario storylines in preparation for Scenario Workshop 2, where similar process and ground rules were implemented. From Workshops 1 and 2, the foundation material was further refined and added to in order to further refine the scenarios as presented in the third and final Scenario Workshop. A summary of the first two workshops was presented to participants at the third and final workshop, along with a third scenario that captured their most ambitious projections for the region.

This final workshop enabled participants to reflect on the findings from the scenario workshop process, and to provide feedback and further suggestions. Participants identified those factors that they deemed open to influence and direction through intervention by Local, State and Federal stakeholders, and pointed to relevant policy implications for positive action. They also identified those factors that are not open to such direction, and pointed to policy implications for mitigation of and adaptation to negative outcomes. Thus, the workshops offer a new perspective on how key stakeholders see opportunities and constraints unfolding in the Regional Geelong Area in the next decade.

All scenario workshops were recorded at the consent of participants and later transcribed.

Ground rules and workshop approach

In the workshop process, participants were required to adhere to a set of 'ground rules' that are applied within all scenario workshops. These are that:

- All participants are allowed air time to speak and to present their information, views and opinions,
- No contribution can be challenged by simple dismissive statements – 'You're wrong!', 'That's nonsense', etc.,
- Only questions of exploration and clarification can be asked – 'Why do you think that...?', 'Who would do...?', 'How would this...?', 'When might this...?', and 'Where do you think that...?',
- On the basis of 'democratic strategic conversation' elicited by these questions, multiple understandings of 'reality' are invited,
- No account of these realities can be removed from the table and the discussion unless all participants agree that it cannot be explained in response to the questions.

The debate on chains of causality was set within consideration of the full range of 'driving forces' – political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal (PESTEL) factors – that might enable or inhibit certain actions. It also took account of the full range of stakeholders. Stakeholders were to be considered under categories of:

- Players – Those that both hold power to influence and issue and that have an interest in the issue (under the scenario conditions being discussed),
- Context Setters – Those that have power but who, at the point in time, have little or no interest in the issue (Consider: does the Prime Minister think of Geelong's future on a day when the US President has just called about a major security issue?)
- Subjects – Those who have a very strong interest in the issue, but who lack power to impact its outcome (Note: it is very easy to think of subjects as players when emotion overrides rationality)

These categories are obviously dynamic, as context setters are spurred to action as players if they do not like what is happening, and where subjects seek to become players, perhaps by forming political alliances with disgruntled context setters.

Summary of Participants

The total number of participants in the three scenario workshops can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of Scenario Workshops

Scenario Workshop 1	*Scenario Workshop 2*	*Scenario Workshop 3*
Participants: 15	Participants: 11	Participants: 12
11 February 2013	12 February 2013	26 February 2013
The Gordon 2 Fenwick St Geelong	The Gordon 2 Fenwick St Geelong	The Gordon 2 Fenwick St Geelong

Participants' backgrounds are detailed below in Table 2, demonstrating a cross section of stakeholders. Participants who attended more than one workshop have only been counted once.

Table 2: Summary of interview and workshop participants

Position	*Sector*	*Number of attendees*
Industry and Company Representatives	Manufacturing	2
	Health Care & Community Services	3
	Education & Training	10
	Other	2
Government Representatives		7
Union Representatives		2
	Total	26

Analysis

Issues Arising, Overarching Themes and Possibilities for Action

As outlined above, this section summarizes the key issues that were raised by participants in response to the scenarios, and groups these under emergent themes identified by the researchers through 'content analysis'. It also records suggested courses of action offered by participants and points to areas where the researchers consider that further action – whether research, analysis or direct action – is required but in this instance was not elicited by the participant stakeholders.

The overarching themes under which issues are recorded are as follows:

1. *Post-manufacturing futures* – traditional and/or new industry bases
2. *Education futures* – from primary school to higher education and industry training
3. *Social fragmentation* – family, community and society
4. *Accessibility* – physical, social, economic and institutional
5. *Decision making* – joined up or fragmented
6. *Political will* – or lack thereof
7. *Mindset of the Region* – 'can do' or 'whatever'
8. *Narratives of Geelong* – diversity as richness or weakness

Within each of these themes, the following key issues and responses – where offered – were noted. Where appropriate, comments are added based upon the research team's interpretation of the issues, in order to stimulate further thought and discussion amongst the stakeholders.

1. Post-manufacturing futures

   a. Major manufacturers such as Ford and Alcoa employ a relative small and declining proportion of the population. They do, nonetheless, support substantial economic activity in related and dependent businesses, either directly or indirectly by generating spending power
   b. It was recognized, however, that it is unlikely that these major multinational firms will be the key players in generating and maintaining future employment
   c. New industry clusters have emerged recently in the carbon fibre and biotechnology areas, linked to Deakin University's growing research capability in the region
   d. It was acknowledged that another key driver for the emergence of the new carbon fibre cluster is the presence of Boeing Australia – a key user of carbon fibre – and a partnership with Boeing and NASA "at a top global standard"
   e. Examples of possible growth of emergent industry clusters through linking to existing major organizations were outlined in the scenarios – carbon fibre production drawing upon Alcoa's electricity network and an aviation cluster building on Avalon Airport and existing industries. Further opportunities of this

type should be pursued proactively – identifying existing large companies as possible seedbeds, incubators or hosts to emergent businesses, rather than either subsidizing them to continue outmoded production or letting them fall over and die

f. There appears little research on and knowledge of how clusters have developed through various stages in other parts of the world in order to inform regional planning and there was a question as to the extent to which local supply chains are protected or can flow offshore

g. There was also some concern that Deakin University and CSIRO might look to 'cherry pick' research clusters with no relevance to the local context, operating in isolation of local needs and resources

h. An emerging methodology was identified for established small and medium enterprises, where a number of enterprises could establish a proto-cluster to secure research and development capacities and bid for support, for example an engineering cluster seeking state support

i. It was stated that the region does not have an 'export mindset', having become too much dependent upon major manufacturers for the Australian market. It was suggested that there is a key need to foster a new mindset that explores opportunities in the export field

j. With government providing only limited seed funding for new business and these being by and large 'idea rich/cash poor', it was questioned who is going to provide the environment and support for new venture creation. It was proposed that earlier initiatives, while having some success, had been too dependent on government funding and support

k. With over 7 million visitors per year travelling the Great Ocean Road, there is opportunity and potential for growth in service and hospitality sector employment in the region. However, the opening of the ring road saw a 30% hit on local shops, so the issue of tourists bypassing Geelong requires to be addressed

l. In relation to tourist traffic, the entry to Geelong from the north through and past the industrial sectors does not offer the most attractive approach

m. The education sector was seen as a key to the future, in relation to training and education. Concern was expressed about an absence of cooperation between some providers, although examples were given of links between some schools and Deakin University, between the university and the Gordon Institute and the development of VET courses in schools

2. *Education futures*

a. As outlined in other themes, issues of integration and fragmentation of educational provisions and access recurred across the discussion and are key to unlocking positive futures

b. Attracting students into higher education for an effective outcome can be seen in the discussion as being linked back to attracting both local and international students and to providing graduates with relevant skills and capabilities to meet industry needs (Here, the term 'industry' is used to describe all employer sectors:

public, private, not-for-profit, self-employed, etc. However, use of the term in this way was contested in particular by the health sector participants, speaking on behalf of constituents who would not recognize their sector as an industry)

c. Attracting local students will be dependent not just on the types of early interventions outlined under theme 3, below, but will also be reliant upon consideration of unaffordable provision, as in 4d.

d. Within the scenarios, the notion of an educational sector that remained tied to providing programs that were no longer relevant to the needs of students and employers was presented and was not challenged. Rather, it was accepted as being very much evident in the present

e. It was acknowledged that major change to the higher education provision and the nature of Deakin University in the region had been seen in the last few years. This was attributed to the current Vice Chancellor on several occasions. Questions from the research team on whether or not these changes had been embedded within the community to an extent to which they were irreversible did not elicit certainty that this was the case

f. In discussion of the current growth of online education and workplace focused learning, it was suggested that there is currently a lack of suitable provision of either within the region. However, it was pointed out that gaining the qualification attached to major online providers – primarily US-based – would involve very substantial fees, whereas Australian education is available at more affordable levels – which sparked further discussion on the issue of affordability and access

g. From these issues, it can be argued that a key action point for the leaders in the region is to develop an integrated strategic approach to a 'whole of region, whole of community, whole of life' education program

3. *Social fragmentation*

a. A major issue for the region was identified as low achievement and social disadvantage as accepted social norms from an early age

b. Many families provide evidence of intergenerational unemployment where parents and grandparents have been without work for many years and lead to primary-age children expressing the notion of 'why bother'

c. A key initiative proposed in discussion was to move to promote education for 'what is possible', seeking to break down long-established reference points of: 'what boys do', 'what girls do', and the resultant 'what I *can't* do' attitude

d. The challenge was expressed in terms of how do you proactively set aspirations for an 8-year old whilst dealing reactively with a 30-year old with no future

e. Proposals were mooted for bringing information on future employment opportunities into the primary school classroom, to point to roadmaps through secondary and tertiary education and relevant industry training towards specific goals

f. Early intervention in the primary school classroom in a way that involves the whole community – educationalists and employers from all sectors and family

members from all generations – through a process of "long and deep engagement" was discussed and supported across Workshops

g. One aspect of social fragmentation relates to the incoming population – whether this consists of those coming for personal retirement lifestyle choices or to bring innovation and growth, or whether Geelong is simply "managing Melbourne's population growth". The answer(s) will have a major impact on how new populations do or do not integrate with the existing populace

h. A further dimension of social fragmentation is in relation to in-comers. It was noted that the educational strategy by the University and to a limited extent the TAFE is to encourage international students to study in the region. Of course, there is a long standing tradition of such education at the independent primary and secondary schools in the region. Even so it was noted that international students are not always welcomed by some residents in the locality

4. *Accessibility*

a. Sections of the community are currently deprived of access to facilities and services

b. There is a lack of public transport within the region to link Geelong to its hinterland on a regular basis and to enable travel by those without private cars to facilities such as Deakin University's Waurn Ponds campus.

c. There appears to be unevenness in public transport provision within the City of Geelong. Mention was made of reports that noted that public transport provision was poor. It was noted that the public transport provision had not followed the changing socio-demographics of the region. This factor is a particular problem in relation to education and training

d. A focus on development of new high-tech industries, such as in the carbon fibre sector, risks excluding access to opportunity to those without the necessary skills and educational support

e. It was stated that institutional frameworks that are intended to provide support and access to resources for small and medium enterprises often operate in a counter-productive mode, whereby their processes and procedures act as impediments rather than enablers. One example was provided about the difficulty that many small and medium enterprises have in relation to accessing and using training programs.

f. Geelong based small and medium enterprises were not always considered when incoming and expanding new enterprises (carbon fibre) developed expansion plans

g. Costs associated with education programs have risen dramatically in recent years whereby, for example, a hairdressing course that used to cost around $600 now costs the student around $8000

h. The ageing population was mentioned and it was noted that many training and educational courses are not attracting the older population

i. Discussion in the groups indicates that access to the discourse on regional futures is not consistently open and encouraging and that there are degrees of exclusion and protectionism in relation to physical and institutional boundaries

j.   A view was expressed that the development of a teaching hospital at Waurn Ponds based upon a private hospital model will increase competition for limited medical staff resources in the Barwon Health region, whilst not providing access to healthcare for the majority of residents in the immediate area

k.   Whilst Geelong was discussed in relation to Melbourne – as neighbour, commuting centre, overflow growth area, etc. – the question was raised, but left unanswered, as to how Geelong relates to its regional hinterland

5. *Decision making*

a.   There was a lack of clarity and coherence around the issue of who has the community and social license to speak for Geelong in outside arenas

b.   Whilst a number of forums exist to support innovation and development in the region, there appears to be a lack of consensus and clarity around how – and if – they interrelate to each other and operate in an integrated manner

c.   In Workshop One, there was discussion of how different Ministerial officers come to the region to represent different interests and promote different ideas when, from the regional perspective the issues seemed to be one and the same

d.   Examples were discussed in which it was argued that key investment decisions were being pushed on the basis of vested interests – the example of a construction training facility – without reference to industry and community needs

e.   In the final Workshop, there was specific reference to and apparent agreement that Northern Futures operates as a silo that does some good work, but that is in competition with others in the region for resources, rather than being a collaborative partner with them.

6. *Political will*

a.   A key question is whether to let failing industries fall over, moving funding to support emergent businesses and employment potential rather than propping up existing jobs in an unsustainable way. The answer will be provided by political will, one way or the other

b.   Whilst it is acknowledged that there are key players who are intent on 'making things happen', they were viewed as having limited institutional support to overcome red tape and related blockages

c.   The short life cycle of government in the Australian context was recognized as an obstacle to consistent political commitment and direction. Also, the lack of alignment of State and Federal election cycles adds further uncertainty

d.   However, the frequency of the cycles also means that the 'Corangamite card' (i.e. marginal seats) can be played more often. That said, it must be questioned as to whether or not this is a sustainable political strategy, with potentially ever-changing priorities at national levels and changing demographics at the local level. In response to this question, one participant responded, "The time is now!" (the title adopted for Scenario Three)

7. *Mindset of the Region*

   a. Whilst relative newcomers to the region from amongst the participant group expressed very positive views, these were not apparent from those who have been in the region for more than a few years. As one newcomer stated, "We have a fabulous place and we don't do enough with it."

   b. It was, however, agreed that people in Geelong are pretty good at "keeping the wheels moving" and this should be harnessed to foster a more positive attitude

   c. There are mixed opinions on whether Geelong is an urban or a regional centre, with views that it is thereby neither

   d. It was acknowledged that there is a degree of parochialism in the local psyche. This could be a positive force where it is tied to pride in and support for the region, but it is seen as being more evidenced in 'turf wars' in which groups protect their own interests against others

   e. It was reported that there are youngsters in the community who have no interest in seeking employment, on the basis that any job will pay less than dealing drugs or engaging in burglary

   f. Within the first two Workshop conversations, there was an evident 'elephant in the room', with oblique references to an emerging racist undercurrent based upon resentment towards international students at Deakin University and migrant workers being brought in by less scrupulous employers. When this concept was made explicit in Scenario Three, there was no disagreement from the participants

   g. From Workshop Three, there was a proposal that a new mindset was needed; one that saw the benefits of both a top-down interventionist and directive approach to dealing with issues based upon macro-environment factors and a bottom-up nurturing approach based upon recognizing local needs and fostering local capabilities

   h. There was agreement in Workshop Three of the need to work at early school level locally and in the international arena to showcase Geelong as an educational hub, to teach youngsters at an early age to 'expect jobs, expect to work' – to change one of the negative narratives of Geelong

   i. Stakeholders of the region must recognize that there "is no silver bullet" and that they must work together to build expectations that are strategic, both broad and deep in their engagement, and based on research on the future job market and demand

8. *Narratives of and for Geelong*

   a. The overview of key themes and related issues that emerged in the Workshop discussions indicates that there are many narratives of Geelong within the local stakeholder community

b. In addition, we have presented three very different narratives of Geelong – through three varied scenarios – each of which was accepted as both possible and plausible

c. Some of the narratives are indicative of the fragmentation that was spoken of explicitly in various fields – within families, access to employment, educational achievement, between areas of development provision and need. Others, however, demonstrate the richness and diversity of the population, culture and capabilities of the region

d. The view was expressed that there is a need to develop a new narrative of Geelong. The challenge is to ensure that it is one that is coherent and focused where necessary to enable and support success, yet is also diverse and varied where essential to foster individual, community and business creativity, innovation, flexibility and resilience

References

Wright, G. and Cairns, G. (2011), *Scenario Thinking: Practical approaches to the future*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.

Van der Heijden, K. (1996), *Scenarios: The art of strategic conversation*. Basingstoke, Wiley.

Appendices

Scenario Workshops 1 and 2 – Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 February 2013

The following two Scenarios, 1 and 2, were read to the participants of Workshops 1 and 2 at the outset in their first iteration form, in order to inform and provoke the discussion. The first question asked after the reading was, "Are these stories possible and plausible?" The answer to both scenarios and in both Workshops was "Yes". The final versions of the scenarios, below, includes only minor adjustments to the first iterations.

Scenario One – Geelong and Its Environs: A Place for Every Generation

Six years on from the global financial crisis (GFC), in 2014 the world's financial markets had returned to a state of stability and general confidence. In Victoria, this had a particular impact in bringing a return of healthy growth in superannuation that prompted increasing levels of retirement in the late 2010s by those with sufficient capital and super. The Geelong region, and south to the Bellarine and the Great Ocean Road, saw a disproportionately large increase in the retired population in the second half of the decade, with demand for recreation, leisure, health and lifestyle amenities to suit the specific age demographic. Some of this demand was driven by those with health and wealth, seeking to maximise their retirement pleasure. However, some was driven by those needing specialised healthcare, but with limited funds beyond what was needed for day-to-day basic comforts.

Earlier in the decade, job growth was steady through 2013-5, but the local training sector was not then positioned appropriately to service the demand for new skills, resulting in local workers being trained for jobs that were no longer available. Employers looked to recruit workers from outside the region to meet their needs, with a resultant growth in the younger population with children, but linked to a decline in the post-Year 12 education sector.

Foreign investors took advantage of the growing research and development opportunities related to carbon fibres in the early 2010s, and this grew to embrace the growth in global demand for new uses for natural fibres such as jute in composite materials, as these replaced petro-chemicals in many applications. Initially, growth was based upon a small cluster of innovative businesses using imported materials sourced from Boeing, and focussing on niche market products.

In 2015, a commercial large-scale factory producing carbon fibre threads opened up near the Alcoa site, taking up under-utilized electricity supply to the site. The company,

who employed some 600 skilled and semiskilled workers by 2018, had early reservations about making the investment due to concerns about suitable human resources within the region. In the local community, there was also some concern that ownership and much of the value chain of the operation was located offshore. It was recognised, from experience, that such operations were fragile and transferable.

This was shown in 2016 when, with a world market for aluminium that had remained highly competitive and over-provided, Alcoa decided to sell the smelter. However, it managed to secure a buyer who was interested in upgrading part of the facility, but with a downsized workforce. Even then, there was some concern from the company that local skills available were in short supply and might constrain their business plans. Their business case was based upon explicit agreements with Alcoa and Government that enabled them to employ migrant skilled labour. The questions raised about the capacity of local training providers to respond to new market demands relatively quickly became crucial in light of these developments.   There was now a very clear perception that the training providers were slow and inflexible and, also, that young workers were no longer interested in taking up jobs in 'dirty' industries where career prospects were questionable.

In late 2016, in response to these pressures and encouraged by State and Federal Governments, both Labor at this time, the local education sector engaged in dramatic renewal and courses were redesigned in order to address the specific needs of the new industries. This included both direct training of suitable employees with technical skills for business within TAFE, nurturing of 'soft' skills in the University, and the fostering of relevant research that brought industry and education together in 5th generation business clusters.

In the four years to 2017, there had been concerted effort by various bodies, led by Enterprise Geelong from its inception in 2013, to address the key issue of poor levels of achievement in schools. A two-pronged approach directed the 'thirty-somethings' with family backgrounds of inter-generational unemployment into training, whilst their own children were targeted by a new 'be all you can be' approach to early development.

By 2016 the region was fully connected to the National Broadband Network and new, small-to-medium service operations were being established to take advantage of local and global connectivity. Also, the decision in 2014 to finally confirm Avalon International Airport with its direct rail links to Melbourne and Geelong was beginning to bear fruit with increased direct flights supporting both industry and tourism. The tourism sector was well served by the new training regime, in which local lobbying had been successful in bringing recognition of specific local needs within national and State policy frameworks.

The research focus on materials technology at Deakin University, linked to the new manufacturing facility for sustainable and lightweight composites found a key customer in Ford. Having struggled through the period to 2014, the car maker had re-established itself in the emerging market for 'green' cars, using a combination of global platforms and supply chains to feed into assembly of a new breed of models with local design and manufacturing input to meet Australian market needs. Deakin University itself was by then established as a key player in the local education and innovation sector through its

innovative active learning programs, whilst operating within a global network of providers of high quality online core knowledge.

Early in the 2010s, the State Government supported V/Line's decision to increase the number of services along Melbourne-Marshal line. From late 2013, services operated every 20 minutes at peak times. As a result, a growing number of Geelong workers commuted to Melbourne for work and entertainment, but with the new industrial developments and a resurgent education sector, there was an increased trend for Melbourne-based workers commuting to Geelong for work and, to avoid peak travel, to use the facilities of the lively city centre, easily accessible to and from the railway station.

After years of deliberation and uncertainty, the Government finally endorsed plans for Corio Bay as Melbourne's second port in 2014, killing off Port of Hastings' aspirations and providing vital infrastructure funding and key policy support for private sector investment. Over the period to 2018, the initial water and land-based works enable the first shipments in and out of the new vehicle carrier terminal. By 2022, the vehicle trans-shipment trade had fully transferred to the Bay, with a 100% increase in trade levels from 2012.

In 2023, we see Geelong and its surroundings as a district that offers secure and sustainable employment in new and regenerated industries and in a renewed education sector that embraces schools, TAFE and Deakin University. The city centre is vibrant and caters for all generations, with retail, entertainment and tourist attractions. The new port is busy. The only downside is that the quality of the water and the air is noted to be poor, particularly on the now regular very hot days, due to the level of industrial activity and port traffic. But, the majority of residents see this as a fair trade off for prosperity.

Scenario Two – Geelong and Environs: A Place in Transition and a Transitory Population

During the period to 2015, the region saw a dramatic change in demographic, as a result of numerous factors, as follows, but characterised by an aging population and an outward flow of younger people. As the population aged, government cuts, watering down of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and restructuring to the health care industry; following the example of New Zealand in the early 2010s; led both to drastically reduced provision for the aging population and, also, to declining job opportunities in what had been the region's most important service sector in the first decade of the century.

Globally, the fall-out from the GFC ran on through the 2010s, with initial signs of growth in the US economy faltering as the country finally fell off the 'fiscal cliff', China's growth bubble bursting, and Japan's focus on self-preservation precipitating currency war, at the same time as these two countries narrowly avoided real war, but with negative consequences for global confidence and cooperation.

Against this global backdrop, Ford and Alcoa's markets collapsed, government finally decided that enough was enough and refused to provide the requested billions of dollars of support and both closed down their Australian operations virtually overnight. From these major players to small local contractors, the ongoing job loss from the manufacturing sector led to growing disadvantage and unemployment which became very evident on the streets of the CBD around 2014, particularly to tourists who ventured off the ring road on their way to the Great Ocean Road and Bellarine, itself in any case a pretty depressed area of aged residents. To compound matters, continuing uncertainty and volatility in markets had led the Government cancel plans for a second port for Melbourne in 2014, after years of delay and debate about its location. The existing port facilities were then sweated to the limit, with no benefit to the Geelong region.

At the same time, the problems of poor school attainment and inter-generational unemployment grew worse and the failure of Enterprise Geelong to live up to expectations as a new champion of 'joined up government' meant that efforts to address core problems remained fragmented and, to many, appeared as mere sticking plaster on gaping wounds. With increased competition for limited resources, there was a lack of communication, trust, cooperation and coordination between public and private interests across a range of industries, resulting in considerable waste, confusion and failure to resolve major workforce and skill development challenges and to engage in cooperative strategic planning.

The overall situation presented a major challenge for the region's tourism industry, its higher education sector, for downtown retailers and the hospitality industry, as well as for the real estate market. The city centre resembled a third world country in many respects, but this was dwarfed by the suburbs in which street after street of boarded up and burnt out abandoned houses were to be seen.

In what had appeared a positive step, in late 2013 the State Government had supported V/Line's decision to increase the number of services along the Melbourne-Marshal line to operate at every 30 minutes. However, this led to a growing number of Geelong residents seeking employment in Melbourne, but did not encourage any reciprocal travel into the depressed area.

In the early 2010s, there were continuing cuts to TAFE training and increased competition with private RTOs meant TAFE, group training and private training competed on price for a shrinking body of students. With cost the major driver, employers began to question the quality of training being delivered as 'qualified' workers appeared unable to perform basic tasks. Higher education also struggled with cuts to Federal Government funding, decreased international student enrolments, and local students selecting to study online courses from major US universities and the G8 rather than at regional campuses. Employers gave these certificates much higher credence when based upon industry needs and practices.

In depressed regional, national and global markets that were well connected by technology, potential investors were concerned and other parts of the country and of the

world were perceived as performing much better in skills development and offering investment opportunities. Where there had been optimism in 2013 that the emergent carbon fibre materials development cluster, and existing nascent bio-tech and food clusters, would grow and develop, the continued fragmentation and the weaknesses in the education sector meant that they were not 'nourished' and they variously withered or migrated elsewhere.

In 2023, we see Geelong and its surroundings as a region of dereliction and continuing decline. An aging population is largely without key health care facilities, whilst the young who have skills and determination to succeed in a very difficult world have largely left – most on a permanent basis, and some on a daily commuting basis, kept only by the low cost of housing and ease of transport to Melbourne. The major industries that gave the region is employment and wealth, and that sponsored its major sports team, have long gone and even the famous Geelong Cats are now a mere shadow of their former selves.

Scenario Workshop 3 - Tuesday 26 February 2013

Following Workshops 1 and 2, the first two scenarios were incorporated into a draft report that was circulated to participants prior to Workshop 3, at which the following Scenario 3 was read at the outset, again to prompt discussion.

Scenario Three – Geelong and Environs: 'The Time is Now! Ten Years On'

The headline above, from the Geelong Advertiser of 26 February 2023, introduces current Mayor of Geelong, Ms Saengdao Suttikul's look back over the last decade, and to the key event of 2013 that was a catalyst for change – then-Mayor, Cr Keith Fagg's official launch of Enterprise Geelong.

At the start of 2013, in outlining his initiative, Cr Fagg was quoted in the Geelong Independent of 11 January as "looking for commercially-savvy people and (stating that) the process to find them is part of the structure that will go to council. There's nothing about individuals yet but my intention is that the board will be skills-based." (http://www.starnewsgroup.com.au/indy/geelong/322/story/156862.html)

Many wondered exactly what 'skills bases' would be sought that current or previous initiatives had not embraced, and how these would – or would not – be integrated with this new initiative.

Between this initial vision and the official launch, there had been some fairly negative reports of Geelong's situation. The Geelong Advertiser of 19 February in the same year reported on a forum at Geelong West Town Hall, where a leading economist had stated that, "The mining boom is transforming Australia. While it is creating some jobs in mining

centres, the high dollar and the drain of skilled labour from other industries is devastating big employers like tourism, agriculture and manufacturing... For cities like Geelong, that means the mining boom delivers a lot more pain than gain." (http://www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/article/2013/02/19/359500_news.html).

There was, at that time, great uncertainty about the future of Geelong's major industrial employers, including Ford, Alcoa and Shell. Ford and Alcoa in particular were seen to be very exposed both to poor global trading conditions and to the high Aussie Dollar. Whilst there was some ground for optimism in the emerging fields of materials technology, particularly carbon fibres, and bio-medical technologies, the region was tarred with a reputation for high levels of intergenerational unemployment, low aspiration and a culture in which some youngsters questioned why they would take a lowly paid job in the service sector when they could make more from selling drugs or from burglary.

Whilst the region had seen many initiatives to address issues of poor educational attainment and family dysfunction, and to foster new industries for the information and digital age, these had had limited impact and success. Also, there was concern about an emerging undercurrent of racism as old employment disappeared and international students appeared more numerous and more affluent than the established community. There was a feeling that initiatives happened in isolation of each other, addressing single issues rather than the region in an holistic manner. Some likened these to sticking plasters on each wound as it appeared, but never dealing with the root causes.

It was in the face of these mixed signals that Cr Fagg officially launched Enterprise Geelong in mid-2013. Rather than offering a fanfare of grand aspirations, the somewhat low-key event outlined what appeared to many, on the surface, a bland set of initiatives. However, while some saw not much to celebrate here, others saw a clear vision of a future. They recognised the required cultural shift for the various governmental agencies, educational providers and involved industry partners.

The key focus of Enterprise Geelong was on fostering a transparent, collaborative culture that embraced all stakeholders in strategic action to address issues on the ground, and in the State and Federal parliaments. This was to be done, not from the inward-focused 'this is what we do' perspective that had prevailed until then but, very clearly from an outward-focused 'this is what our citizens and our businesses need' perspective. Here, 'the family' would be treated as a cohesive unit, and agencies would respond proactively to 'family needs', not with reactive service provisions. Also, small business would find a welcoming single point of access to supportive and encouraging entrepreneurial services, rather than multiple barriers of red tape and bureaucracy.

One of the first visible signs of the new approach was the launch of an integrated 'user-focused' agency – but not in the traditional sense of the word – to address issues of the 'fragmented family'. This brought together employers, educators, healthcare sectors, welfare groups, etc. to develop a number of models for family support. These addressed, holistically, early development needs, through teenage maturity and rebellion, parent

(and grandparent) re-integration into society, seeing these live stages as intertwined – moving from a 'why bother' to a 'what's possible' culture.

Whilst developing these initiatives was a key step, giving them visibility and making them accessible was crucial. The new groups saw that the Victoria Government web site (http://www.vic.gov.au/) was not hugely informative, particularly on Geelong, but realized that there was NO web portal for Geelong itself! How had this slipped through? With a lead from City of Geelong Council, a user-friendly web portal was quickly set up, following the long-established South Australia model (http://www.sa.gov.au/) – here, over a decade earlier, a joined up exterior had, like most such portals, been set in front of existing service 'silos', but with individual leaders committed to joined up action.

This portal linked government and non-governmental services with leisure, recreation and broad information. New and existing residents and businesses now had a 'one-stop shop' window to regional services, events and lifestyle information.

How were these various initiatives funded? The Council and other key players made the most of the region's location on the edge of, but central to the marginal constituency of Corangamite. Whilst the region had played the 'Corangamite card' often, here it was sweated to the maximum to gain investment support for these initiatives in the long and bitter run up to the 2013 Federal election, with its bizarre outcome.

This time was also used successfully to advocate for full electrification of the Marshall-Melbourne rail line, with V/Line being partially privatised in order to bring in the necessary capital in return for a new private sector management structure. By late 2016, the new line linked Geelong to Melbourne via Avalon International Airport every 20 minutes.

The Airport was further strengthened in 2017 when Marand secured a defense contract which required them to increase production of components for fighter jets 5-fold. This resulted in substantial job growth in an emerging military-industrial complex centred on Geelong that required highly specialised aviation engineering skills. This defense aviation 'cluster' led to development of a commercial/defense arm for testing military aviation equipment at the Airport. In the second half of the decade, several other clusters emerged drawing on Deakin University research to seed new small business initiatives in the social enterprise and sustainability areas, addressing local issues to meet local needs and providing local opportunity.

Finally, how can we forget the role of the Geelong Cats? In the wake of the 2013 AFL scandals of alleged match fixing and drug abuse across the code, the Cats took a bold initiative to embed themselves firmly in the roll-out of Enterprise Geelong, bringing the new approach to life for those that would benefit from it most over the decade – those that had been marginalized and excluded.

In 2023, we see Geelong as a thriving, exciting and optimistic community of citizens, businesses, education providers and government that has been recognized for setting

world-leading standards in new forms of social engagement and governance. The seeds were sown back in 2013 at that low-key launch.

Appendix 2 – Informed Consent Form

RMIT UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONS AND WORK

Consent to Participant in Research:
Skilling the Bay - Geelong Regional Labour Market Profile

Our names are Peter Fairbrother, Darryn Snell, George Cairns, Dora Carias Vega, Emily Toome, Meagan Tyler and Claire Homsey. We are part of an RMIT University research team involved in conducting research on current and future skill needs in Geelong. This research is being funded via the Gordon Institute, Geelong. The purpose of this study is to identify industry skill needs and how workers make decisions about future job and training opportunities. This work will assist in improving our understanding of Geelong's changing labour market and how training providers can best meet the needs of local employers and workers.

You have been invited to take part in a Scenario Workshop interactive discussion as part of this research. The Scenario Workshops will last approximately 90 minutes and will involve the participation of people from a variety of organisations and occupations. Participation is voluntary and you are free to leave the workshop at any stage without any explanation.

Participants' comments during the workshops will be made anonymous in any reports published. While the industry sector in which you work may be identified, you as an individual will not be identified in any manner in any publications that arise from this research. A report on the research will be available via the Gordon Institute at the end of the project. All data will be held securely for five years after publication in accordance with university guidelines. After completion of the project all documentation relating to the identity of the participating individuals will be destroyed.

We would be most happy to answer any questions you may have about this project. If you have any queries or would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings, please contact us via the Research Co-ordinator Emily Toome on Phone 03 9925 1682 or Email: emily.toome@rmit.edu.au

1. The project's particulars having been satisfactorily explained to me: **Yes   No**

2. In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:

    i.   I agree to take part in the Scenario Workshops with the researchers   **Yes   No**
    ii. I agree that the Workshop can be recorded by electronic device   **Yes   No**
    iii. I would like to check any transcription for accuracy   **Yes   No**

3. I give my permission for the organisation to be named in any publication arising from the research.
                                                                                  Yes   No

4. I acknowledge that the data collected for the RMIT Project will be used for research purposes and not for direct profit; research purposes may include publishable / peer reviewed outcomes.
                                                                                  Yes   No

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………

Signature & Date: ………………………………………..…………………………

This project has been approved by the College of Business Human Ethics Advisory Network, RMIT (BCHEAN Register No. 1000448), in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chair, Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network, College of Business, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 5596 or email address bro@rmit.edu.au. Details of the complaints procedure are available from http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=2jqrnb7hnpyo

Briefing Report 3
Scenario Workshops

Skilling the Bay –
Geelong Regional
Labour Market Profile

Prepared by:
The Centre for Sustainable Organisation and Work

Commissioned by:
The Gordon Institute of TAFE, Geelong

Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work
RMIT University
GPO Box 2476
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, Australia
Tel (61) 3 9925 5940
Fax (61) 3 9925 5960
http://www.rmit.edu.au/bus/research/csow